



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • Dec. 5, 2017



## Gameday: Hurricanes at Canucks

by Michael Smith [@MSmithCanes](#) / CarolinaHurricanes.com

12:00 AM

### VANCOUVER - Road trip!

This is the gameday hub, where you can find all the latest news and information you need to know for tonight's game, featuring the Carolina Hurricanes and Vancouver Canucks. Make Hurricanes.com a regular stop throughout the day, as we update this hub with notes, photos and more as puck drop draws near.

The Hurricanes will be on the ice at Rogers Arena at 11:30 a.m. local time, which will be 2:30 p.m. on the East Coast. Check back then for the latest.

*Last updated: 12:00 a.m.*

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### CANES BEGIN ROAD TRIP IN VANCOUVER

12:00 a.m.

The Carolina Hurricanes begin a season-long six-game road trip in Vancouver when they face off with the Canucks on Tuesday.

The Hurricanes will be looking to snap a nine-game winless streak at Rogers Arena (0-6-3), where they last won in October of 1999.

The Canes are looking to build off a dramatic 3-2 overtime win against the Florida Panthers at home on Saturday night. [Jeff Skinner](#) gave his team a lead in the third period, and [Noah Hanifin](#) tallied the game-winner in overtime with just two seconds left.

## Dispatches from the Road: Vancouver

### Canes face Canucks on Tuesday to begin six-game road trip

by Michael Smith [@MSmithCanes](#) / CarolinaHurricanes.com

December 4th, 2017

**VANCOUVER** - Vancouver is one of my favorite road cities in the National Hockey League.

Really, the Pacific Northwest as a region is one of my favorites in North America. Vancouver itself is this picturesque fusion of mountains, water and a cityscape.

"We've got to start stringing some wins together, and there's no better time to do that than right now," head coach Bill Peters said after a Monday practice at Rogers Arena. "We love coming out on the road and being together as a group. It's a good opportunity to come out here and play good teams in the Pacific Division to start and see where we're at."

The win over the Panthers was emotional in that it was a physical, feisty affair in which the Hurricanes answered the bell. Both Hanifin and [Brock McGinn](#) recorded their first career NHL fights, the first two fighting majors of the season for the team.

"Guys were dialed in and passionate. They knew the importance of getting the two points," Peters said. "I thought the guys did a good job playing hard for each other, and that was good to see."

The Canucks come into tonight's game winners of two in a row against Nashville and Toronto. At 13-10-4 with 30 points in 27 games, the Canucks sit in one of the two wild card spots in the Western Conference.

"You've got to do your homework now," Peters said. "We've got good video of how they play. We feel comfortable with what we're going to present to our guys tomorrow in our meetings. We'll put our best foot forward."

**CANESPR NOTES:** The Canes scored two power-play goals on Saturday against Florida, totaling six power-play goals in their last seven games. The Canes are 7-3-1 this season in games when they score on the man advantage. ... The Hurricanes are 9-2-1 this season when scoring first and 5-1-1 when leading after the first period.

But you're not here to read me wax poetic about Vancouver (or maybe you are, but we'll save that for another time); you're here to read about the Carolina Hurricanes, so let's talk hockey, shall we?

The Hurricanes took advantage of a two-day gap in between games to get out to the Pacific Northwest on Sunday in advance of Tuesday's match-up with the Canucks.

"It helps you get the body clock readjusted, especially the fact that we're out here in the Pacific time zone for quite a while with this trip," head coach Bill Peters said. "It will help us to get acclimated sooner rather than later."



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After two separate three-hour legs flying across the country, the Hurricanes held a team event in Vancouver and then got back on the ice for a Monday practice at Rogers Arena.

"We had to get going again. Travel day yesterday, and it was a good day to get out here early. There was some stuff that we worked on today," Peters said. "It was a good day."

Practice in Vancouver wraps up with a stretch at center ice. Michael Smith/Carolina Hurricanes

The trip to Vancouver is usually grouped with the swing through Western Canada, but this season is a bit different. This is the starting line for a two-week, six-game road trip that will then take the Hurricanes through California, Las Vegas and Buffalo.

It's a crucial road trip at a crucial juncture of the season, just past the quarter mark, and the Hurricanes are looking to build off an emotional 3-2 overtime victory over the Florida Panthers at home on Saturday.

"We've got to start stringing some wins together, and there's no better time to do that than right now," Peters said. "We

love coming out on the road and being together as a group. It's a good opportunity to come out here and play good teams in the Pacific Division to start and see where we're at."

On Tuesday, the Hurricanes will be looking to snap a nine-game winless streak (0-6-3) at Rogers Arena; it was October of 1999 when the Canes last won in Vancouver. The team lost a 4-3 heartbreaker in overtime in October of last season.

"You've got to do your homework now," Peters said. "We've got good video of how they play. We feel comfortable with what we're going to present to our guys tomorrow in our meetings. We'll put our best foot forward."

Have some coffee on standby this week - here come the late-night start times, beginning with Tuesday's 10 p.m. Eastern puck drop in Vancouver. We'll have you covered with all you need to know on gameday right here at Hurricanes.com tomorrow and throughout this road trip. TV's Mike Maniscalco will get things started on the broadcast side with Hurricanes Live! at 9:30 p.m. Eastern on FOX Sports Carolinas.



## Canucks hope to ride momentum into game vs. 'Canes

**VANCOUVER, British Columbia -- The hype meter is turned down.**

by [STATS](#)

3h ago • 4 min read Update 3h ago

VANCOUVER, British Columbia -- The hype meter is turned down.

Way down.

However, Vancouver coach Travis Green wants the [Canucks](#) (13-10-4) to show the same motivation against the [Carolina Hurricanes](#) (11-9-5) on Tuesday night as they did Saturday in an inspired win over the Toronto Maple Leafs before a sellout crowd and a national television audience.

"Some nights are big games," Green said after a practice Monday. "Saturday night against the Leafs, you know it's gonna be a big game. It doesn't mean it's not a bigger game for us against Carolina."

Like the Leafs, the Hurricanes rarely visit Vancouver. The implications will be much lower than they were when the Canucks eked out a 2-1 win with many in the crowd wearing Leafs jerseys.

But even with few if any fans sporting Carolina sweaters, Green is confident that the Canucks can get up for the Hurricanes.

"Inside our walls, every game is a big game, and we treat it that way," he said.

However, Green indicated that he wants the Canucks to provide a better performance than they did while staking claim to a 2-0 first-period lead and then holding on to edge the Leafs after being badly outshot in the final 40 minutes.

"We had an exciting game against Toronto," Green said. "We found a way to win. It was great for the city and, for hockey in general, it was a fun game to watch. Were we great? ... We weren't great."

The Canucks have won two straight, while the Hurricanes have lost two of their past three games and are 5-4-1 in their past 10 outings. Although the atmosphere at Rogers Arena will be distinctly different from Saturday's raucous environment, Canucks winger Thomas Vanek expects the Hurricanes to provide the same battle level as the Leafs.

"I think they're one of the better teams in the East," Vanek said. "I think that they're deep. They create a ton (of offense). Their (defense) is really balanced. Line-wise, it's going to be very similar to Toronto. They make plays all over the ice."

Canucks center Bo Horvat added, "They've obviously gotten younger, and I think they've gotten a lot faster. And I think they have four lines that can skate and that can play hockey. We've gotta have guys that can match them, guys that can play against all four lines. If we can stick to our structure, play fast (and) stick to our game plan, we'll be all right."



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The game will be the second of 10 home games in December for the Canucks, compared to only three on the road. Horvat wants the Canucks to show more heart at home, where they are only 4-5-3.

"We need to get the job done at home here," Horvat said. "We've had lots of success on the road (9-5-1). We need to start winning some games here."

The Hurricanes hope to deliver a spirited effort similar to their last outing -- a 3-2 overtime win against the Florida Panthers on Saturday.

"If we can get that emotional engagement into our game, it's going to help us," Hurricanes coach Bill Peters said after a practice Monday in Vancouver. "Every scenario was outstanding. Guys were dialed in. Guys were passionate."

Since Carolina does not face Vancouver often, Peters said he and his coaching staff had to do their homework on the Canucks and study the different things that they display under first-year coach Green, who emphasizes the need for speed.

"They beat Nashville in Nashville, which is tough to do, and then (they) had a real good game on Hockey Night in

Canada against Toronto," Peters said. "So we have real good video of how they play, and we feel comfortable with what we're gonna present to our guys (Tuesday) in our meetings -- and put our best foot forward."

The Tuesday contest is the first on a six-game road trip for the Hurricanes, who came west a day early in a bid to ensure that fatigue is not a factor against the Canucks.

"It helps you get the body clock readjusted, especially flying out here," Peters said. "We'll be in the Pacific time zone for quite a while here, and then we end up in Buffalo. So it'll help us get acclimated sooner than later."

Peters called the Hurricanes, who are 5-5-2 away from Raleigh, a "good road team." Winger Jeff Skinner said they need establish their road game early against the Canucks as they use the lengthy trip to gain ground on Eastern Conference rivals.

"We want to get that good feeling as a group and have success," Skinner said. "So (Tuesday) night is a good opportunity for us to do that."



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

## Behind Enemy Lines - Previewing the Vancouver Canucks, San Jose Sharks and Los Angeles Kings

**The Canes begin a western swing with a three game week.**

by [Andy House](#) Dec 4, 2017, 4:03pm EST

### [Vancouver Canucks](#)

The [Carolina Hurricanes](#) begin their lengthy six-game road trip with a date in Vancouver against the Canucks on Tuesday night. While the Canucks are viewed as a rebuilding franchise by most around the league, their current 13-10-4 record has been good enough for the third slot within the Pacific Division, not bad for a team with an interesting, but nonetheless quirky, mix of aging veterans and young, explosive talent.

Perhaps the most exciting development for the Canucks has been the emergence of their 2015 first-round pick, [Brock Boeser](#), as their leading scorer. Just 20 years of age, [Boeser](#) has had a wonderful start to his first full season in the NHL. His 25 points in just 24 games has him averaging just a shade over a point per game. Along with Boeser, the other featured youngster on the roster for the Canucks has been [Bo Horvat](#), who had plenty of success against Carolina last season. While Horvat has been counted on to lead the new generation of Canucks for the past few seasons, he appears to now have his running mate in Boeser to finally take the torch of leadership from the Sedin twins over the rest of this season.

While the Canucks do have a few young scorers who have become the centerpiece of the attack along with the other experienced scorers on the roster, the biggest development for the Canucks in terms of success has been the emergence of their goaltending. [Jacob Markstrom](#), along with [Anders Nilsson](#), have put together a solid .916 save percentage and 2.58 goals against average combined. The Canucks are still minus-2 in goal differential, but there is little arguing that the Canucks are a bit better than they were projected to be this season under new head coach Travis Green.

In order for the Canes to be able to handle the Canucks to begin this trip, they will have to improve their defensive cohesiveness to curb the grade A scoring chances they are giving up. If they are able to avoid the defensive breakdowns that have led to great opportunities for opponents at times this season, the Canucks scoring punch is not such that they will create ample dangerous scoring plays on their own.

### What to Watch For

- Former Hurricane Brandon Sutter is questionable to return on Tuesday for the Canucks. While his season has not been particularly potent, he does provide depth at center for Vancouver and provided two goals and two assists in the Canucks' two games against the Canes a season ago.



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- Expect a lower scoring game while at even strength, lending to the Canes needing to stay stingy defensively. The Canucks have yielded the second-fewest goals at even strength with 46. They are also tied for 26th in goals scored even strength with only 51.

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## San Jose Sharks

Thursday, 10:30 p.m. at SAP Center in San Jose

The Pacific Division swing continues Thursday in San Jose against the Sharks. And speaking of defensive-oriented teams, the remake of the Sharks has been striking. While pacing the league by only allowing 57 goals in 25 games, the Sharks simply do not yield scoring chances. Sharing in the credit with the incredible blueline led by [Brent Burns](#) is the goaltending tandem of [Martin Jones](#) and Aaron Dell. While Jones is the clear-cut starter (.926 save percentage, 2.23 goals against), Dell has actually been even better in his 10 games of limited action (.933 save percentage, 1.93 goals against).

On the other side of the ice however, the Sharks have shown a stark difference from the offense that finished fourth in the league in goals scored in their Stanley Cup Final run just two seasons ago. Sitting at 30th in the league in goals with 65, the lack of offensive punch has made it so the Sharks defensive acumen has only resulted in a solid, but unspectacular 14-9-2 record. The same veterans are leading the scoring in San Jose, with veterans [Logan Couture](#), [Joe Thornton](#), [Joe Pavelski](#) and former Norris-winner Burns the usual suspects near the top of the score sheet.

The fact that those same veterans are carrying the offense is likely part of the issue. There has not been an influx of youth and scoring talent at the forward positions. Youngsters like [Joonas Donskoi](#), [Chris Tierney](#) and [Kevin Labanc](#) have contributed, but not in the dosage needed to cure the scoring ills of the Sharks thus far. If the Sharks continue their defensive prowess and are able to wring out a bit more offense from the talent on hand, the Sharks have a chance to be an intriguing, veteran team out West that could give other Western Conference contenders — which, other than the surprising [Winnipeg Jets](#), do not rely on top-end speed—all sorts of fits in the postseason.

In order to win this game, Carolina *must* fight and scrap against a bigger team for the valuable parts of the ice in front of the net. If they play a comfortable game and keep pucks on the outside offensively, they will find scoring very difficult in the Shark Tank.

### What to Watch For

- This is the type of game that [Brock McGinn](#) has a chance to continue to show some of the toughness he has displayed this season so far, and needs to

drag along a few teammates into the trenches as well.

- Goaltending is going to be very important in this game, regardless of who is in net. No one expects that either [Scott Darling](#) or [Cam Ward](#) will win this game alone, but against a team who struggles scoring and is tough to score upon, there is no room for a soft goal on Thursday in San Jose.

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## Los Angeles Kings

Saturday, 10:30 p.m. at Staples Center

For the Pacific Division-leading Los Angeles Kings, this season has been a wonderful reset back to their Stanley Cup form from a few seasons past under new head coach John Stevens. With goal and goal prevention numbers within the top eight of the NHL, they have been a well-rounded team all season long.

Captain Anze Kopitar has exploded at a better than a point per game pace through 28 games, as he has posted a team-leading 14 goals along with 17 assists. All of the typical names in LA have taken lead roles in the early success, with all-world defenseman [Drew Doughty](#), veteran [Dustin Brown](#) and of course goalie [Jonathan Quick](#) all producing at a high level to push the Kings to the top of the division. Quick and backup [Darcy Kuemper](#) have supplied a league-leading .931 save percentage on the season.

That could mean that the Canes could find tough offensive sledding in LA as well, but it certainly will be a good test to see if they can start to produce offense against the leading defenses and netminders in the league. If they can, perhaps some of that confidence will begin to blossom more offensive success the rest of the way for Carolina.

While the Kings have been very effective this season, they have been vulnerable at home in the first few months, posting a middling 6-5-2 record at Staples Center to date. If the Canes are to have any success out west this week, they need to start on time and not allow the defensive-minded teams they are facing to force them to come from behind.

### What to Watch For

- The Kings are riding a five-game winning streak currently in which they have allowed only six goals total. Can the Canes put more offensive pressure on the Kings?
- The Kings possess the top-rated Penalty Kill at just under 90%. However, they rate just 27th (actually behind Carolina!) on the Power Play. If the Canes can find a way to be a plus on special teams, it would be a big boost against a stingy defensive team like LA.

## Carolina Hurricanes at Vancouver Canucks: Game Preview and Storm Advisory

The Hurricanes kick off their five game West Coast roadie tonight against the Vancouver Canucks.

by [Andrew Ahr@andrew\\_ahr](mailto:Andrew.Ahr@andrew_ahr) Dec 5, 2017, 8:09am EST



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### Carolina Hurricanes (11-9-5) vs. Vancouver Canucks (13-10-4)

Tuesday, December 4, 2017 - 10:00 p.m. ET  
Rogers Arena - Vancouver, British Columbia

TV: Fox Sports Carolinas

Radio: 99.9 The Fan

Opposition coverage: [Nucks Misconduct](#)

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The [Hurricanes](#) begin a Western Conference tour tonight in British Columbia as they take on the [Canucks](#) in the first of five episodes of #CanesAfterDark.

#### Vital Statistics

Category	Hurricanes	Canucks
Record	11-9-5	13-10-4
Points	27	30
Division Rank	7 Metro	T3 Pacific
Conference Rank	11 EC	T7 WC
Last 10 Games	5-4-1	4-5-3
Streak	Won 1	Won 2
Goals/Game	2.80	2.78
Goals Against/Game	2.96	2.78
Shots/Game	36.0	29.3
Shots Against/Game	29.8	31.0
Faceoff %	52.7	49.7
Power Play % (Rank)	16.7 (25)	20.6 (14)
Penalty Kill % (Rank)	77.8 (23)	79.8 (17)
ES Corsi For %	54.95	48.25
ES PDO	98.9	100.7
PIM/Game	6:00	9:55

#### Goaltender #1

Category	Scott Darling	Jacob Markstrom
Record	7-7-5	7-8-3
Save %	.903	.913
GAA	2.68	2.54

#### Goaltender #2

Category	Cam Ward	Anders Nilsson
Record	4-2-0	6-2-1
Save %	.914	.922

Category	Cam Ward	Anders Nilsson
GAA	2.84	2.68

#### Game Notes

- The Hurricanes trail all-time with a 26-32-14-1 record, including a 10-18-8-1 record in Vancouver.
- Tonight kicks off the first of two games between the teams. They will meet for the last time in early February in PNC Arena.
- The Hurricanes won last season's series with a record of 1-0-1, but prior to a wild 8-6 win over the Canucks in December of last year, the Hurricanes had lost seven straight to Vancouver.
- From our resident outpost of the Elias Sports Bureau:
- Seven Hurricanes players recorded multi-point games in that December game, including four players who earned three point nights (Ryan, Rask, Skinner, and Faulk).
- [Victor Rask](#) has tallied five points (2g, 3a) in six career games against the Canucks.
- With two power play goals on Saturday against Florida, the Canes have tallied six power play goals in their last seven games. Furthermore, the team is 7-3-1 when the PP unit finds the net at least once.

#### Storm Advisory

- Former NHL defenseman [Brent Sopel](#) opened up about his learning disorder and his battle with alcoholism. [\[ESPN\]](#)
- [Matt Moulson](#) is on waivers and could have a new home at noon today. [\[NHL.com\]](#)
- Just what the [Panthers](#) didn't need to see: [Roberto Luongo](#) being helped off the ice with a leg injury. [\[TSN\]](#)
- We're only a week and a half away from the first outdoor game of the season! [\[NHL.com\]](#)
- The Seattle City Council has approved a \$660 million renovation plan to Key Arena. The city is expecting an announcement from the NHL. [\[Seattle Times\]](#)



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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## NHL.com makes its picks for All-Star rosters

### Staff chooses 11-man teams for each division; fan voting for Jan. 28 game underway

Fan voting for the [2018 Honda NHL All-Star Game](#) began Saturday, and to mark the occasion NHL.com staff writers and editors have made their picks.

Voters were asked to select a captain for each divisional team, which is what the public will be voting on through Jan. 1. They also went a step further and picked the 11-player team for each of the four divisions. Four writers/editors were assigned to each of the four divisions; each named six forwards, three defensemen and two goalies to represent that division. The panel ranked the forwards 1-6, the defensemen 1-3 and the goalies as one or two. Cumulative vote totals determined who made the list and where they were placed. Ties were broken by the player who appeared on more ballots. Each team must be represented.

Fans can have their say as well with the NHL All-Star Fan Vote. The top vote-getter in each division will be named that team's captain, and the NHL Hockey Operations staff will pick the remaining players for the game, which will be held at Amalie Arena in Tampa on Jan. 28.

The game will use the same format as last season, with the four division teams playing in a 3-on-3 tournament.

#### Metropolitan Division All-Star Team

Captain: [John Tavares](#), New York Islanders

#### Forwards

1. John Tavares, New York Islanders
2. [Alex Ovechkin](#), Washington Capitals
3. [Phil Kessel](#), Pittsburgh Penguins
4. [Jakub Voracek](#), Philadelphia Flyers
5. [Taylor Hall](#), New Jersey Devils
6. [Teuvo Teravainen](#), Carolina Hurricanes

#### Defensemen

1. [Nick Leddy](#), New York Islanders
2. [Kevin Shattenkirk](#), New York Rangers
3. [Zach Werenski](#), Columbus Blue Jackets

#### Goalies

1. [Sergei Bobrovsky](#), Columbus Blue Jackets
2. [Braden Holtby](#), Washington Capitals

*Voting panel* : Mike Morreale, NHL.com Staff Writer; Tom Gulitti, NHL.com Staff Writer; Adam Kimelman, NHL.com Deputy Managing Editor; Brian Compton, NHL.com Deputy Managing Editor

Tavares, who's second in the division in goals with 16 (Ovechkin is first with a League-best 18), was nearly a unanimous pick as captain and the top forward for the Metropolitan Division, getting three of four first-place votes in each category (Kessel had the other in each). Of the six forwards selected, Tavares, Kessel and Ovechkin appeared on all four ballots. Hall and Voracek each was named on three. Teravainen, who received two sixth-place votes, made the team as the Hurricanes' representative.

Leddy, who leads all defensemen in the division with 21 points (six goals, 15 assists), and Shattenkirk, who's second with 19, appeared on three of the four ballots. Werenski, whose seven goals are the most among Metropolitan Division defensemen, received one first-place vote.

Bobrovsky, who leads the division in wins (14), save percentage (.935) and goals-against average (1.92) was first on all four ballots. Holtby was second on three; [Henrik Lundqvist](#) of the Rangers got the other second-place vote.

#### Atlantic Division All-Star Team

Captain: [Steven Stamkos](#), Tampa Bay Lightning

#### Forwards

1. [Nikita Kucherov](#), Tampa Bay Lightning
2. Steven Stamkos, Tampa Bay Lightning
3. [Auston Matthews](#), Toronto Maple Leafs
4. [Aleksander Barkov](#), Florida Panthers
5. [Dylan Larkin](#), Detroit Red Wings
6. [Evander Kane](#), Buffalo Sabres

#### Defensemen

1. [Erik Karlsson](#), Ottawa Senators
2. [Shea Weber](#), Montreal Canadiens
3. [Zdeno Chara](#), Boston Bruins

#### Goalies

1. [Andrei Vasilevskiy](#), Tampa Bay Lightning
2. [Roberto Luongo](#), Florida Panthers

*Voting panel*: Dave Stubbs, NHL.com Columnist; Shawn Roarke, NHL.com Director of Editorial; Amalie Benjamin,



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*NHL.com Staff Writer; Mike Zeisberger, NHL.com Staff Writer*

Like Tavares, Kucherov, whose 17 goals are second in the League behind Ovechkin, was the top choice on three of four ballots. Stamkos, the NHL leader in points with 37 (11 goals, 26 assists), was the unanimous choice for captain and received the other first-place vote along with three second-place votes. Kucherov and Stamkos each appeared on all four ballots; so did Matthews, who got a second-place vote, two fourth-place votes and a sixth-place vote. Larkin, Barkov and Kane each appeared on three of the four ballots.

Karlsson, in a four-way tie for second among Atlantic Division defensemen with 17 points, was a unanimous choice. Weber (three) was the only other defensemen to appear on multiple ballots.

Vasilevskiy, the NHL leader in wins (16) and the division leader in save percentage (.932) was a unanimous choice for No. 1 goalie. Luongo, third in the division with a .928 save percentage, received two second-place votes. Bruins goalie [Anton Khudobin](#), second in the division in save percentage (.932), also received a second-place vote.

## Central Division All-Star Team

*Captain: [Alex Pietrangelo](#), St. Louis Blues*

### Forwards

1. [Jaden Schwartz](#), St. Louis Blues
2. [Brayden Schenn](#), St. Louis Blues
3. [Mark Scheifele](#), Winnipeg Jets
4. [Vladimir Tarasenko](#), St. Louis Blues
5. [Nathan MacKinnon](#), Colorado Avalanche
6. [Jason Zucker](#), Minnesota Wild

### Defensemen

1. Alex Pietrangelo, St. Louis Blues
2. [John Klingberg](#), Dallas Stars
3. [P.K. Subban](#), Nashville Predators

### Goalies

1. [Corey Crawford](#), Chicago Blackhawks
2. [Pekka Rinne](#), Nashville Predators

*Voting panel: Bill Price, NHL.com Editor-in-Chief; Jon Lane, NHL.com Staff Writer; Tim Campbell, NHL.com Staff Writer; Nick Cotsonika, NHL.com Columnist*

Schwartz, who's tied with Scheifele for the division lead in goals (13), assists (19) and points (32), was the only forward in all four divisions to be a unanimous No. 1 selection. Schwartz, Schenn and Pietrangelo appeared on all four ballots, and Pietrangelo received three votes for captain. Scheifele and MacKinnon were the other forwards to appear on all four ballots. Zucker and Tarasenko each appeared on three.

Klingberg, the division leader among defensemen in points (18) and assists (14), appeared on all four ballots and was

the only Dallas player to garner any votes. Subban appeared on three ballots.

Crawford, who leads the all goalies in the division (minimum 10 games played) in save percentage (.930) and GAA (2.29), was the only Blackhawks player to receive any votes and was a unanimous choice as the No. 1 goalie. Rinne, tied with [Connor Hellebuyck](#) of the Jets for the division lead in wins with 14 and second to Crawford in save percentage (.925) and GAA (2.38), received two second-place votes.

## Pacific Division All-Star Team

*Captain: [Connor McDavid](#), Edmonton Oilers*

### Forwards

1. [Johnny Gaudreau](#), Calgary Flames
2. Connor McDavid, Edmonton Oilers
3. [Anze Kopitar](#), Los Angeles Kings
4. [Brock Boeser](#), Vancouver Canucks
5. [Sean Monahan](#), Calgary Flames
6. [William Karlsson](#), Vegas Golden Knights

### Defensemen

1. [Drew Doughty](#), Los Angeles Kings
2. [Oliver Ekman-Larsson](#), Arizona Coyotes
3. [Brandon Montour](#), Anaheim Ducks

### Goalies

1. [Martin Jones](#), San Jose Sharks
2. [Jonathan Quick](#), Los Angeles Kings

*Voting panel: Dan Rosen, NHL.com Senior Writer; Lisa Dillman, NHL.com Staff Writer; David Satriano, NHL.com Staff Writer; Pete Jensen, NHL.com Senior Fantasy Editor*

Gaudreau, McDavid, Kopitar and Boeser each was on all four ballots, with the Oilers center getting two votes as captain. Gaudreau, the division leader in assists (23) and points (34), and Kopitar, third in the division with 29 points (13 goals, 16 assists) each received one vote for captain.

Monahan received three fourth-place votes. He's tied for the division lead in goals (14) with Karlsson, who had two sixth-place votes and is making the team as the Golden Knights' representative.

Doughty, who leads Pacific defenseman with 19 points (four goals, 15 assists) and Ekman-Larsson, second with 18 points (six goals, 12 assists) appeared on all four ballots. Montour, who is tied for first with Ekman-Larsson for goals by division defensemen, was listed on three. [Hampus Lindholm](#) of the Ducks was the only other Pacific defenseman to get a vote.

Jones, the lone Sharks player to be named, got three of the four first-place votes; Quick, who is tied with Flames goalie [Mike Smith](#) for most wins (12) by a Pacific Division goaltender, got the other as well as two second-place votes. Smith got the other second-place vote.



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## Hometown Weekly Report: December 4

Written by Nicholas Niedzielski

Published: December 04, 2017

A reloaded Checkers lineup enjoyed a strong week on home ice, sweeping the Springfield Thunderbirds to avenge losses earlier this month. The team will now put their focus on an impending two-game road trip starting Friday in Wilkes-Barre/Scranton.

### Week in Review

#### Team Statistics

- Overall record 14-8-1
- Home record 6-3-1
- Road record 8-5-0
- Last week's record 2-0-0
- Last 10 games 4-5-1
- Division Standings 3rd
- Conference Standings 5th
- League Standings 8th

### Checkers 4, Springfield 1

Hosting the Springfield Thunderbirds – helmed by former Charlotte assistant coach Geordie Kinnear – for the first time ever, the Checkers rode a dominant performance from Warren Foegele to a big win. After Andrew Miller put the home team ahead with a wicked wrister from the slot, Foegele added to the lead with a pair of breakaway tallies less than five minutes apart in the middle frame. The Thunderbirds would finally break through on netminder Alex Nedeljkovic early in the third, but it wouldn't be enough to stop the Checkers as Foegele deposited one more into the empty net to secure his first pro hat trick. [Full recap](#)

### Checkers 4, Springfield 3

Sunday's rematch proved to be a much closer affair. After falling into a 2-0 hole in the first, Lucas Wallmark notched his first goal since returning from injury to cut the deficit in half. Springfield responded in the second, however, lighting the lamp to regain their two-goal advantage midway through regulation. But a power-play tally from the captain Patrick Brown shortly after kickstarted the Checkers' offense, which tied the game late in the middle frame and then won it thanks to a snipe from Aleksii Saarela in the final six minutes of play. [Full recap](#)

### Three Stars Of The Week

- **3rd Star Andrew Miller** 1g, 2a

- **2nd Star Clark Bishop** 0g, 4a
- **1st Star Warren Foegele** 3g, 0a

### Notables

#### FOEGELE LIGHTS IT UP

With his three goals Friday night against Springfield, Warren Foegele notched the ninth hat trick in franchise history. He is the sixth different player to reach that mark and the only Checkers rookie to do so.

One of Foegele's tallies that night came on the penalty kill, giving him four shorthanded goals this season. That total sets a new single-season franchise record, breaking Zac Dalpe's mark from the 2012-13 campaign, while Foegele's five shorthanded points are tied for the most in team history with Chad LaRose's 2014-15 effort.

Foegele's big night boost him to the team lead in goals with 12, a total that also moves him into a tie for third in the league overall. The franchise record for goals by a rookie is 24, set last season by Lucas Wallmark.

#### BISHOP BREAKS OUT

- From The Booth To The Bench [Read More](#)

#### Last Week's News

- [Kuokkanen Growing Into Pro Game With Help Of Finnish Connection](#)
- [Tyler Ganly Assigned To Florida](#)
- [Checkers, Verizon Wireless Continue "Pass It Forward" Campaign](#)

Clark Bishop played a big part in Foegele's hat trick Friday, picking up an assist on all three goals. That career high single-game point total boosted the forward to 12 points on the year, doubling his rookie mark in exactly half as many games.

Bishop is one of four Checkers to reach double-digit helpers this season, while his two shorthanded assists are tied for the league lead and just one shy of matching the franchise single-season record.

#### MILLER GETS BACK ON TRACK

After not being held off the scoresheet in consecutive games to start the year, Andrew Miller fell into a four-game scoreless streak in mid-November, but has come out of that



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slump firing. The forward has five points in his last five games, including three in his last two, and has taken over the team scoring lead.

### WINNING NED

The Checkers seem to have found their man between the pipes, as Alex Nedeljkovic picked up his 11 win of the season Sunday afternoon. That win total puts the goalie in a tie for the league lead and eclipses his total of eight wins from all of last season.

Charlotte's stingy defense, which ranks 11th in goals against per game and ninth in shots allowed per game, has had a hand in Nedeljkovic's hot start as the young netminder has not had to make 30 saves in any of his wins this season.

### WALLMARK AND ZYKOV BRING BOOST

After playing the last week without Lucas Wallmark or Valentin Zykov in the lineup, the Checkers received a formidable boost this weekend when both returned to action.

Wallmark, who had been out since Nov. 10, picked up a helper in his first game back on Friday then lit the lamp in Sunday's rematch to remain in a tie for second on the team in scoring despite playing significantly fewer games. Zykov notched an assist in Friday's contest and helped reunite the top line of him, Wallmark and Miller.

In the nine games that Wallmark was out of the lineup the Checkers went 3-5-1, including their longest losing streak of the season. For the three games that both Wallmark and Zykov were sidelined, Charlotte went 1-1-1.

### GOING STREAKING

The Checker have earned points in each of their last four games (3-0-1), which ties their longest point streak of the season, matching a four-game run of wins from Nov. 3-10. Since dropping four straight games in regulation immediately following that win streak, the Checkers have gone 4-1-1 since Nov. 21.

### Ranks

- Warren Foegele leads all rookies in goals and is tied for third in the AHL overall, leads the league in shorthanded goals and points, is tied for sixth among league rookies in scoring, ranks third among league rookies in shooting percentage and is tied for third among rookies in game-winning goals
- Valentin Zykov is tied for second in the AHL in power-play goals
- Clark Bishop is tied for the league lead in shorthanded assists
- Philip Samuelsson is tied for third among league defensemen and is tied for fifth overall in plus/minus
- Alex Nedeljkovic is tied for the league lead in wins
- Nicolas Roy is tied for second among league rookies in shorthanded goals and points

### INJURIES

- Jake Chelios missed 14 games starting Nov. 3

### Transactions

#### Incoming

- None

#### Outgoing

- Nov. 28: (D) Tyler Ganly assigned to Florida (ECHL)

#### Coming Up

- Friday, December 8 at 7:05 pm - Checkers at Wilkes-Barre/Scranton
- Saturday, December 9 at 7:05 pm - Checkers at Binghamton

### By the Numbers

CATEGORY	RECORD	AHL RANK	LAST WEEK
<b>Power play</b>	21.7%	3rd	t-2nd
<b>Penalty kill</b>	85.2%	7th	12th
<b>Goals per game</b>	3.65	3rd	3rd
<b>Shots per game</b>	29.09	21st	20th
<b>Goals allowed per game</b>	3.04	11th	18th
<b>Shots allowed per game</b>	28.87	9th	13th
<b>Penalty minutes per game</b>	12.91	11th	9th

CATEGORY	LEADER(S)
<b>Points</b>	Andrew Miller (19), Lucas Wallmark, Warren Foegele (17)
<b>Goals</b>	Warren Foegele (12), Valentin Zykov (10), Aleksii Saarela (8)
<b>Assists</b>	Lucas Wallmark, Andrew Miller (12), Trevor Carrick (11)
<b>Power play goals</b>	Valentin Zykov (6), Patrick Brown, Aleksii Saarela (3)
<b>Shorthanded goals</b>	Warren Foegele (4), Nicolas Roy (2)
<b>Game-winning goals</b>	Warren Foegele (3)
<b>Shots on goal</b>	Trevor Carrick, Warren Foegele, Andrew Poturalski (41)
<b>Penalty minutes</b>	Zack Stortini (42), Patrick Brown (34), Trevor Carrick (29)
<b>Plus/minus</b>	Philip Samuelsson (+13), Lucas Wallmark, Clark Bishop, Roland McKeown (+9)
<b>Wins</b>	Alex Nedeljkovic (11)
<b>Goals-against average</b>	Alex Nedeljkovic (2.48)
<b>Save percentage</b>	Alex Nedeljkovic (.907)



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## TODAY'S LINKS

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## SportScan

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

1086734 Vancouver Canucks

Passer, not patter what matters for quiet Canuck Pouliot

BEN KUZMA

Published:December 4, 2017

Updated:December 4, 2017 4:50 PM PST

Derrick Pouliot prefers to let his emerging game do the talking.

The soft-spoken Vancouver Canucks defenceman can defer from doling out the details because he has a willing spokesman in Michael Del Zotto, who will go chapter and verse on any National Hockey League topic.

And when it comes to his defensive partner Pouliot, who had five blocked shots, three hits and logged 21:53 in Saturday's 2-1 victory over the Toronto Maple Leafs, Del Zotto knows there is a lot to talk about.

There's the steady improvement since an Oct. 3 trade with the Pittsburgh Penguins and the elite-level passing. And there's potential for the pending restricted free agent to be part of the club's future.

"Each day he talks a little bit more," Del Zotto chuckled of Pouliot following Monday's practice. "We sit beside each other, so we joke around a bit and there's a little bit more whispering than yelling. But he has been more vocal as each day goes by and it's showing in his play on the ice, too.

"He has been a great for us, especially when Eagle (Alex Edler) went down (Oct. 12). He stepped up and played some big minutes and did a great job. It's an up-tempo system and that's the way the game is played now and it suits his style. He's getting up in the play, he's making plays and allows us to have the puck in the O-zone, rather than defending a lot.

"And he's good with all his passes. He's makes great plays and it doesn't matter in what zone."

Pouliot isn't going to fill the net — he has three goals in 91 career NHL games — but an ability to transition the puck and make the right reads will make the 23-year-old valuable beyond this season. He has earned the right to remain in the lineup, even when Erik Gudbranson returns from an upper-body injury next week.

Derrick Pouliot (right) battles with Toronto Maple Leafs forward Connor Brown during Saturday's game at Rogers Arena.

Derrick Pouliot (right) battles with Toronto Maple Leafs forward Connor Brown during Saturday's game at Rogers Arena. DARRYL DYCK / CANADIAN PRESS

The Canucks took a gamble when they shipped Andrey Pedan and a fourth-round draft pick to the Penguins to provide Pouliot an opportunity to grow his game under former junior mentor Travis Green. But it wasn't really a risk. Pedan was a towering presence and willing combatant, but not a prime puck mover and he hasn't played an NHL game since the trade.

Pouliot had a passing pedigree since his time with Green in Portland, and it just needed to be rekindled.

"It's a big strength of his to pass on the fly with his head up and snap it," said Green. "That's an art. He has been really good at it his whole life. Some guys pass in stride cleaner than others. But to be an elite defenceman you have to pass it hard and flat so it hits the blade and sits there.

"He's also done a good job in his own zone and we don't need him to be something he's not — not yet. You can be a good player without being No. 1 power-play guy."

Run all this by Pouliot and you get more of nod and a shoulder shrug because he knows he's still a work in progress.

Mention his triumphant return to Pittsburgh on Nov. 22 — the Penguins' first-round pick of 2012 (eighth overall) had a goal and a season-high 25:08 in a 5-2 victory — and he will say this much: "It was really neat to go back and play. It was a pretty emotional game, even though it was a back-to-back. I felt full of energy."

The native of Estevan, Sask., would rather talk about challenges in his game because he appears to have found a home. It's why the only goal the Maple Leafs managed Saturday — a James van Riemsdyk tip in the slot — still bugs him because that's what good players do. They're not going to let anything slide.

"You've got to get the guy's stick and maybe get in front of that one," he recalled. "But day by day I'm feeling better. Some games, you may be at 80 or 85 per cent, but you have to find a way to be as consistent as you can."

It helps that Pouliot and Del Zotto have similar styles in a system that plays to their strengths. It helps build puck-rushing chemistry where they



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instinctively know who's going and who should hang back. Not that it's easy.

"Once where he was carrying the puck in the (offensive) zone and I was the second guy I thought: 'I think I'll just hold back here,' " said Pouliot. "You just read off each other. And if we can both jump up in the play, it takes a little pressure off you to do it all the time.

"One thing I really noticed is that he (Del Zotto) defends hard (a team-high 61 hits, 43 blocked shots) and is more of a physical presence than I thought. He has a high compete level."

So does Pouliot. He just doesn't talk about it much.

Vancouver Province: LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086735 Vancouver Canucks

Canucks prospect Evan McEneny undergoes knee surgery

PATRICK JOHNSTON

Published:December 4, 2017

Updated:December 4, 2017 2:50 PM PST

Evan McEneny's dream of getting back to the NHL has hit a big bump.

McEneny had surgery on an injured left knee suffered in a Nov. 15 hit by the Laval Rocket's Nicolas Deslauriers.

This is the second time he's suffered a substantial left knee injury, as he missed nearly all of the 2011-12 season — the season ahead of what was supposed to be his 2012 NHL entry draft year — when he tore his anterior cruciate ligament while playing for the Kitchener Rangers of the OHL.

With the announcement of McEneny out for 6 months — here is the play where he was hurt on November 15 vs Laval#Canucks #Comets pic.twitter.com/jR4AdsvoPn— Ryan Biech (@ryanbiech) December 4, 2017

According to the Comets, McEneny will be out of action for at least six months, meaning his season is most likely over.

Comets General Manager Ryan Johnson confirmed today that Evan McEneny underwent successful knee surgery and is expected to make a full recovery with an estimated timetable of six months. pic.twitter.com/3m20nVQVqx— Utica Comets (@UticaComets) December 4, 2017

The 23-year-old defenceman signed a two-year contract this summer with the Canucks. He played in one game for the Canucks last season and was seen by some as a darkhorse candidate to get more games this year.

He'd tallied two goals and five assists in 11 games for Utica before getting hurt. In 2016-17, he was often seen on the first unit power play in Utica and clearly had the confidence of Travis Green.

McEneny was considered a hot prospect going in to his draft year, but after going undrafted in 2012, the Canucks were able to scoop him up as a free agent.

The Comets say they expect he'll make a full recovery.

Vancouver Province: LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086736 Vancouver Canucks

10 thoughts on the Canucks, including some appreciation for Troy Stecher

By Jason Brough 8 hours ago

1. I've been wondering lately if Troy Stecher is the kind of player the Canucks might consider locking up long term — especially if they can get him for a low-ish cap hit.

Sort of like what the Nashville Predators did with Ryan Ellis (5 years, \$12.5 million), where the player gets some financial security and the team gets cost certainty.

Stecher is a pending restricted free agent, so I asked Jim Benning on Saturday about the possibility of signing the 23-year-old defenceman to more than a bridge deal.

"We'll talk about it, we'll see where his year goes," said Benning. "But if you're asking me if he's a core guy for our group moving forward, I would say yes he is."

As most of you know, Stecher is from Richmond and grew up cheering for the Canucks. Since signing out of college, he's become a real fan favourite thanks to his tireless work ethic, ultra-competitive attitude and willingness to sacrifice for the good of the team.

"He's not big, but he's competitive in the battles," said Benning. "He doesn't lose many battles. He's aggressive, moves the puck up the ice. He's a leader in the room for a young kid. Everyone sees how hard he works and competes."

Daniel Sedin added, "He's a professional all the way through, off the ice, on the ice. He's one of the guys the young guys can watch."

For the record, I have no idea if Stecher would be amenable to an Ellis-type deal. The Canucks may not want to do that, either. All I'm saying is he's a guy I'd bet on to keep working and keep battling, even if he did get that financial security.

2. Saturday against the Leafs, Stecher took a shot off the foot and then a puck off the face. Afterwards, he couldn't breathe out of his bloodied right nostril, and his teeth hurt, too.

"I knew I'd come back," he said. "We knew we'd need everyone to beat this team. I knew if I was capable of playing, I'd play. I didn't want to let my teammates down."

Now, that's not an unusual answer for a hockey player. As Stecher was sure to note, others have played through worse.

But Stecher should serve as a great example for Canucks prospects, particularly those who weren't drafted in the first few rounds or weren't drafted at all. Previously, Alex Burrows, Jannik Hansen and Derek Dorsett could be held up as proof that hard work can pay off for long shots.

I'd think that every team would want one or two of those guys on the roster.

Obviously, Chris Tanev is another great example.

3. Perhaps that's why I'm cheering for Zack MacEwen to make it to the NHL. Undrafted, the 21-year-old forward signed with the Canucks in March out of the QMJHL. He's currently in Utica, where he's scored two goals with seven assists in 16 games for the Comets.

This is his first professional season, and the Canucks are extremely impressed with his willingness to learn.

"In the offseason, we threw the book at him," said Ryan Johnson, the Canucks' director of player development, in a conversation with The



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Athletic. "What he did in a short amount of time ... he's hungry, he wants to be a player. He's a big body that plays a physical game. But for a guy that big, he's got some elusiveness to his game. He sees the ice very well. He's got a great shot. He's still figuring out the American League, as they all have to do. But to be able to make the steps that he has in a short amount of time, I'm excited to see him continue to take those steps."

4. During our conversation, Johnson spoke a lot about "bad junior habits," and how prospects need to relearn certain things once they reach the pros.

One of those bad habits he sees is too much circling.

"They want to keep their speed, so they turn away from the puck at times," said Johnson. "They get ahead of the play then, because they're circling to keep their speed. Or in the D-zone they can get out of position. You do that in the NHL and it ends up in the back of your net. In the NHL, it's a stop-and-start league."

Another thing new pros need to learn is how to push the pace.

"In junior or college, they get the puck in the neutral zone, they have the ability to go east-west or plant their feet and make a play," said Johnson. "In the NHL, as soon as they get the puck, they gotta get up and go. You pull up in the NHL, you better make a play fast or that's a turnover heading the other way. So I talk to a lot of our guys about it. It's pace, pace, pace."

Johnson mentioned Bo Horvat as a guy who had to learn that lesson. It wasn't so much that Horvat was a poor skater coming out of junior; he just mentally had to pick up the pace.

"In junior, he could get away with planting in the neutral zone," said Johnson. "Now one of the most exciting parts of his game is watching him when he gets the puck, that explosiveness in the neutral zone."

5. Speaking of Horvat, I asked him the other day about the evolution of a team leader. Now that he's been on the Canucks for a few years, is he more vocal in the room?

"I try to speak up a little bit more than I used to," Horvat said. "The first three years, I just kept my mouth shut and played hard on the ice and let my play do the talking. Now I say a bit more stuff in-between periods or before the game."

I don't think Horvat will ever be super vocal. It's just not his personality. But that doesn't mean he can't be a leader. After all, the Sedins aren't super vocal either.

"They're not constantly talking," Horvat said of the twins. "But when they talk and voice their opinion, you listen."

Only 22, Horvat already feels a responsibility to show the young guys the way.

"I like being an approachable guy that's easy to talk to," he said. "Anybody has any questions or any concerns, they can come to me and I'll give them my advice. Because I know what it feels like. I've been there."

6. On that same topic, I asked Daniel Sedin how the leadership evolution went for him and his brother.

"You mature, you get older, you get more confident around the old guys," Sedin said. "For us, we watched and learned. We watched Markus, Trevor, Mattias, all the older guys. How they reacted in different situations, when to talk, when not to talk. You've got to pick those things up, and it takes time."

For now, the Canucks have enough veterans that the young guys don't need to be too vocal.

"I think in a perfect team, young guys should be able to tell me or Henrik if we've done something wrong," Daniel said. "Obviously, that maybe doesn't happen. We didn't do that when we were young either. But you

want to get all the guys comfortable enough to be able to talk and keep each other accountable. I think that accountability usually comes from the older guys. But sooner or later the young guys will have to talk and step up and take over."

7. Who's to blame for Nikita Tryamkin bailing back to Russia? It's a question that's still being debated in Vancouver.

From what I've gathered, a lot of Canucks fans believe that Tryamkin should've been given more of an opportunity last season. Perhaps if he'd had a bigger role and gotten the ice time he felt he deserved, he could've been convinced to stay.

In other words, a lot of fans blame the Canucks.

And hey, fair enough. It's never a good look when a highly touted prospect chooses to leave.

Just know, though, that Tryamkin really rubbed some people in the organization the wrong way.

From what I've been told — and just so we're clear, this information didn't come from my chat with Benning — Tryamkin's teammates repeatedly went out of their way to talk to him, invite him on team outings, and generally make him feel like part of the group, only for their efforts to be rebuffed more often than not.

I do have empathy for Tryamkin, because it must be tough coming to a new country, especially without knowing the language. But it doesn't sound like he made the best effort to fit in. Nor does it sound like he accepted responsibility for various on-ice mistakes.

It's all very unfortunate, because Tryamkin clearly has potential.

Maybe he'll be ready to try again someday, and both sides can get another crack at it.

8. In speaking with Benning about the future of the Canucks' defence, it was interesting to me that he didn't mention Erik Gudbranson.

He mentioned Stecher, Ben Hutton, and Derrick Pouliot. He also mentioned Olli Juolevi, Philip Holm, Guillaume Brisebois and Jalen Chatfield.

But not Gudbranson.

So I asked for an update on the 25-year-old pending unrestricted free agent.

"We can't sign him until after January 1," said Benning, "so we'll start talking to him then to see where it's at, and where he's at."

Yeah, it wasn't much of an update.

The best guess is that Gudbranson is traded before the deadline. I have no idea what the Canucks might get for him. It all depends if a GM is willing to pay up for the intangibles while downplaying the analytics. Not too long ago, Benning was that willing GM.

9. "I love his compete level," said Travis Green.

And you'll never guess which player the coach was talking about.

Thomas Vanek!

"Maybe his rap is that he doesn't play hard enough, that he's just a goal scorer," said Green. "But he's got a real inner desire to win. He's extremely smart. He's got great hockey sense."

I have to admit that I've been pleasantly surprised by Vanek. I didn't hate his signing as much as a lot of Canucks fans did, since it was only for a year and the team badly needed to add forward depth.

But I really didn't expect to see Vanek win so many puck battles. He's a great passer, too.

10. Canucks stat of the week: The power play is up to 20.6 per cent and the penalty kill is running at 79.8 per cent.



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Combined, that adds up to 100.4 per cent.

Last year, the PP (14.1 per cent) and the PK (76.7 per cent) added up to just 90.8 per cent.

So that's a dramatic improvement on special teams.

Enjoy the games this week!

The Athletic LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086693 San Jose Sharks

Three things to know: Sharks' minor league coach reaches remarkable milestone

By PAUL GACKLE | PUBLISHED: December 4, 2017 at 10:19 am |  
UPDATED: December 4, 2017 at 10:38 am

WASHINGTON — Joakim Ryan can only imagine the scene on the AHL Barracuda's bus ride home from Bakersfield Sunday night.

Get Sharks news in your inbox. Sign up now for the free Sharks Report newsletter.

With a 2-1 win over the Bakersfield Condors, the Barracuda earned head coach Roy Sommer's 700th career AHL victory, giving the league's all-time winningest coach plenty of reason to celebrate.

"That must have been fun," said defenseman Joakim Ryan, who suited up for 139 games on Sommer's blue line before joining the Sharks this season.

"They might have stopped for some beers on the way. I'm sure they had a good time. Roy is always happy when you win, no matter what."

The win made Sommer the first AHL coach to reach the 700-win mark. The 60-year-old set the league's all-time wins record two years ago, passing the previous mark of 636 set by AHL legend Fred "Bun" Cook.

"That's a lot of fun wins," said Sharks alternate captain Logan Couture, who played in 46 games for Sommer with the Worcester Sharks. "Every time you win with Roy as your coach, you're having a good time."

Roy Sommer of the @sjbarracuda has become the first head coach in @TheAHL history with 700 career regular-season wins

1. Roy Sommer, 700
2. Bun Cook, 636
3. Frank Mathers, 610
4. John Paddock, 589
5. John Anderson, 424 pic.twitter.com/ZOIwbouAVu

— AHL Communications (@AHLPR) December 4, 2017

Sommer reached 700 wins by spending 19-plus seasons behind the bench of the Sharks' AHL franchise. His record could be a tough one to break considering that coaches at the AHL level are usually looking for a promotion to the NHL. It's rare to find a coach who's willing to ride buses around the country without the promise of greener pastures down the road.

"It takes someone special to stick with it that long in the minors," Ryan said. "You've got to have a true love and passion for the game of hockey, which Roy obviously has. It's a true love of the game."

Sommer spent two years as an assistant coach on Darryl Sutter's staff with the Sharks from 1996 to 1998, but he enjoys the process of developing young players and watching them succeed at the next level.

"I think he's comfortable with who he is," Couture said. "He's had his chance to coach in the NHL and I'm pretty sure he's comfortable and confident with what he does down in the AHL."

The Sharks currently have 11 players on their roster who've played for Sommer with the AHL Barracuda over the last two seasons.

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In addition to developing the organization's prospects, Sharks coach Pete DeBoer indicated that Sommer plays just as important a role in building character and helping turn boys into men.

"He's part coach, part father figure, which is great at that level when you have young guys turning pro," DeBoer said.

At this point, Sommer isn't showing any signs that his enthusiasm for coaching the Barracuda is waning as he approaches his third decade behind the bench, which means he should have a lot of wins left in him.

"I hope one day he gets to 1,000," Justin Braun said. "Maybe he'll hang it up after that, but we'll see. I think he'll coach forever."

2. Marcus Sorensen will make his 2017-18 debut Monday night.

With Joonas Donskoi, Melker Karlsson and Mikkel Boedker sidelined by day-to-day injuries, Marcus Sorensen will make his 2017-18 debut with the Sharks Monday at the Capital One Arena in Washington.

Sorensen earned his recall to the Sharks Saturday by scoring 14 points in 17 games with the Barracuda.

The 25-year-old Swede made a splash with the Sharks late in the season last year, suiting up for 19 games while skating in all six of the team's Stanley Cup playoff games against the Edmonton Oilers. As the fastest-skating forward in the organization, Sorensen will inject some much-needed speed into the lineup.

But Sorensen failed to make the Sharks roster out of training camp, struggling to find the hard inside game that he developed midway through his first season of North American hockey with the Barracuda last winter.

"Even talking to him after (training camp), he agreed that he was inconsistent in bringing that game to the rink," DeBoer said. "He went down there, played really well, was their best player recently. Hopefully, he can play his game up here with us."

Tim Heed (upper body) will also be scratched with a day-to-day injury Monday.

DeBoer said that defenseman Paul Martin is "very close" to rejoining the Sharks lineup.

3. Joe Thornton's fine is 'no big deal'

Joe Thornton received a \$5,000 fine from the NHL Department of Player Safety Sunday, the maximum allowable under the NHL's collective bargaining agreement with the NHL Players' Association. Thornton received the fine for slashing Tampa Bay Lightning forward Tyler Johnson on the back of his left leg at 19:51 of the second period Saturday.

It was the first time Thornton has faced supplementary discipline from the league since he received a two-game suspension in 2010 for delivering a hit to the head of David Perron.

Thornton's reaction to the penalty?

"Whatever," the Sharks alternate captain said. "It's no big deal."

San Jose Mercury News: LOADED: 12.05.2017



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • Dec. 5, 2017

1086694 San Jose Sharks

Sharks forward is responding to DeBoer's criticism: 'I wanted to prove a point'

By PAUL GACKLE | PUBLISHED: December 4, 2017 at 7:41 am |  
UPDATED: December 4, 2017 at 7:45 am

WASHINGTON — Chris Tierney is playing with something to prove this year and his early season performance is holding the Sharks fragile forward alignment together.

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After getting called out by head coach Pete DeBoer last spring and lowballed by management in contract negotiations over the summer, Tierney entered training camp determined to show the Sharks braintrust and his teammates that he's capable of being the team's third line center. Through 25 games, he's delivered, giving the Sharks some much-needed secondary scoring by recording seven goals, which is tied for second on the team.

"I came into the year wanting to prove a point. I believe in myself. I think I'm a good hockey player," Tierney said. "I wanted to come in and show people that I could play an offensive role on the team."

Tierney took big strides between his rookie year in 2014-15 and his sophomore season a year later, serving as the Sharks third line center in the last two-plus rounds of the playoffs as the team made its run to the Stanley Cup Final.

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But Tierney's development hit a snag last year as he failed to make another jump forward, scoring just 23 points (11g, 12a) in 80 games, which left him stuck in the fourth line center role.

After the Sharks got eliminated from the Stanley Cup playoffs in April, DeBoer called Tierney out by name, insisting that the team needed to get more out of him if it was going to contend in the Western Conference in 2017-18.

General manager Doug Wilson didn't exactly give Tierney a ringing endorsement either when he signed him to a one-year, \$735,000 contract in restricted free agency, an underwhelming offer considering that he was matched up against Pittsburgh Penguins superstar Evgeni Malkin in the Stanley Cup Final just a year earlier.

In addition, the Sharks signed Ryan Carpenter to a two-year contract. With Joe Thornton, Logan Couture and Tomas Hertl slotted in as the team's top three centers, simple math suggested that someone would be getting bumped out of the mix this year.

Tierney went into his offseason training program with former-NHL all star Gary Roberts determined to ensure that he wouldn't be the odd man out.

"A lot of it was just coming into the gym every day and going there with a purpose," Tierney said. "Give 100 percent and get 100 percent out of the workout, and really listening, and focusing on my nutrition."

Playing in the Pacific Division against big heavy centers, such as Anze Kopitar, Ryan Getzlaf and Ryan Kesler, Tierney knew he needed to get stronger on the puck, and to do so would require adding lower-body strength.

The 23-year-old center added 10 pounds of muscle while improving his speed by doing explosive exercises, such as lunges and squats, and quick feet drills, such as jumping over pylons and hurdles.

Tierney made a conscientious effort to follow Roberts' strict-dietary plan throughout his training, eating organic meals, some vegan, while cutting out eggs, wheat and dairy.

"He preaches the same thing all the time, but I think I just dialed in more. I took it a bit more seriously this summer," Tierney said.

The work is paying off.

Lacking scoring up front, DeBoer moved Hertl onto Couture's left wing after just two games, giving Tierney another chance to lock down the third line center position. He's capitalizing on the opportunity, producing seven goals, 10 points, a plus-three rating and a 52.30 percent possession rating in 25 games.

"He's done a good job. He's got more goals than (Joe) Pavelski on a team that's lacking some scoring. That's sorely needed and he's one guy that's delivered," DeBoer said. "We're recognizing it and trying to reward that."

Third line center is a key position for the Sharks who made their run to the Stanley Cup Final in 2016 on the strength of their depth down the middle. With Thornton, Couture and Patrick Marleau as their top three centers, the Sharks produced a 26-14-4 record over the last 44 games of the season, creating mismatches on each of their top three lines.

It's a formula the Sharks are looking to replicate this winter, making Tierney's role extra pivotal. If Tierney sputters on the third line, DeBoer will be forced to pull Hertl off Couture's wing, deflating the Sharks most potent line combination.

"For sure, we need depth in the middle and he's part of that," DeBoer said. "It's no secret that goaltending, defensemen and centermen are what everyone is looking for."

Although Tierney is delivering right now, he knows that he will ultimately be judged by his ability to sustain his performance over an 82-game season. If he can do that, he'll put himself in a position to be rewarded when contract negotiations resume in the offseason.

"It's a one-year contract, so obviously, it's going to be up at the end of the year," Tierney said. "I want to give myself every possibility to get the best contract that I can. I've got to just keep going and try to build on this right now."

— Joe Thornton received a \$5,000 fine from the NHL Department of Player Safety Sunday, the maximum allowable under the NHL's collective bargaining agreement with the NHL Players' Association, for slashing Tampa Bay Lightning forward Tyler Johnson at the 19:51 of the second period Saturday.

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1086695 San Jose Sharks

Sharks lose to Caps in regulation for just the second time in 18 years

By Paul Gackle | PUBLISHED: December 4, 2017 at 6:44 pm |  
UPDATED: December 5, 2017 at 3:20 am

WASHINGTON — A road trip that looked promising after a 2-0 start ended in mediocrity as the Washington Capitals picked up just their second regulation win over the Sharks since 1999 with a 4-1 win Monday night.



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The Capitals (16-11-1) broke things open by scoring three times in a 23-minute span in the middle of the game, sending the Sharks (14-10-2) back to the West Coast with a 2-2 record on their East Coast jaunt.

Devante Smith Pelly opened the scoring at 16:49 of the first, redirecting a point shot from John Carlson after Jannik Hansen and Marc-Edouard Vlasic left him open in front of the Sharks net.

The goal was the first career tally that Martin Jones has given up in Washington. Jones pitched shutouts at Capital One Arena in each of the Sharks last two trips to the nation's capitol.

Alexander Ovechkin stretched the Capitals lead to 2-0 at 7:11 of the second, burying a breakaway opportunity. Ovechkin pounced on a loose puck after Kevin Labanc sent a pass into Brent Burns skates before sending a backhand into the roof of the net.

With his 578th career goal, Ovechkin grabbed hold of 20th place on the NHL's all-time goals list, passing Mark Recchi.

After Timo Meier cut the lead in half by firing a rebound off the end board into the top-left corner at 11:32 of the middle stanza, the Capitals made it 3-1 by capitalizing on a power play opportunity in the final minute of the period.

Brett Connolly scored the insurance goal with 52 seconds left in the frame by flipping a backhanded shot into the top shelf after he broke loose following a scramble for the puck at the Sharks blue line.

The tally marked the first time this season that the Sharks penalty kill has surrendered goals in back-to-back games.

The Capitals scored a second power play goal at 11:36 of the third when Jakub Varana scored from in close off a pass from Tom Wilson.

Joe Thornton fought for the first time since he dropped the gloves with Jamie Benn on Feb. 23, 2013, mixing it up with Wilson.

Wilson appeared to initiate the fight with Thornton because the Sharks alternate captain knocked T.J. Oshie out of the game with a clean hit in the second period.

San Jose Mercury News: LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086696 San Jose Sharks

Three takeaways: Sharks take exception to Caps' 'premeditated' fight with Thornton

By Paul Gackle | PUBLISHED: December 4, 2017 at 8:54 pm |  
UPDATED: December 5, 2017 at 3:19 am

WASHINGTON — What started as a promising road trip wound up being "pretty average" in the words of Sharks captain Joe Pavelski.

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After winning the first two games of their East Coast trip, the Sharks dropped back-to-back games to the Tampa Bay Lightning and the Washington Capitals, finishing with a 2-2 record.

Here's what we learned as the Sharks lost a chippy 4-1 game to the Capitals Monday night.

1. The Sharks take exception to the Capitals decision to fight Joe Thornton.

Pete DeBoer let the Capitals bench know how he felt about their decision to engage Thornton in a fight early in the third period and he didn't hold back when he spoke with reporters after the game.

DeBoer took issue with the fact that Tom Wilson initiated a fight with Thornton at 2:14 of the third in response to a hit that he put on T.J. Oshie with 3:27 left in the second, knocking him out of the game.

"If someone were to grab Joe in the heat of the moment after the play because they thought a liberty was taken, then I've got no problem with that," the Sharks coach said. "But to go into the dressing room, think about it, come out in the first shift and do that premeditated crap is just garbage."

Thornton turned and hit Oshie with his backside as the Capitals forward was falling to the ice after making contact with Logan Couture.

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By the time that Thornton hit Oshie, the Capitals forward was down on the ice, resulting in a hip-to-head collision into the glass. Oshie spent a couple minutes on the ice before leaving the game with an "upper-body" injury.

Here's a look at Thornton's hit on Oshie

Watch #CapsSharks live: <https://t.co/NGTPHxGvna>  
[pic.twitter.com/L04bzUEKn](https://pic.twitter.com/L04bzUEKn)

— NBC Sports Capitals (@NBCSCapitals) December 5, 2017

The referees didn't call a penalty on the play.

"He was just falling a little bit. It's not like I ran him or anything," Thornton said. "I bumped him and it felt like my hip hit him in the head. Just unfortunate what happened.

"You don't want to see anyone hurt, obviously. It's just too bad. Hopefully, he gets back quick."

2. Thornton got the 'whole bench going' by sticking up for himself.

Thornton is a rare breed.

He's among the NHL's top-20 scorers of all time and one of the best playmakers the league has ever known, ranking 12th in assists.

Nevertheless, when the Capitals decided to come after him, he didn't skate away and leave matters in the hands of tough guy Brenden Dillon. Instead, he dropped the gloves and went toe-to-toe with Wilson, who entered the game with 55 career fights, according to [hockeyfights.com](http://hockeyfights.com).

"It's no big deal," Thornton said. "I can take care of myself. It's never been an issue with me.

"I'm a big boy."

The fight was Thornton's first since he dropped the gloves with Jamie Benn of the Dallas Stars on Feb. 23, 2013.

Thornton's willingness to stick up for himself left an impression on the team, which featured seven players who skated with the AHL Barracuda last year. Kevin Labanc said it got the "whole bench going."

After the fight, Timo Meier, who scored the Sharks lone goal, engaged in fisticuffs with Brooks Orpik and Barclay Goodrow received a fighting major for dropping the gloves with Alex Chiasson. The Sharks received a total of 37 penalty minutes in the third, including Dillon's game misconduct penalty for slashing, which will likely result in a fine.

"He's probably the most respected guy in that room. All the guys look up to him," said Meier, referring to Thornton. "If he goes out there and shows that he's willing to pay the price and sacrifice his body, I think it's great for us to see.

"We want to be like him."



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3. Labanc needs another trip to the minor leagues.

The Sharks reassigned to Labanc to the AHL Barracuda for a pair of games on Nov. 5 to give him a chance to regain his confidence.

It didn't work.

Labanc is riding a 17-game goalless drought after opening the season with three goals in four games. He's picked up just one point in the eight games since he rejoined the Sharks on Nov. 12.

With Joonas Donskoi, Mikkel Boedker and Melker Karlsson sidelined by injuries, Labanc received a golden opportunity to break out of his slump Monday, skating on Logan Couture's right wing.

Instead, he failed to capitalize on several quality-scoring chances, and his pass into Brent Burns' skates in the middle of the second led to Alexander Ovechkin's breakaway goal, giving the Capitals a 2-0 lead.

Labanc is hesitating to shoot the puck, suggesting that his confidence is waning. He had a golden opportunity to use his shot, which is among the best on the team, during a two-on-one chance late in the second. Instead, he waited and then tried to pass, allowing the defender to break up the play.

When Donskoi, Boedker or Karlsson returns, it might be a good idea to send Labanc back to the Barracuda where he can regain the mojo that he displayed early in the season after a strong training camp.

San Jose Mercury News: LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086697 San Jose Sharks

Washington Capitals get rare win over San Jose Sharks

Associated Press Updated 9:54 pm, Monday, December 4, 2017

On the same night Tom Wilson beat up a player he grew up admiring, Alex Ovechkin beat the team he grew up rooting for.

Ovechkin scored his NHL-leading 20th goal of the season and assisted on another, helping the Capitals snap their recent run of futility against the Sharks with a 4-1 victory in Washington on Monday night.

The Capitals beat the Sharks for the fourth time in 18 meetings since Ovechkin entered the league in 2005-06. It's just Washington's second regulation win against San Jose in that time and first since Oct. 15, 2009.

"It was a situation where everybody step up and everybody play for each other," said Ovechkin, who considered the Sharks his favorite team as a kid in Moscow.

Halting the Sharks' recent mastery came at a cost: T.J. Oshie left in the second period with an upper-body injury and didn't return. As Oshie was already engaged with Logan Couture and falling down along the boards, he took Joe Thornton's backside to the head.

Tom Wilson took exception to Thornton's hit and fought him in the third period of a chippy game that also included a fight between Alex Chiasson and Barclay Goodrow.

Devante Smith-Pelly and Jakub Vrana also scored for Washington, which has won two in a row and six of eight.

Predators 5, Bruins 3: Craig Smith scored twice and added an assist to lead host Nashville over Boston. Kevin Fiala had a goal and an assist, and Nick Bonino and Filip Forsberg also scored for the Predators. Pekka Rinne made 36 saves. Charlie McAvoy, Zdeno Chara and David Pastrnak scored for the Bruins.

Islanders 5, Panthers 4: Mathew Barzal scored the winning goal in a shootout to lift visiting New York over Florida after Panthers goalie Roberto Luongo was injured in the second period. Jaroslav Halak made 39 saves and stopped all three attempts in the shootout. Denis Malgin, Aleksander Barkov and Aaron Ekblad scored for the Panthers. Keith Yandle had a goal and two assists, and Vincent Trocheck added three assists.

Flyers 5, Flames 2: Scott Laughton scored twice and Brian Elliott made 43 saves as Philadelphia snapped a 10-game skid with a win at Calgary. The Flames held a wide edge in play, outshooting Philadelphia 45-21, but the Flyers scored three times in a 1:11 span of the second period.

San Francisco Chronicle LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086698 San Jose Sharks

Sharks and Capitals, forever linked, could not be more different this season

By Marcus White December 04, 2017 11:34 AM

When we look back on this era, the San Jose Sharks and Washington Capitals will always be linked.

They've never played each other in the postseason, of course, and that's part of the reason why: The two franchises are kindred spirits, labelled as perennial disappointments for their perceived perennial postseason failures.

The Capitals are "Sharks East," never having made it past the second round of the postseason in the Alex Ovechkin era. The Sharks have, and even made it to the Stanley Cup Final in 2016, but they've never won it, so they're "Capitals West."

Now, though, the two franchises find themselves on divergent paths. Yes, both teams find themselves in playoff position entering Monday night's matchup, and only about \$1.5 million separates them in salary cap space this offseason.

But if you look beneath the surface, the differences are clear, as the Sharks and Capitals are utilizing different blueprints to address their own failures.

The Sharks can't score, but their opponents haven't scored much, either. Their plus-eight goal differential is tied for the fourth-best mark in the conference, and their possession numbers (top-five in both major metrics, per Puck On Net) bode well for future success.

The Capitals can score, but they can't stop anyone from scoring. They're one of two playoff teams in the East with a negative goal differential (minus-three), and find themselves in the bottom-10 of both corsi-for and fenwick-for percentage.

That's an unusual place for Washington, long one of the league's best possession teams, but it's been by design. The Capitals went all in last year, and they're paying the price this season.

Facing a salary capocalypse, Washington let Karl Alzner, Kevin Shattenkirk, Justin Williams, and Daniel Winnik walk in free agency, lost Nate Schmidt in the expansion draft, and traded Marcus Johansson to New Jersey for salary cap relief.

They still re-signed Andre Burakovsky, Evgeny Kuznetsov, and T.J. Oshie, but they're facing what Chicago has so often. They just don't have the trophy to show for it.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Look no further than their salary cap situation. They currently have just over \$800,000 in space, and assuming the cap remains flat, have just over \$16 million to sign 11 players next summer.

By contrast, the Sharks currently have a little over \$6 million, and will have just over \$17.5 million to sign five players next summer.

Sharks general manager Doug Wilson hasn't gone all in the same way his Capitals counterpart, Brian Maclellan, has. San Jose's kept their window ajar by kicking the can down the road, structuring their contracts in a way where decisions on major players are spread out.

Their roster is not as deep as the Capitals' last season, but the Sharks have enough cap flexibility to get there without going all in. Yet, no matter the differences in their respective approach, San Jose will continue to be linked to Washington as long as they also don't succeed.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086699 San Jose Sharks

Chippy game goes way of the Capitals, Sharks end roadtrip with loss

By NBC Sports Bay Area staff December 04, 2017 6:39 PM

WASHINGTON — Alex Ovechkin scored his NHL-leading 20th goal and assisted on another, helping the Washington Capitals snap their recent run of futility against the San Jose Sharks with a 4-1 victory Monday night.

The Capitals beat the Sharks for the fourth time in 18 meetings since Ovechkin entered the league in 2005-06. It's just Washington's second regulation win against San Jose in that time and first since Oct. 15, 2009. It ended a four-game skid in the series.

Halting the Sharks' recent mastery came at a cost: T.J. Oshie left in the second period with an upper-body injury and didn't return. As Oshie was already engaged with Logan Couture and falling down along the boards, he took Joe Thornton's backside to the head.

Tom Wilson took exception to Thornton's hit and fought him in the third period of a chippy game that also included a fight between Alex Chiasson and Barclay Goodrow.

Before those tensions rose, Ovechkin continued his climb up the career list with his 578th goal, passing Hall of Famer Mark Recchi for 20th. He's the 11th player in NHL history to score at least 20 goals in each of his first 13 seasons.

Ovechkin, who rooted for the Sharks while growing up in Moscow, turned several defenders inside out and made a perfect pass to set up Brett Connolly's power-play goal. Devante Smith-Pelly and Jakub Vrana also scored for Washington, which has won two in a row and six of eight.

Capitals backup goaltender Philipp Grubauer made 24 saves to pick up his first career victory against the Sharks. San Jose's Martin Jones allowed four goals on 29 shots in his second game back from injury, and Timo Meier scored his first goal in eight games and third of the season.

NOTES: Connolly has goals in back-to-back games since returning from being a healthy scratch for the previous two. ... Sharks coach Peter DeBoer said D Paul Martin is close to returning from an undisclosed injury that has kept him out since Oct. 12. ... Capitals F Travis Boyd made his NHL debut, replacing Chandler Stephenson, who's day-to-day with an upper-body injury. ... F Andre Burakovsky rejoined the Capitals for their morning skate as he works back from October surgery to repair his broken left thumb. He hopes to return within the next week.

UP NEXT

Sharks: Return home to face the Carolina Hurricanes on Thursday night.

Capitals: Host the Chicago Blackhawks on Wednesday night.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086637 Los Angeles Kings

What we learned from the Kings' defeat of the Blackhawks

Curtis Zupke

The Chicago Blackhawks were on tired legs Sunday, but for much of the second period at home against the Kings they were able to channel their trademark quick-strike capability.

Slick passing. Great transition game.

The Kings could have suffered a loss in the finale of a four-game trip, but they scratched out a 3-1 win behind Jonathan Quick and a rare goal by defenseman Christian Folin.

Here's what we learned:

Let's use the real estate phrase associated with location to describe how the Kings have won five straight games. Quick and Darcy Kuemper have shouldered much of the effort, and often mask shortcomings that pop up, especially on the road.

Quick was at this level early in the season, when the Kings were scoring more. That support has dipped some, but he is there and it's a notable contrast to last season's opening-night injury that doomed the Kings.

"It's unbelievable," Folin said. "I get surprised every time. I think the puck's going to be in the net, and somehow it stays out."

Overshadowed by partner Drew Doughty, Muzzin quietly did the blue-collar work in bodying Blackhawks, shutting down lanes and breaking up shots and passes. He had six blocked shots and helped kill four power plays, however ineffective by Chicago.

It was a bland start by their standards. Both teams were exhausted from the schedule and Chicago's inability to get set up in the Kings zone with the man-advantage drew some boos from the United Center crowd.

But from the second period on, the game was another example of the exciting hockey displayed when these teams get together. Long stretches without a whistle. Big scoring chances followed by big stops. There were only 34 faceoffs through two periods, and 60 for the game.

It's too bad these teams won't meet again until February.

LA Times: LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086638 Los Angeles Kings

No grudge match for Christian Folin and Darcy Kuemper when Kings host Wild

Helene Elliott

It makes for a good storyline, but there's disappointment in store for anyone who expects Kings goaltender Darcy Kuemper and defenseman



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Christian Folin to approach Tuesday's game against Minnesota as a grudge match because the Wild let them depart as free agents last summer.

Kuemper, who's expected to back up Jonathan Quick, and Folin, who's trying to keep a regular spot, had only good things to say about Minnesota on Monday. Folin said he saw Wild coach Bruce Boudreau last summer and joked he was looking forward to this matchup, but didn't carry any animosity with him when he signed with the Kings and moved west.

"It's just a business. I'm not going to have any sour emotions towards anyone in the Minnesota organization," said Folin, whose goal against Chicago on Sunday might keep him in the lineup when the Kings try to extend their winning streak to six. "I really enjoyed playing there. I had three great years and I have lots to be thankful for. It was a good time in my life and I made lots of really good friends."

He has felt comfortable with the Kings from the start. "I like being around the guys in the room. You can tell there's a lot of experience," said Folin, who shares a South Bay home with Kuemper. "There's a lot of guys around the room that's won a couple Stanley Cups, and it shows. It's fun to be part of it every day and I'm just pushing to get better, something I've been doing my whole career."

Kuemper never seized the Wild's starting job and lost his backup role late last March when Alex Stalock was promoted.

"I think I knew I wasn't going to be back in Minnesota, which was a lot of mixed feelings," said Kuemper, who is 4-0-2 with a 1.72 goals-against average and .944 save percentage in eight games this season. "It was the only team I'd ever played for and a lot of good experiences there, but I'm really happy to be here now and really happy with how things have been going."

LA Times: LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086639 Los Angeles Kings

What we learned this week in the NHL: The Kings are back

Helene Elliott

What we learned in the NHL over the last week of play:

The Kings' slump is over

Remember the 1-6-1 slump that triggered flashbacks to the bad old days of the last few seasons? Neither do the Kings, who have a five-game winning streak and have regained the Pacific Division lead. "I think part of it is we're getting scoring from up and down our lineup, which I think is key to win in this league," right wing Dustin Brown said Monday. "We're getting big goals from so-called third- and fourth-liners. That helps." It also helps that they've given up only six goals in that streak. "We're not giving up very many scoring chances, which is a staple. When we're on our game, it's always there," Brown said.

The Ducks, or what's left of them while they endure a plague of injuries, made a good move in acquiring established center Adam Henrique and depth forward Joseph Blandisi for defenseman Sami Vatanen and a conditional draft pick. The Ducks' depth on defense made turnover-prone Vatanen expendable. They should be formidable up the middle when Ryan Kesler (hip surgery) and Ryan Getzlaf (facial bone surgery) return, but they'll have to end a 1-4-2 slump to stay near the playoff pack. They're scoring only 2.59 goals per game and giving up a league-worst average of 36.3 shots against per game.

A 10-1 loss to the Montreal Canadiens on Saturday left the Detroit Red Wings' faces as red as the color of their classic uniforms and extended their winless streak to 0-4-3. "Basically embarrassed everyone that played for the Winged Wheel tonight," team captain Henrik Zetterberg said, according to the Detroit News. "We have to live with that."

The Philadelphia Flyers' winless streak hit 0-5-5 after a 3-0 loss to the Boston Bruins on Saturday. Fans didn't even stick around the Wells Fargo Center to boo them at the end of the game or to repeat their previous calls for the firing of coach Dave Hakstol. Their streak ended Monday with a 5-2 win at Calgary.

The Pittsburgh Penguins are again playing like Stanley Cup champions and have a season-best four-game winning streak. Rookie goalie Tristan Jarry has stepped in for injured Matt Murray, and Sidney Crosby has scored at least one goal in five consecutive games. "We're back," forward Evgeni Malkin told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

The Dallas Stars, who had a slow start, stretched their winning streak to five games by sweeping a home-and-home series with the Chicago Blackhawks. "It's how you deal with adversity," coach Ken Hitchcock told the Dallas Morning News. "You can build or you can crumble, and we're building."

Vancouver forward Daniel Sedin joined his twin, Henrik, in the ranks of players who have scored 1,000 points. It was fitting that Henrik set up the power-play goal that made them the only brothers to have each scored 1,000 points. They're class acts off the ice, too, and have generously supported causes related to children's health.

LA Times: LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086640 Los Angeles Kings

Anze Kopitar says late-November victory over Ducks fueled Kings' fire

By ROBERT MORALES | Orange County Register

PUBLISHED: December 4, 2017 at 5:12 pm | UPDATED: December 4, 2017 at 5:35 PM

EL SEGUNDO — Kings center Anze Kopitar didn't have to ponder the question very long. In his mind, yes, his team's 2-1 shootout victory over the rival Ducks on Nov. 25 at Staples Center did have something to do with shaking the Kings from their doldrums.

The Kings had lost seven of eight before that game. That the victory over the Ducks included plenty of extracurricular activity perhaps added fuel to a fire that has the Kings on a five-game winning streak.

"Absolutely," Kopitar said Monday, a day after the Kings defeated the Chicago Blackhawks 3-1 to complete a 4-0 trip; it's only the third time in franchise history the team has done that. "We actually played a pretty good game the game before in Phoenix (a 3-2 overtime loss Nov. 24). Obviously, we didn't get the result that we wanted, but that point was pretty big.

"And then coming home, and the start of the game (against the Ducks) that it was, with three fights and a lot of scraps early and then getting down and needing the full 60 minutes to tie it up. And a shootout is obviously a lottery and we managed to win and, for sure, that was a kick-start to this team."

There is more to this surge that has the Kings (17-8-3) atop the Pacific Division with 37 points, just a point behind Winnipeg for the best record in the Western Conference. Kopitar explained.



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"I think the biggest difference is we're just finding a way to win and not really crumble," said Kopitar, who leads the Kings in points with 31. "And I'm not saying that we crumbled before, but it was just ... I don't know how many of those seven losses were one-goal games, where we just couldn't get it done."

Five of those losses were by one goal.

"Obviously, we're scoring more goals, that certainly helps," said Kopitar, whose team hosts Minnesota (13-10-3) on Tuesday at 7 p.m. at Staples Center. "You know, give Quickie (Jonathan Quick) a lot more support, obviously. But even last night, it's 0-0 going into the third and somehow find a way to win."

Right wing Dustin Brown believes more balanced scoring is helping.

"I think part of it is we're getting scoring from up and down our lineup, which is, I think, key to win in this league," he said. "We're getting big goals – especially on the road trip – we're getting big goals from so-called third and fourth liners. That helps."

"The one goal that comes to mind is (Adrian) Kempe's goal in St. Louis. It was late in the period and it restores our two-goal lead going into the third; it's just a big goal."

That's not to mention the Kings' first goal Sunday was scored by defenseman Christian Folin, breaking a scoreless tie.

Brown noted the team has been very stingy of late, too. The Kings allowed just five goals on the trip that included wins over Detroit (4-1), Washington (5-2), St. Louis (4-1) and Chicago (3-1).

"We're not giving up very many scoring chances, which is a staple," he said. "When we're on our game, it's always there."

Kings coach John Stevens did not even try to downplay his team's success over the past week and a half.

"We loved the trip," he said.

He broke it down.

"I really liked the way we played in our own zone," he said. "I thought we defended really well, we were really fast, we had really good posture inside the dots, I thought our game in the neutral zone continues to get better."

"I think our forecheck's getting better, but it's probably one area of our game I'd like to see us get more out of."

## ICE CHIPS

The Wild come in with 29 points and are coming off home victories over Vegas (4-2) and St. Louis (2-1, OT). ... Backup goalie Darcy Kuemper is in his first season with the Kings after playing his first five for the Wild. With Quick having played four of the past five games, Stevens was asked if he's considering playing Kuemper against his former team. He said it's an option, but him having come from Minnesota "would not be the determining factor."

Orange County Register: LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086641 Los Angeles Kings

Jonathan Quick, Kings stop Blackhawks for fifth straight win

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS |

PUBLISHED: December 4, 2017 at 5:00 pm | UPDATED: December 4, 2017 at 5:23 PM

CHICAGO — There's nothing magical about the surging Kings' rise to the top of the Pacific Division. The formula of tight defense, sharp goaltending and timely scoring is working just fine.

Jonathan Quick made 24 saves, Christian Folin scored the game's first goal midway through the third period and the Kings beat the Chicago Blackhawks 3-1 on Sunday night for their fifth straight win.

Folin's shot from the right point sailed over Anton Forsberg's glove with Anze Kopitar screening at 9:29. Dustin Brown scored an empty-net goal with 2:03 left to make it 2-0, and Kopitar added another empty-netter after Chicago's Jonathan Toews scored with Forsberg pulled for an extra skater.

"I closed my eyes," joked Folin, a defenseman who scored his second goal. "I saw two guys right in front, and one of their forecheckers coming hard at me, so I kind of shot it in there hoping for the best."

"It's fun when it goes in. I don't score too many goals, so I'll take it."

The Kings have allowed six goals during their streak, which has moved them to second in the Western Conference. Their run follows a 1-6-1 slide.

"It's fun," Folin said. "I think we're pushing each other as a group. That's something we're going to need going forward."

Quick turned aside some tough chances, especially when Chicago outshot the Kings 15-6 in the second period, before losing a bid for his third shutout this season.

"Way too big of a letdown in the second, but Quickie kept us in it," Kopitar said. "In the third period, we just kind of find a way."

Chicago has lost four straight. Forsberg made 21 saves in his second straight start in place of Corey Crawford, who's out with a lower-body injury.

"It's a little bit frustrating not getting a win, but I can't do nothing else," Forsberg said. "I've just got to keep playing the way I've been and focus on my game."

The Blackhawks were in position to pull this one out after picking up the pace in the second period – and entering the third with a scoreless tie and some momentum.

"The game's right there for us to make the plays and have a big third period, and it turned out to be a tough, tough loss," Coach Joel Quenneville said.

The Kings' Adrian Kempe narrowly missed on a point-blank tip-in attempt midway through the second, then a loose puck tipped off the right post during a goalmouth scrum.

A point shot by Chicago's Cody Franson glanced off Brandon Saad's skate at the edge of the crease and clanged off the left post with 5:20 left. Quick then came through with a snappy glove save on Ryan Hartman's backhand with 1:58 left.

Marian Gaborik broke in alone just under two minutes into the third after stealing the puck from Patrick Sharp at the Chicago blue line. Forsberg stopped Gaborik point-blank with a glove save.

## NOTES

Kings forward Torrey Mitchell, acquired from Montreal on Nov. 23 for a conditional 2018 draft pick, made his Kings debut. ... The Blackhawks finished a stretch of five games in seven nights. ... The Kings next host Minnesota on Tuesday night. ... Before the game, Quenneville said he expected Crawford back skating this week, but had no timetable for the goalie's return to action.

Orange County Register: LOADED: 12.05.2017



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • Dec. 5, 2017

1086642 Los Angeles Kings

Eric Stephens' NHL power rankings (Dec. 4, 2017)

By ERIC STEPHENS | estephens@scng.com | Orange County Register

PUBLISHED: December 4, 2017 at 2:42 pm | UPDATED: December 4, 2017 at 5:33 PM

Patience still matters, it seems, in an increasingly impatient world.

Within the hockey universe, Kevin Cheveldayoff is considered to be among the most patient of NHL general managers. Proof of that is his unwillingness to break from a core he built in Winnipeg even when there were growing pains after a surprise berth in the 2015 Stanley Cup playoffs.

And when there were tough times with missed postseasons the past two years, Cheveldayoff resisted any notion of fifth-year coach Paul Maurice paying the price. In fact, Jets owner Mark Chipman exercised his own patience in handing both multiyear extensions before this season.

Amid expectations that have never been higher since the move from Atlanta, Winnipeg is meeting them two months in. The Jets are 13-3-2 since their last pair of back-to-back losses, both overtime losses. The only other consecutive failures came in the season's opening two games.

Blake Wheeler may be the league's most underrated player. Mark Scheifele is a star and Patrik Laine could also be one for years. Scheifele and Laine were drafted along with goalie Connor Hellebuyck, defensemen Jacob Trouba and Josh Morrissey and forwards Nikolaj Ehlers, Adam Lowry and Kyle Connor.

As a squadron, these Jets are in full flight. (Records in parentheses are as of Sunday's games).

1. Jets (17-6-4). They hung a touchdown on two teams (Minnesota, Vegas) and wrapped up a 3-0-1 week with a 5-0 drubbing of Ottawa. Impressive. (7)
2. Predators (16-7-3). Barring injury, Pekka Rinne is going to get to 300 wins this season and all with the same franchise. At 35, he's as steady as ever with flashes of brilliance thrown in. (2)
3. Lightning (18-6-2). After cooling off with no goals in six games, Nikita Kucherov potted two in win over San Jose. Tyler Johnson also snapped a 15-game cold snap with two. (3)
4. Blues (17-8-2). Back-to-back home losses to Ducks and Kings and just four goals scored in three-game losing streak, but Patrik Berglund has two goals in first three games this season. (1)
5. Kings (17-8-3). Outscored teams 16-5 on a 4-0-0 trip. Darcy Kuemper (4-0-2, 1.72 GAA, .944 SV%) is giving them quality work in backup role to Jonathan Quick. (10)
6. Blue Jackets (17-9-1). Big center Pierre-Luc Dubois, the fourth overall pick in the 2016 draft, made the team at 19 straight out of juniors and is starting to earn rave reviews. (4)
7. Maple Leafs (17-10-1). It isn't getting much attention but Nazem Kadri is putting together another strong season. On pace to top last year's career-high 32 goals. (5)
8. Golden Knights (16-9-1). A 6-7-1 road record is a bit disconcerting but the VGK's are back home and got their fifth different overtime winner Sunday against Arizona, this one from Reilly Smith. (6)

9. Sharks (14-9-2). Joe Pavelski getting his 300th goal only cements his status as a San Jose institution and Chris Tierney has become a nice do-all-the-little-things depth center. (9)

10. Devils (15-7-4). Sami Vatanen played a team-high 22:47 in his first game since the Ducks finally opted to move him. He's on their top pairing with Andy Greene. (8)

11. Stars (16-10-1). If they've solved their road issues – and they've won their past three – this explosive team is going to be a player in the Central. Tyler Seguin seems to score in bunches. (16)

12. Penguins (15-10-3). Racked up three easy wins against sad sacks Philadelphia and Buffalo (twice), which helped Tristan Jarry ease into starting role while Matt Murray gets healthy. (15)

13. Islanders (15-8-2). Offensive defenseman Nick Leddy is headed for a career season. GM Garth Snow gets a lot of grief but there's been good value for that seven-year commitment made in 2015. (12)

14. Capitals (15-11-1). Evgeny Kuznetsov racked up assists in the first few weeks and now is scoring goals. Eight of his nine have come in the past eight games. (13)

15. Rangers (14-10-2). Litmus tests coming up with games at Washington and Pittsburgh before returning home for New Jersey. (14)

16. Flames (14-11-1). Jaromir Jagr has only one goal and six assists in averaging 13 minutes of ice time over 16 games. He's also 45 so we'll cut the future Hall of Famer some slack. (11)

17. Wild (13-10-3). Need to be better than 4-5-0 within division to keep pace with the leaders. If Zach Parise (back) can get back before the new year, it'll help their cause. (18)

18. Canucks (13-10-4). It's going to be a heck of a Calder Trophy race and Brock Boeser (13 goals, 12 assists) is right in the middle of it. (19)

19. Blackhawks (12-10-5). A 7-3 bouncing of Anaheim was the only highlight as they've since dropped four in a row and backbone goalie Corey Crawford is now out for a bit. (17)

20. Canadiens (13-12-3). If Carey Price – who's 5-0 with a 1.20 goals-against average since returning from injury – drags this group into the playoffs, he should be part of the Hart Trophy mix. (27)

21. Bruins (12-8-4). Good health matters. The B's are getting bodies back – Brad Marchand in particular – and it shows in winning six of seven. Tuukka Rask is finding his form. (25)

22. Ducks (11-11-5). New center Adam Henrique is off to an ideal start but these missed opportunities to stash away points on a challenging trip might come back to haunt them. (20)

23. Hurricanes (11-9-5). You'd like to see GM Ron Francis make a trade to get this franchise moving. He's got defensive depth and Buffalo's Evander Kane and his 12 goals are available. (24)

24. Avalanche (12-11-2). They're respectable, which says something after the disaster that was 2016-17. But they're not a playoff team, especially in that rugged Central. (22)

25. Oilers (11-14-2). Can Jesse Puljujarvi, the No. 4 pick in 2016, stick in this latest NHL shot? Two goals in a win over rival Calgary don't hurt. (28)

26. Senators (9-10-6). An 0-6-1 run was snapped Friday but it doesn't get any easier as their seven-game trip takes them out to California. (21)

27. Panthers (10-13-3). Jonathan Huberdeau, Sasha Barkov and Vincent Trocheck are at or near a point per game. Alas, they still need about six more forwards and a defense. (29)

28. Red Wings (10-12-5). After a 10-1 beating in Montreal for their seventh consecutive loss, Henrik Zetterberg said, "We basically embarrassed everyone that played with the winged wheel tonight, and we've got to live with that." (23)



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29. Flyers (8-11-7). Dave Hakstol still has his job after his club went down for the 10th straight time but he may not survive their upcoming trip to western Canada. (26)

30. Coyotes (7-18-5). New Jersey castoff Scott Wedgewood got a shutout against his former team, and Dylan Strome, a No. 3 overall pick in 2015, scored his first NHL goal. (30)

31. Sabres (6-17-4). It just continues to get worse. 1-9-2 since Nov. 7. Jason Pominville's goal Saturday ended their goal drought at 232 minutes, 9 seconds. Brutal. (31)

Orange County Register: LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086643 Los Angeles Kings

WAKING UP WITH THE KINGS: DECEMBER 4

JON ROSEN

DECEMBER 4, 20170 COMMENTS

GAME STORY

Two tired teams took the ice at United Center on Thursday night. The game was played on December 3, so it's not as if NHL teams are arriving to games comfortably sustained by eight-hour sleeps and deep body massages after a weekend at Terranea, but both the Los Angeles Kings and Chicago Blackhawks were knee deep into a compacted part of the schedule. For Los Angeles, Sunday's game came at the tail end of a cross-country, four-in-six stretch, and for Chicago, the game punctuated a challenging away-home-away-home-away-home six-in-nine. So, it wasn't exactly a surprise that the Blackhawks' second shot on goal came over 13 minutes into a game that took a long time to get airborne. Before some late-period penalty trouble and the flurries that followed – including several threatening missed nets – the Kings were sustained by an emotional jump early in the game but weren't able to transfer their strong territorial play into a bevy of offensive chances, save for the Jake Muzzin-Marian Gaborik slap/pass and the iron that Tyler Toffoli found from point blank range. At the other end of the rink, Los Angeles' diverse array of penalty killers – eight forwards logged at least a minute of shorthanded time, led by Jussi Jokinen's 2:50 – didn't allow much of a sniff towards Jonathan Quick for the first two penalty kills in the opening period, provoking the Madison Street boo birds. That changed on the final kill, when Quick made a lunging blocker save on Alex DeBrincat at the buzzer, which brought out Frank Pellico's rendition of Here Come the Hawks instead of some piped-in Chelsea Dagger.

Bill Smith/NHLI

It was a dicey second period, but Quick again retained the focus and composure necessary to sort through 20 minutes of heavy Chicago zone time. And "heavy Chicago zone time" is much more dangerous and taxing than the sustained pressure from a vast majority of other NHL teams. But as it has been throughout the road trip, the Kings were lifted lifted by a wagons-circling collective defensive unit. They fended off an onslaught that peaked late in the period but was pressured throughout, and while it's silly to circle the names of several standouts when Los Angeles has been sustained by its team game – would it be possible to circle the names of everyone in the lineup? – the Muzzin-Doughty pairing was excellent, as it should be, and a pillar of the team's success on the trip. If we're going to stay with the Kings Twittersphere Whipping Boys, the center matched up most frequently against Patrick Kane and his line was Nick Shore. The Kings won the shot-attempt count over the 5:49 of five-on-five time the two were on the ice against each other, and Kane didn't factor into any scoring until he was on the ice for a pair of empty-

net goals against. Shore has represented the team's road mode quite well and has two goals, four points and a plus-five rating while averaging 15:17 over 11 road games. He's responsible, not dynamic, and has factored into the team's strong play away from Staples Center during its improbable success in the absence of Jeff Carter.

Bill Smith/NHLI

The Blackhawks are also a good third period team and entered Sunday with a plus-eight goal differential over the final 20 minutes of regulation. (And in walked the 2017-18 L.A. Kings.) Christian Folin's goal, which followed much higher-quality chances from Alex Iafallo and Marian Gaborik, was scored off a clean Dustin Brown zone entry and a dish back towards the right point. Tanner Pearson had an opportunity to play the puck but instead buzzed through the slot, which along with Kopitar's presence in front of Anton Forsberg, provided a moving screen that the defenseman timed up perfectly with his shot. Anze Kopitar scored four goals on the trip and Tyler Toffoli added three, but some of the biggest goals during the four road wins were scored by Folin, Jonny Brodzinski, Jussi Jokinen and Adrian Kempe. Los Angeles has lifted its offense by over half a goal per game through the first 28 games despite their leading scorer from a season ago being limited to just six games. There are a number of resurgent individual performances that have influenced this swell, but it speaks to the overall team game and the next-man-up opportunism that the offense has been lifted to the degree that it has.

LA Kings Insider: LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086644 Los Angeles Kings

JOHN STEVENS ON CUTTING DOWN SHOTS AND CHANCES, KOPITAR, KUEMPER, FOLIN, JOKINEN

JON ROSEN

DECEMBER 4, 20170 COMMENTS

On the overall takeaway from the road trip:

We loved the trip. I think, like any other point in the season, there's always going to be parts of your game you want to improve on, but I really liked the way we played in our own zone. I thought we defended really well, we were really fast and we had really good posture inside the dots. I thought our game in the neutral zone continues to get better, and I think our forecheck's getting better, but that's probably one area of our game I'd like to see us get more out of. But I really liked the way we were playing in our own zone. The commitment in our own zone, the detail in our own zone, how fast we were playing in our own zone, I thought it got better and better and better throughout the trip.

On any point prior to the season that foretold Anze Kopitar's impressive bounce-back:

I don't know if there was a point where the light bulb went off. I mean, I've seen Kope play at a really high level. He was probably the one guy that I thought if there's a guy that can get his game back, it's him, and we felt very optimistic about him throughout the summer – just the way he was approaching his summer. Every time you talked to him – Matt Price went over and spent a week with him. He came back here at a point in the summer. All indications were that his preparation over the summer was going to put him in a position where he could be a really good player, and what we were hoping to see was what we saw from day one. He was a good player the first day on the ice, he was a good player every day in training camp. He and Brownie haven't skipped a beat. They seemed like their game was back in order – great chemistry right out of the get-go. So, we've been kind of optimistic about him from the summer



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on. I don't think there's any one point where we said, 'that's him.' Obviously, he's produced at a really good rate for us, but his quality of play has been there from day one.

On the biggest influence in cutting down shots and chances against:

One, it's a commitment to be there and wanting to do it, and it's just getting five people back quickly and being in the right posture and starting point. I think we've done a really good job at getting people back inside first and then closing quickly. I think earlier in the year we were a little bit guilty of coming maybe back a little too wide, but I think we were doing a better and better job of getting the dangerous ice taken care of quickly on entries, which starts with your rush coverage, and then quickly fanning out from there. So, I just think our initial starting point with our coverage has been very good.

On Darcy Kuemper:

He's been terrific going back to training camp, but I think he's done a really good job of just getting ready to play. If you look at the situation, maybe one game this year where he looked a little off. But he's been outstanding. It's what you want from your back-up goalie is when he's asked to come in and play – and a lot of times they're tough situations. Billy and I talk, and Darcy knows ahead of time when he's going. He does a really good job of focusing and really getting ready to play, and then he needs to be ready to come off the bench. If you look at the game in Vegas, Jonny went in and got pulled early, and he came in and gave us a chance to get a point in the hockey game. He's been really good. He's been really focused. He's really worked hard at his game, and I know he's gained the confidence of the team and the staff. [Reporter: Tempted to use him tomorrow against his old team?] We've actually looked at the schedule. We've talked about it. It'd certainly be an option, but that wouldn't be the determining factor, just because it was Minnesota.

On Kopitar's ability to hit the middle of the ice with speed:

Probably the St. Louis game would be a reference point for him and where he's most effective. He was just a fixture in the middle of the ice. He was a fixture low in the middle of the ice, he was a fixture on the rush in the middle of the ice and he was a fixture ending up at the net in the middle of the ice. But I think with Kopi, he's a high-possession guy. He's one of those guys that has the ability to hold the puck and buy time and people get open away from him, so he is going to have the puck dot-to-boards, but there are clearly a lot of situations where he can take advantage of his size and his smarts and be a presence in the middle of the ice, carry speed in the middle of the ice, end up at the net at the middle of the ice and get pucks off the wall and end up in the middle of the ice, and I think he's done a really good job in a lot of those areas. Certainly, we hand him doing that, but it's certainly something we've emphasized with our teams.

On Dustin Brown and Marian Gaborik approaching 1,000 games played:

It's impressive. And not only that, at that point, approaching 1,000 games, they're still very productive players. It's an admirable thing in my opinion. If you look at a guy like Brownie, he plays the game extremely hard, he plays every night, he's up around the 80, 82-game mark every year and plays as hard as anybody in the league. Gabby's battled through a lot of injuries and really takes great pride in his fitness and training and being prepared and is a very elite trained athlete, and I think when you have an older player that's well trained, he gives himself a chance to be a good player approaching that mark in his career of 1,000 games.

On any concern that puck management will be an issue going forward:

It's always going to be a concern. I don't think it's an issue at all. We always want to try and manage the puck. I thought Kopi's line, in particular, part of it, the fact that they're trying to take the game on themselves and they felt like if we could get the first goal in the hockey game, it'd really make a difference, so I think every time they had the puck they were trying to score as opposed to just trusting the team game

a little bit. That team checks very well. They skate pucks off your stick really well, and I think the right play a lot of times is to get pucks in behind them, but that's a process that over time we hope we get better and better at – recognition when there's an opportunity to make a play on the rush, and recognition when [inaudible].

On Christian Folin's ability to make an impact despite not being an "every-day player":

Well, we hope that he wants to be an every-day player. We've tried to take advantage of healthy people with the schedule the way it is and get guys in and out to give us fresh legs, but he's done a good job of getting better each game. When he doesn't play, he comes back and is a better player even though he may have missed a game, but I think he has a good understanding of his identity. He's a good, physical, hard-to-play-against defender, and he makes simple decisions with the puck. He's got good skills. He skates well, he's well trained, he moves the puck well, first-pass, he can kill penalties and he can defend against top guys, so he gives us some real quality minutes, especially when you're on the road.

On Jussi Jokinen's play leading to Kopitar's empty-netter, and whether it's indicative of anything:

Well, there's a few things there. I think he's a good penalty killer, he's a really smart player, positions himself well and has got a lot of composure when he gets the puck and he also gives you another faceoff guy that you get in a situation where a puck's iced. He's very good in the faceoff circle, and I just think he thinks the game really well and has got a lot of experience and usually makes the right play at the right time in those situations.

LA Kings Insider: LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086674 NHL

After making all the stops in goal, nothing can stop Carter Hart of the Everett Silvertips

Originally published December 4, 2017 at 9:48 PM

By Seattle Times staff

The Seattle Times

It's three and counting for Everett Silvertips goaltender Carter Hart.

For the third consecutive week, and the 12th time in his career, Hart was named the goalie of the week in the Western Hockey League. Hart had two victories last week, one his franchise-record 23rd career shutout.

He currently leads the WHL in goals-against average at 1.46 and save percentage at .956.

Hart, a 19-year-old from Sherwood Park, Alberta, was selected in the second round, 48th overall, by the Philadelphia Flyers in the 2016 NHL draft.

• Zach Norvell Jr., a redshirt freshman from Chicago, was selected as the West Coast Conference player of the week. Norvell scored 38 points for the now 12th-ranked Zags in victories over Incarnate Word and Creighton. He hit 14 of 23 shots, and had 10 rebounds and eight assists. Teammate Johnathan Williams won the honor last week.

• After averaging 24.5 points and nine rebounds in two victories, Jill Barta was named the women's WCC player of the week. The junior from Fairfield, Mont., scored 30 points with seven rebounds against Portland



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State. It was her fifth career game with 30 or more points, setting a school record. Nationally, Barta is 17th in double-doubles, 28th in points per game and 30th in rebounds per game.

REIGN

• Seattle Reign player Rumi Utsugi was one of 23 players selected for Japan's national team that will play in the AEF E-1 Championship. For the Reign in 2017, she played in 20 matches, started 18 and scored one goal with two assists.

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1086675 NHL

One of Seattle's biggest sports days occurs outside of arena

Originally published December 4, 2017 at 9:44 pm Updated December 4, 2017 at 11:11 PM

By Matt Calkins

Times columnist

It wasn't standing room only like it was 19 months ago. Attendees didn't cheer or boo after speakers pleaded their cases, either.

A cursory glance would suggest this was just another city-council meeting. The reality is — from a Seattle sports standpoint — it might have been the biggest day of the year.

Monday afternoon, the city council took the most significant step toward getting the Sonics back yet. With seven "yes" votes to one "no," (council member Lorena Gonzalez was not present), it approved a Memorandum of Understanding between the city and Oak View Group to renovate KeyArena as early as October 2020.

Theoretically, newly elected Mayor Jenny Durkan could overturn the decision greenlighting the \$600 million, privately funded remodel, but that seems highly unlikely. And though there is public skepticism as to whether OVG CEO Tim Leiweke can eventually deliver an NBA team to Seattle, it's safe to say the city made its play.

"It's been a long road," said council member Debora Juarez. "We can get a world-class arena at little or no cost to the taxpayers."

Flash back about a year and half ago, when the council was voting on a different arena proposal. After buying up a chunk of land in the Sodo District, developer Chris Hansen sought a street vacation on Occidental Avenue that would allow him to break ground should he obtain an NBA team.

That meeting was exponentially more crowded and boisterous than the one Monday, as NBA die-hards, Port of Seattle representatives and myriad other groups crammed their way into City Hall. But the council voted Hansen down, prompting pain and anger in Sonics fans throughout the city.

Perhaps that's why there were so many empty seats Monday afternoon. Arena fatigue has become very real, as political twists and contentious debate has stripped people of their enthusiasm.

But for those who did make it to City Hall on Monday? Almost universal joy.

Lance Lopes, a former Seahawks executive who serves as OVG's Director of Special Projects, pumped his fist when the vote became official. Leiweke's daughter, Francesca Bodie, turned to him and said,

"We did it." The crowd, meanwhile, burst into applause — and Leiweke's face was visibly victorious.

Not wanting to get ahead of himself, though, Leiweke opted not to express his excitement verbally. In the 30 seconds he spent with the media, Tim stressed it was still up to Durkan to approve the council's decision.

But that's sort of like a coach up by 30 points choosing not to celebrate until the clock is at 0:00. The fact is — this thing is happening.

So what's next?

Leiweke has stressed from the beginning that hockey will come before basketball, and in the next few months, the NHL is expected to make an announcement regarding a franchise in Seattle. Could be via expansion, could be relocation — but with billionaire investment banker David Bonderman and movie producer Jerry Bruckheimer conveying interest as potential owners, the money would likely be there.

As for the NBA? Well, fans might have to be a little (a lot?) more patient with that. The league's collective-bargaining agreement doesn't expire until 2024 and, even then, there is no guarantee for expansion.

The talent pool is already diluted, and the league is swimming in money. But Seattle's rapid growth and basketball appetite could have the NBA salivating.

So, yes, the Sonics returning just became a very real possibility. With the city taking a concrete step toward building a world-class arena, locals can allow themselves to dream.

Monday's vote won't be shown on any highlight reels, but that doesn't mean we should downplay what occurred. It might have been a small crowd — but it was a huge day.

Matt Calkins:

Seattle Times LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086676 NHL

KeyArena MOU approved by Seattle City Council; will NHL announcement soon follow?

Originally published December 4, 2017 at 4:25 pm Updated December 4, 2017 at 10:28 PM

Geoff Baker By Geoff Baker

Seattle Times staff reporter

In swift, workmanlike fashion, the Seattle City Council on Monday approved a deal for a \$600 million renovation of Key-Arena that could soon attract an NHL team and possibly an NBA franchise down the road.

The council voted 7-1 to approve a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the city and the Los Angeles-based Oak View Group (OVG). They hope to complete the renovation by October 2020, in time to launch an NHL team for the 2020-21 season. OVG co-founder Tim Leiweke was seated in the council chambers with his daughter, company Vice President Francesca Bodie, and his Seattle projects director, Lance Lopes.

They congratulated one another when the vote passed. It was in stark contrast to a prior arena vote in May 2016, in which the council voted 5-4 to reject a plan for a new arena in Sodo pitched by entrepreneur Chris Hansen.



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Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan must sign off on the new arena plan.

"We still have work to do," Leiweke said after the vote. "The mayor was elected, and she has the right to ultimately make the final decision. We respect that process, and until she makes that decision we're not done. And so we're going to wait on any public comments until we can give the mayor a chance to weigh in on this."

Durkan is not expected to object. In a statement Monday after the vote, she said, "I look forward to reviewing and signing the MOU later this week."

Hansen's group released a statement after the vote saying it still believes its Sodo project is the best shot to bring the NBA back to Seattle. This year he revised his initial proposal, from one seeking up to \$200 million in public bond funding, to an all-private proposal.

In September he offered to renovate KeyArena into a downsized music venue for \$100 million if his Sodo arena gets built. The city dismissed the offer as too late and said Hansen's all-private Sodo plan must continue to go through bureaucratic channels pending a decision on whether to present it to the council.

What's next?

Mayor approval: Mayor Jenny Durkan must sign off on the new arena plan. She said in a statement that she hopes to sign it this week.

EIS: An environmental-impact study of the KeyArena plan is under way, and the city hopes to finish it by late next year so construction can begin.

NHL announcement: The National Hockey League is expected to announce in July whether it will relocate a team or place an expansion team in Seattle.

Project completion: The target date for completion of the renovation is October 2020, in time to launch an NHL team for the 2020-21 season.

Hansen wants a second vote by the council on whether to sell him a part of Occidental Avenue South that runs through the site of his proposed arena. The Sodo group contends it needs the full property to better attract NBA investors, and it would not begin building until landing a team.

"Having two viable arena options puts Seattle in the best position to attract an NBA team," the statement said. "If some future NBA ownership group is unable to reach a competitive deal at Seattle Center, having an alternative is vital for the City and Sonics fans. We ask the City Council to consider our revised application."

The OVG proposal does not require it to first acquire teams before the KeyArena renovation begins. Leiweke's company also has pledged \$40 million toward a city transportation fund to mitigate traffic and parking problems around the arena, plus an additional \$20 million to local charities.

An environmental-impact study of the KeyArena plan is underway, and the city hopes to complete it by late next year so construction can begin. The NHL is expected to make a franchise announcement by July regarding the addition of either an expansion or a relocated team to this market.

The league is dealing with ongoing arena issues in Arizona and Calgary and would like to align its Western and Eastern conferences in what now is a 31-team league.

There was some dissent among council members before Monday's vote, with Mike O'Brien the lone "no." Member M. Lorena González was not in attendance.

O'Brien earlier had proposed an amendment to the MOU eliminating a so-called exclusivity clause that prevents the city from giving benefits to any other group proposing an arena of more than 15,000 seats.

The clause is perceived as a way to block the Sodo group from obtaining its needed part of Occidental Avenue South, because that could be

construed as a benefit. O'Brien said he's worried the clause "would tie our hands" in being able to negotiate with another arena group over the 39-year term of the lease.

But Councilmember Debora Juarez disputed that, saying it is standard contract language that won't prevent Hansen's group from trying to acquire the street. Councilmember Kshama Sawant agreed with O'Brien that the clause is merely OVG's way of trying to dictate to the city what it can do.

"They want a guarantee of a monopoly of this sort of space," she said.

Sawant voted for the defeated motion, but she also voted "Yes" on approving the KeyArena deal, saying it's not great but represents the best the city can hope to get.

Councilmember Sally Bagshaw, who represents the district containing Key-Arena, said the city is "getting \$600 million that is invested in an asset that needs some love. Let's just be frank."

One person grinning after the vote was Brian Surratt, head of the city's economic development office. Surratt had been appointed by then-Mayor Ed Murray to spearhead the request for proposals process to find a KeyArena renovation partner.

Surratt recently had told Durkan's camp he'd be leaving his city job to take a private-sector offer with a real-estate company. But he wanted to stay on through the conclusion of the council's vote and did — announcing his resignation less than a half-hour after the final tally.

"It's been a long haul," he said with a smile.

Indeed it has been, for Seattle sports fans as well, hoping to land winter teams. But after Monday's vote, a new ride on that front may just be getting started.

Geoff Baker:

Seattle Times LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086737 Websites

The Athletic / NHL Trends: A look at who's up and who's down after November

By Dom Luszczyszyn 17 hours ago

The end of every month is a great time to look back and reflect on the previous month of hockey and see which way teams and players are trending. A one month sample is usually obfuscated by hot and cold streaks, so it's valuable to find ways to separate the signal from the noise. Those at the extreme ends of the spectrum also make for some great stories.

The Athletic has a model we use for projections and probabilities that are updated daily and this provides a look at how much has changed under the hood on a monthly basis. Our season preview series offered a snapshot of how and why each team was rated the way it was and this is an opportunity to provide further context as the season progresses. It'll hopefully be an interesting sneak peek at how the model operates and how much perception changes within from month-to-month, and it's a question many have asked after seeing the daily probabilities operate.

What you're getting is two articles in one. (Well, technically three). The first looks at the teams and players who've made the biggest changes from where they were last month. The second is a brief run through of each team with accompanying charts looking at how each player's value



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has changed over the last month – an appendix of sorts for the rest of the league that wasn't mentioned here for those that want to take a deeper dive into every team or simply curious about their own.

## Hottest Teams

### Nashville Predators

Last Month Strength: 0.510

Current Strength: 0.529

The Predators had the best record of any team in November and they're showing they're still the team to beat in the West. The Blues look great and the Jets are on the rise, but it's still Nashville as the alpha if they keep playing the way they have. Pekka Rinne is playing some of the best hockey of his career while Filip Forsberg is staking his claim as one of the league's brightest young stars with a sizzling 27 points in 26 games. Those guys are leading the way, but they're getting help as everyone is pulling their weight right now.

The big X-factor is obviously the addition of Kyle Turris, giving them a bonafide 1-2 punch down the middle. I was very skeptical of Nick Bonino in that role, but Turris is a great fit and his addition has propelled Kevin Fiala into a major contributor, with 10 points in 15 games since November 1. Along with the underrated Craig Smith, that gives Nashville a solid second line to go with the JOFA unit. Add that to the league's best defence and the Preds will be tough to beat. Now imagine how they'll look once Ryan Ellis returns.

### Vegas Golden Knights

Last Month Strength: 0.441

Current Strength: 0.459

An expansion team that doesn't suck is a unicorn in sports. That's what makes the Golden Knights this season's best and biggest story. Everyone thought they'd be awful, some thought they'd be 2016-17 Colorado bad, and even the most optimistic (this model was among them) pictured a bottom feeder. Vegas isn't that. Instead the team is 15-9-1 and sitting second in its division. This team is a rare breed that has somehow made it work despite being given mostly scraps with a few gems sprinkled in between. I still can't believe Florida just gave Jonathan Marchessault away; he looks like a legit first line talent these days. There were concerns to start the season about their process, but that's changed since and they've really clicked lately. They were a top 10 possession team last month which is pretty crazy to think about for a team of misfits. I'm still not completely sold on them given their talent level, but they keep surprising and it's time to start taking these castoffs seriously.

## Honourable Mentions:

**New York Rangers:** The start of the season looked like the end of the Rangers as contenders and the end of Alain Vigneault, but they've rattled off a number of wins lately and are right back in the thick of things.

**New York Islanders:** The Islanders were a Metro afterthought before the season started, but they look legit. They're buoyed by a (perhaps unsustainable) red-hot power play right now featuring arguably the league's best rookie.

## Coldest Teams

### Ottawa Senators

Last Month Strength: 0.477

Current Strength: 0.455

The Matt Duchene trade was supposed to be a turning point for the Ottawa Senators and in a way it was. The team is 3-7-1 since the blockbuster deal (with two of the wins coming against his former team) and has fallen hard toward the bottom of the standings, dangerously

close to the league's bottom five. They're now 25th and Duchene has been capital B Bad since arriving.

It's not just him though, the entire team has been brutal and the projected value for nearly everyone has dropped over the last month. After last season's unexpected playoff run this is probably not where the team expected to be, but it's probably a lot closer to what they deserve compared to last season's finish. What's really hurting the team is the play of their starting goalie. Craig Anderson has an .895 save percentage on the season and that's obviously not going to cut it. His underrated play last year was a big part of Ottawa's surprise season and the team needed an unlikely re-up in order to repeat the magic. They're not getting that. Instead, they're getting a harsh dose of what this team really is.

### Buffalo Sabres

Last Month Strength: 0.442

Current Strength: 0.418

It's never a good sign when a team spends consecutive months in this spot. Welcome to Buffalo, where the Sabres are as bad as ever and somehow maybe even getting worse. What's left to be said about this team? This has been a total team effort of ineptitude. It's been an embarrassing start for a team that was supposed to start making some noise but have stumbled instead. Their stars aren't shining as bright as they should be, goaltending is way below par, the defence is a disaster – the whole thing is one big gigantic mess. Since the start of the season, no team has fallen harder in projected expectations than the Sabres, going from a projected true-talent 86 point team to what they are now, a projected true-talent 78 point team. This model thinks they're the worst team in the league, a title they're probably very familiar with given their past half-decade or so.

## Honourable Mentions:

**Detroit Red Wings:** The Red Wings are exactly who we thought they were: a not very good hockey team.

**Philadelphia Flyers:** I don't quite remember what a Flyers win looks like, and my model has really downgraded their projected strength as a result.

To see more charts for how the value of every player on each team has changed over the last month, go [here](#).

## Hottest Players

### Mathew Barzal, NYI

Last Month GSVA: 1.01 wins

Current GSVA: 2.45 wins

Not many people thought much of the Isles going into the season, but they've been a steady fixture atop the Metro standings and it is thanks in large part to the play of Mathew Barzal. He's been a revelation so far this season and is arguably the Calder front-runner at this point. He's not only scoring (24 points in 25 games), he's also providing a sound two-way game. His line with Jordan Eberle and Andrew Ladd has been the Islanders best at influencing shot rates and Barzal is currently rocking a 55 per cent Corsi, which is pretty incredible for any player, let alone a rookie. He started the season strong, but he really exploded over the last month, looking like a future superstar. (This is also a pretty good example of how volatile rookie projections can be due to the small sample). By Game Score, he was the best Islander in November with an average score of 1.28, much better than the next best, Anders Lee, at 1.08. It was actually the seventh best score in the entire league. The biggest hole on the Islanders has long been a second pivot behind John Tavares and Barzal is filling the role better than anyone could've imagined.

### William Karlsson, VGK

Last Month GSVA: 0.47 wins

Current GSVA: 1.36 wins



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As a person paid to write about hockey who deals specifically in predictions and forecasts, it's important to go back often and look at what went right or wrong and why. This take on William Karlsson is the wrongest I've ever been. It's an article from after the expansion draft, where I essentially wrote that losing Karlsson would be no big deal as he didn't really look all that valuable. The best part were these exact words:

"He's still relatively young at 24, but it's unlikely he gets exponentially better. At this point what you see is usually what you get."

As you now know, this is exactly what did not happen. What we saw is not what we got. He did, in fact, get exponentially better. Whoops. Vegas Karlsson is miles ahead of Columbus Karlsson and the transformation speaks volumes about the pro scouting staff. My biggest concerns were that he didn't score (he does now), he didn't shoot the puck (he does now) and he didn't drive play (he does now). It's really something else to see a guy break out like this when there were very few signs suggesting he could. Now, he won't score on a quarter of his shots forever, so expect some regression, but he's still proving he's the real deal.

## Honourable Mentions

**Brock Boeser, VAN:** The other candidate for best rookie has spent the last month filling the net. While my pre-season take on Karlsson was among my worst, calling Boeser already Vancouver's best player before the season even started was probably among my best, though that may not have even gone far enough.

**Micheal Ferland, CGY:** Calgary has been looking for a right winger to put beside Johnny Gaudreau and Sean Monahan and it looks like they've found him. Ferland is four goals off his career high and it's only December.

## Coldest Players

**Michael Del Zotto, VAN**

Last Month GSVA: 1.43 wins

Current GSVA: 0.82 wins

This model, and the Canucks coaching staff, were fans of Del Zotto to start, but that opinion has soured over the last month as he's quickly fallen out of favour among Canucks defenders. He was the top dog for the first part of the season, getting upwards of 25 minutes (!) per night, but has now settled in around 18 or so during November, fifth behind Alexander Edler, Chris Tanev, Ben Hutton, and Derrick Pouliot. The fall has been dramatic. It's not without reason though. No Canuck got outshot more than Del Zotto since November 1 and his minus-74 Corsi was among the worst of any player in the league for the time frame. I think he's better than what he's shown so far, but it's clear he's not going to be The Guy in Vancouver.

**Nick Foligno, CBJ**

Last Month GSVA: 1.50 wins

Current GSVA: 0.98 wins

Once lauded (by me) as a secret star, Nick Foligno has fallen on hard times of late and has really struggled this season. It's been especially bad over the last month where he had just three points in 15 games while being one of the few Blue Jackets to get outshot. Columbus has been a sneaky dominant team at 5-on-5 this season, but you couldn't tell from looking at shifts with Foligno on the ice. Driving play, particularly on defence, was one of the big reasons Foligno was seen as an unheralded player by the analytics community, but he hasn't been able to show much of that this season. Columbus is a contender right now, but they'll need more from their captain in order to take the next step.

## Honourable Mentions:

**Jordan Weal, PHI:** He looked very promising to finish last season, but has looked anything but this year. He's been practically non-existent over the last month and it's no wonder he's been getting scratched lately.

The Athletic LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086738 Websites

The Athletic / Grassroots to Gold: Despite some resistance, Hockey Canada aims to change minor hockey culture

By Sunaya Sapurji 19 hours ago

Any kind of culture change takes time. It takes money and education and effort. And, in hockey, particularly in Canada, it can take a long time.

No one knows this better than Corey McNabb, Hockey Canada's manager of player development. Recently, he was in Thunder Bay giving a presentation on long-term athlete development to Hockey Northwestern Ontario. He started his talk by saying he gets about 100 emails a day.

"Everything from 'how tight should I tie my daughter's skates' to 'I can't believe you guys are running this forecheck with the Olympic team — and everything in between,'" he told the crowd.

He has an email folder called "beauties" and one can only imagine the horrors contained inside.

That comes with the territory in Canada, where hockey has become such a cultural touchstone that it has been used to sell everything from coffee to cars to appliances, gas, banks, fast food, beer and everything else imaginable.

In a few weeks, Canadians from coast-to-coast will be bombarded with the annual saccharine-filled, jingoistic commercials for the world junior hockey championships. The ones that reinforce the notion that hockey is our game and ours alone.

Canada, like many of the other countries featured in this series, has many of the same philosophies for youth development: Small area skills, small area games, multi-sport play at younger ages, focusing more on skill development versus winning.

"But that is not necessarily the same philosophy throughout the actual minor hockey system," said McNabb on the phone from his office in Calgary. "Where there is a lot of focus on winning by coaches or associations or even parents — and that just goes back to the competition model.

"When you look at Europe they're not playing full ice, five-on-five games with score clocks and referees until their kids are nine or 10. The fact that we do it in places in Canada here when kids are six years old — and they're probably keeping track of scoring leaders and stuff like that — it's a natural phenomenon to worry about winning versus development. That's probably one of the biggest differences and the earlier you put in a competition structure in place and the earlier you place a tiering of players, it's inevitable that the outcome becomes more important than the process."

And that, right there, is a problem. As much as Hockey Canada wants to do the right thing, the scientifically-proven thing, and the cost-effective thing for development, there are also people working against the system — either to make a profit or because it's not the way it's always been done. This is also true in the U.S., though USA Hockey has found success in many non-traditional markets. Though there aren't many (or any) of those same markets in Canada.

In Europe, this same culture doesn't really exist thanks to their club system. In places like Sweden and Finland, there are skills and goalie coaches available at every club and at every level. In addition, there are regional coaches paid by the federations to oversee both coach and player development — everyone is on the same page.



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"Everything is supplied and self-contained in a club," McNabb said. "Versus in Canada, traditionally you pay for your minor hockey and the parents go outside the system to a goalie coach or a skating coach or a skills coach because the club itself does not employ those people and that's a major difference. I think what (the club system) does is that it really helps to put in place consistency and standardization.

"You're bound to have a much more consistent methodology in developing players, whereas in Canada it's much more of a free-market system. There's not as many of those associations or clubs that have that skills person and instead everyone is going out to find different things — and some of it's good and some of it's not so good."

That same level of standardization is very difficult to do in Canada with roughly 442,163 junior aged players and 3,500 minor hockey associations across the country. There are more than 85,000 minor hockey coaches in Canada from the initiation level to midget hockey alone — more than all of the registered players in Finland and Denmark combined.

"We have a ton of great skills coaches in Canada and a lot of great goaltending coaches and experts," McNabb said. "It's the structure that makes it different."

One of the good things about it though, he said is that Canada's system doesn't produce "a cookie-cutter style of player" where everyone is taught to do the same thing, the same way.

All those associations have their own bylaws and philosophies though they fall under the purview of 13 member branches, all within the Hockey Canada umbrella — which not only makes for less consistency but more bureaucracy as well.

McNabb said in the association he coaches in he'd like to see the kind of system implemented in golf, where part of each member's fees goes to pay for a club pro.

"It would be great if we could charge every parent an extra \$100 for the year and that money would go towards having a skills coach that is employed by the association or a goaltending coach, or one of each," explained McNabb. "Let's say you have 800 players — that's \$80,000 you could put directly to that. It's actually going to save parents money from having to spend \$500 on a goalie school or a skills school because it's all self-contained. And I think we're starting to see some associations or clubs look at that."

Hockey in Canada is big business.

Every parent wants to do right by their child, but there are some who at a point lose perspective when it comes to the game. It becomes less about kids having fun and being active and more about chasing the NHL dream or landing a scholarship. It's created a culture where it's more about the end product rather than the experience — and that product costs money. A lot of it.

It's one of the reasons parents can feel pressured into paying for extra lessons, spring hockey, summer schools, dry-land training, private hockey academies and the like. It's the notion that if you don't keep up with the Joneses, your kid is going to fall behind. Your child can't be the next Sidney Crosby if they're not in that under-five elite program.

Paul Mason knows better than most what it takes to develop a Crosby. He was the NHL superstar's minor hockey coach in Cole Harbour, N.S.

He wants parents to know that when Sid was an actual kid, he was a very good multi-sport athlete. In his spare time Crosby would play a lot of ball hockey with neighbourhood kids. He would train, by himself, by running the local Colby Loop.

And when you come into the skate shop at Cole Harbour Place, and ask for the "Crosby Cut" — the same as the three-time Stanley Cup champion — this is the kind of edge you'll get:

"The 'Crosby Cut' is just the standard cut," said Mason, who runs and owns the skate shop. "It's nothing special."

Crosby, however, was special, a generational talent who would have succeeded regardless of how many or few extra-curricular programs he was involved in. And Mason, who has coached thousands of children over the years, has only seen one of his like.

Mason, an elementary school principal, has been a volunteer minor hockey coach in Cole Harbour for 39 years. And in his community of 30,000 — technically a part of Dartmouth thanks to amalgamation — he has seen hockey change.

"It's 100 per cent worse," Mason said. "It's not even comparable. Being in the school system as well and having people know you from hockey we have parents who come to us and ask about, for example, spring hockey. They talk about the expense of spring hockey but they see all these other kids doing it and they say to you, 'Is it going to put my kid behind the eight ball?' Is it going to affect them?' I tell them, 'No, it's not.' Kids should be playing more than one sport. It shouldn't be hockey only, but there is that perception that (these extra programs) are a way of developing your kid and getting them to the next level. Parents see it and they buy into it. It puts a financial demand on parents and the belief that's what they have to do. And that's definitely way worse than it used to be.

"There's a mindset and I don't know when it started, but you could see it more and more — who's going to be The Next One and what do I have to do to get there?"

He can't believe some of the sacrifices parents are willing to make in order for their kids to get extra hockey outside of the association, which is home to roughly 650 players.

"One family mentioned to me, 'We have to decide if we're going to put our kids in spring hockey because then we're not going to have our summer vacation,'" Mason said. "Wow. That's mind-boggling."

McNabb said the research shows that more hockey isn't necessarily better. According to Hockey Canada's long-term player development manual, specializing in hockey before the age of 10 is detrimental, leading to overuse injuries, burnout, lack of interest, and retirement from training and competition.

"I'm sure kids would love to eat Fruit Loops for breakfast, lunch and dinner," McNabb said. "But at a certain point you get tired of eating Fruit Loops. So as a parent you need to be able to look at it and say, 'We need some balance here' and I think that's the key.

"Kids that are on the ice 12 months a year and are always in the pursuit to 'make it' — it puts a lot of unnecessary pressure on kids and unnecessary expense in the hands of parents."

Cole Harbour has had success not only with its NHLers — Crosby, Nathan MacKinnon, Joey DiPenta and Cam Russell — but many others, both men and women, who have gone on to play pro hockey or earn scholarships.

For decades the Cole Harbour Bel Ayr Minor Hockey Association was a model of consistency in its coaching. It had stalwarts like Mason behind the bench who coached players who eventually would return as assistant coaches and then as head coaches. There were few, if any, parents involved in coaching teams with their own children. In recent years that has changed.

"You don't see as many (volunteers), it's mostly parents now," said Mason, who coaches Peewee Triple-A. "They're primarily the ones that step up. ... As of right now we have seven coaches involved on our team and none of us have kids involved and the Bantam AA team is the only one now with no kids involved. Which used to be right through our program — that continuous cycle of coaches was there from beginning to end — you don't see that as much anymore."

He said overbearing parents and the ever-increasing Hockey Canada hoops to jump — different policies, courses, certifications and background checks — have led a number of volunteers in his association to leave coaching.



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"Anyone who coaches — you're going to lose money — it's a hobby," Mason said. "It's something you love to do, but as someone who golfs, if I had to continually do what I have to do for hockey — I'd drop golf. It wouldn't be a hobby anymore. I've seen that frustration in coaches — we're going through it right now where you can just see where it's just that little bit extra that you have to do and coaching itself takes up quite a bit of time."

But it's not all doom and gloom.

Mason said his association has recognized the need to shift some of their own policies around to make it more inviting for non-parent volunteers. And he hopes those parents consumed by the race to get their child to the next level will stop for a minute to remember what should really be important in youth sports.

"I love hockey," Mason said. "I think it's great. It's the joy of hockey in what you're able to teach kids. Our Peewee kids are fundraising so we can buy clothing for a homeless shelter and they're going to make sandwich lunches and bring them over to the shelter. These are skills — it's about teamwork, it's about camaraderie and it's all part of the minor hockey experience. Some people will say, 'That has nothing to do with hockey,' but I think it does — that's any team sport. It develops community members not just hockey players."

In September, minor hockey made headlines in Toronto over Hockey Canada's mandate issued for cross-ice hockey at the six-and-under level. The move was part of Hockey Canada's Initiation Program which is designed for players aged five and six and provides an entry level to the sport. In 2016, there were 13,248 players who were enrolled in the program across the country.

Despite the fact that for some 35 years the Initiation Program has always recommended cross-ice and half-ice games, the idea was finally mandated in March. Many associations across Canada had already been using the format for years, while others had not.

The program is designed with four phases of instruction designed to teach the skills of skating, shooting, puck control and passing in a progressive and age-appropriate way. The "games" are more akin to shinny or 3-on-3 in which there are no scorekeepers or officials and the focus is on fun and learning.

And yet, there is still resistance.

"The five-year-olds who are coming into the game — even though it's parents who have played the game or are familiar with it — when they see how it's organized for a five-year-old playing in a smaller area with a lighter puck and a smaller net, they're like, 'Yeah OK, this makes sense. They're small so we shouldn't be playing on a full-sized surface,'" McNabb said. "That generation is going to come through now with a much greater acceptance versus someone who might have had an older son or daughter who played full-ice 5-on-5 with score clocks and referees. Now they come back and say, 'What's this? This isn't real hockey. This isn't the same.'"

"So it's going to take some time for sure to change an entire culture in the way the game is developed and taught. I think we're going to get there because there are a lot of good hockey people in this country who understand and look at the long-term player development and what is the best way to develop players."

That kind of pushback comes with the territory for hockey rule changes in Canada. In 2013, there was a national debate when Hockey Canada voted to ban bodychecking at the Peewee level (ages 11-12). The same night the vote was passed, Don Cherry took to his Hockey Night in Canada pulpit to decry the new rule.

"Don't you wish Hockey Canada would do something instead of being politically correct," said Cherry on the March 25, 2013 broadcast of Coach's Corner.

"You (Hockey Canada) have good intentions, but the road to hell is paved with good intentions. You're going to be sorry. You watch and see. You will be sorry."

Four years later a study conducted by the University of Calgary showed there was a 64 per cent decrease in concussion risk as a result of the Hockey Canada ban and a 50 per cent decrease in "all-injury risk" in Peewee-aged players. The study estimated there were 581 concussions saved annually in Alberta and more than 4,800 concussions saved annually in Canada.

It's not expected that the new cross-ice rule will be met with the same kind of fervent opposition, considering many associations are already using it.

McNabb uses the example of futsal, a variation of soccer, that is usually played on a much smaller surface with fewer players.

"If five-year-olds learn to play the game of soccer on a full-size field, all they do is kick the ball 20 feet in front of them and then kick it again and kick it again," McNabb said. "There's never any opportunity for them to learn how to handle the ball in traffic, so when they get into those situations, they can't do it. It's not that much different in hockey. It's much harder to learn the game on a full-sized ice surface and then come back and be really, really good in a small area. It just doesn't happen. It's much easier to learn it in a small area — how to handle the puck in tight and change directions, stop and start — and then graduate to the larger surface because you're always going to go back to the fundamental skill-set you learned in a small area."

He says looking at the NHL and elite-level hockey the way the game is played now is more conducive to smaller area play, even though they are playing on full sheets of ice. The game has become more compact in design and that's why many NHL coaches use small ice drills in their own practices.

"We've done studies on games where 84 per cent of the game at a high level is played blueline-in, either at one end of the other," McNabb said. "So if you look, those teams are practicing 85 per cent of the time in a zone — either offence or defence because there's not that much time where the game actually happens between the bluelines in the neutral zone and if it does the puck is going through there really, really fast."

"The way the game is played now and the skill-set that you need is different than it was years ago where it was more end-to-end type of play."

Hockey Canada is hoping their vast vault of education material will help both parents and coaches have a better understanding of what age-appropriate skill development is all about. In addition to the long-term player development manual, and information about the Initiation Program, they also have the Hockey Canada Network an app that has everything from drills and coaching plans to articles on nutrition and meal plans for players and parents. The app is free to download, though there's a premium option from as low as \$4 a month.

One of the other issues McNabb deals with is seasonal planning in relation to player development. So if you were a 12-year-old player, what would an optimal calendar look like? But that means trying to get leagues and associations to buy-in to change and that's always a difficult proposition.

"One of the things we're really trying to look at is the seasonal structure," said McNabb. "There's no point in starting hockey in August, you rush through tryouts to pick your team. You rush through your regular season only to have it end in January so you can go through a three-month playoff process. We have a ton of kids that are finished their hockey season in January and February because we're trying to follow an NHL-style of playoff system which is designed for professionals and adults, not for a 10-year-old kid. It's still winter in February in most places in Canada, so to me the cultural aspect is the biggest thing that we're really trying to change and I think if we can do that a lot of the other things are going to



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fall into place to give coaches more time to develop skills and not necessarily worry about the winning and trying to get into playoffs.”

McNabb believes the key to developing good players is to develop good coaches. And Canada has its share of those. The biggest challenge he sees going forward is in trying to change the culture surrounding the sport which has taken on a life of its own.

“The game is in good shape in so many ways, but there’s also a lot of things that we know can be done better. From a personal standpoint, I’d like to see those things happen a little quicker or a little more efficiently, but it’s getting there.

“Every country has things that they feel are doing really well and things that they feel need to improve on. I’m a big believer in looking at everything that’s out there and beg, borrow and steal from the best and from everywhere — every coach, every association and every country to see what you can take and implement to your own benefit. You can’t be so regimented in what you do that you’re not willing to look at other good ideas.

“But you have to have a plan and the courage to stick with it. It might not be the most popular thing right now, but we do believe it’s the best thing for players.”

The Athletic LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086739 Websites

The Athletic / Canadiens successfully erase their wretched start to the season

By Arpon Basu 21 hours ago

The Canadiens have done it.

They have erased their worst start to a season in 76 years. They did so, astonishingly, before Christmas. They did so by winning five games in a row... in eight days. They did so by winning those five games with Carey Price in net. They did so with Carey Price looking like Carey Price in net.

This is no small thing.

The Canadiens had the worst record in the Eastern Conference at 1-6-1 on the morning of Oct. 21, second-worst in the NHL. Thanks to this five-game winning streak, the Canadiens are now 5-1-1 in their last seven games. So that awful start has been essentially erased. What’s left in between is a 7-5-1 team, which is probably closer to what this Canadiens team is than their first eight games or their last seven games.

This is what happens when you open the season shooting 3.4 percent and getting an .878 save percentage at 5-on-5, which were 31st and 30th in the league on Oct. 21. Over the last seven games, the Canadiens are shooting 10.9 percent and getting .971 goaltending at 5-on-5, fourth and first, respectively, over that time. It’s not complicated.

In between that start and these last seven games, the Canadiens had a 53.4 Corsi for percentage (sixth in the NHL), a 50.9 goals for percentage (14th), a 54.7 expected goals for percentage (third), a 7.5 shooting percentage (18th) and a .915 save percentage (19th) at 5-on-5 in 12 games.

Those are decent underlying numbers. Numbers that suggest this is a team that will battle for a playoff spot. The difference between those numbers and the Canadiens’ current situation, of course, is Price.

No, he will not maintain his .962 save percentage and 1.20 goals against average since his return for the rest of the season. But that is, in some ways, irrelevant. What is important is that Price is at the top of his game,

and that trickles down to all of his teammates. It makes them feel like they have the best player on the ice in any game, and that they have the advantage in that he doesn’t leave the ice. It makes them feel like they have a chance to win. It makes them confident, a confidence that reflects in so many areas of their play that are in no way impacted by goaltending.

This is why Price, when he is at the top of his game, is the most valuable player in the NHL.

“Any time he’s in the net for you, you know that at any given point he can literally steal you a game, so I think it alleviates some of that tension, that responsibility that we need to score tonight or we need to play really good defence tonight to have a chance to win,” Paul Byron said last Saturday, after Price’s first game back. “You just go out there and you play hockey and you know that he’s got your back... It certainly takes a load off everybody to know he’s in the net.”

How’s this for an example of what Byron is talking about? Since Price’s return, 11 players on the Canadiens have at least four points in five games (Alex Galchenyuk – 8, Byron – 6, Brendan Gallagher – 5, Andrew Shaw – 4, Jonathan Drouin – 4, Jeff Petry – 4, Jacob De La Rose (not a typo) – 4, Daniel Carr (in two games) – 4, Max Pacioretty – 4, Phillip Danault – 4, Tomas Plekanec – 4). Of course, scoring 10 goals in a game helps that, but still.

How many Canadiens had four points after the first five games of the season? None. In fact, Drouin was the only player with as many as three points.

“It’s just a relaxed feeling when you’re in front of him,” Brendan Gallagher said. “There’s really no panic. He’s making some of the saves that are pretty difficult saves, and he makes them look pretty easy. Not only that, he controls the rebounds, there’s no second chances. It’s obviously pretty impressive what he’s able to do.”

That relaxed feeling is what the Canadiens are riding right now. They are performing at every level, and it’s not hard to see that it goes from the net out.

The Athletic LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086740 Websites

The Athletic / U.S., Canada women shaping their Olympic identities one showdown at a time

By Nathan Wells 17 hours ago

ST. PAUL, Minn. — A crowd of 9,098 at Xcel Energy Center witnessed the fifth of eight games between the United States and Canada women’s hockey teams in the lead-up to the 2018 Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea.

While Brienne Jenner scored on a wrist shot 37 seconds into overtime to send the American fans home disappointed, snapping a short winning streak against the Canadians, the 2-1 result mattered less than the progress.

It was the first time the two had played since the U.S. won 5-1 in mid-November to take the Four Nations Cup. Sunday’s exhibition was different. It was a different game and different teams. Different players had opportunities. That process will continue throughout the final three exhibitions.

“We still have got a little ways to go,” said Team Canada goaltender Shannon Szabados, a veteran of two Olympics. “We’re on the ice a lot and we’re together a lot, getting to know each other and getting to know



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the system and where our strengths and weaknesses are and fine-tuning that.”

Nearly two months away from the opening ceremony, the two squads are both happy with the progress made yet not done tinkering. Both have high hopes in the quest for gold in South Korea, and the race is on to be the best.

.@RJOHNST6 TO @BRIANNEJENNER = CANADA 2-1 WIN IN OT.  
PIC.TWITTER.COM/WHOQGFREHEI

— WOMEN'S HOCKEY GIFS (@CWHLHIGHLIGHTS) DECEMBER 3, 2017

If Team USA forward Amanda Kessel had her way, every year would be like an Olympic year.

“It’s a really good year for all of us and something we take full advantage of,” Kessel said. “I wish we could do it every year, to be able to train with one another all year-round.”

Every fourth year the prospective U.S. players leave their homes and simply focus on hockey. No distractions. Tons of bonding. Training this time out of Wesley Chapel, Florida, 26 Americans centralized on the U.S. Women’s National Team get one day off a week.

The other six are spent preparing for February, working out and buying into head coach Robb Stauber’s vision and self-described “unconventional” system. Stauber is trying to build a team built on speed and possessing the puck as much as possible with good control.

Among other things he also wants to see the Americans, trying to end a 20-year gold-medal drought, be prepared to handle themselves well in tight games. Several big contests between the two — like the 2014 Olympic gold medal game and 2016 and 2017 IIHF World Championships gold-medal games — have been close and gone to overtime.

So far he’s happy with the result.

“The players are very ... in pressure situations when games are tight, games are on the ice, they are handling themselves on the bench,” Stauber said. “Over the last several games against Canada they’ve had really good emotional control on the bench. That’s critical.”

North of the 49th parallel, the Canadian counterparts have been training 5-6 days a week in Calgary since May. They’ve been playing boys AAA midget teams in the area to test themselves against faster, more physical players. They’ve been working on conditioning to be more consistent and take over in the third period of games.

It’s been given extra focus since the Four Nations Cup and paid off Sunday when Team Canada weathered an early onslaught by the host country. Canada’s forwards turned the tables, outshooting the Americans 13-5 in the third period and overtime to get the comeback victory.

“Obviously (being at our best in PyeongChang) is the main goal for both of our teams,” Canadian forward and captain Marie-Philip Poulin said. “We’ll continue to take it one game at a time and build confidence and build our team.”

Canada head coach Laura Schuler sees her team’s identity in a similar light to Team USA. She wants her team to be capable of thinking and playing the game fast while possessing the puck and limiting the opposition’s time with the puck.

“Every time we play we continue to get better,” she said. “No doubt about it, the games we’re playing against the boys in the Alberta Major Midget Hockey League are really helping us get our game to where we want to be. We’re really grateful for that opportunity to play against them.”

Settling on a roster

There have been pit stops on the road to PyeongChang. Neither Canada nor the United States’ rosters look the same as when the journey began.

In Canada’s case, that was part of the original plan. Hockey Canada invited 28 players to centralize in May. Two additional goalies were available to help. Two players — forward Amy Potomak and defender Erin Ambrose — were already cut following the Four Nations Cup. Three more will need to follow in order to get down to the maximum 23 players.

To Sarah Potomak, Amy’s older sister and youngest player left on Canada’s roster, the competition for spots has an added effect.

“Obviously that’s always in the back of our minds, but we push each other. The end goal is to win gold and that’s our biggest focus right now, just pushing each other,” she said.

Team USA, on the other hand, added three players from its original 23-woman roster. Defender Cayla Barnes was called to the national team in late October. Sidney Morin and Haley Skarupa joined the fold last week. While the initial idea was to go forward with the players already named to the national team, there was flexibility left open for the possibility of other players added for the Olympic squad.

Both Morin and Skarupa made their pre-Olympic debuts Sunday. Skarupa took Kessel’s normal spot at forward while the defender Morin saw time on the penalty kill.

“I thought they did a good job” Stauber said. “Sid Morin did a really good job back there. Handled the pressure well. Just fit in very, very good. Haley Skarupa came in on what we call our ‘white line’ with (Dani) Cameranesi and Hannah Brandt and she did a good job too. All in all, some real positive things, as I said. Obviously the score isn’t what we wanted, but that’s hockey.”

The U.S. team will make a decision on a final roster for PyeongChang by Jan. 1.

Options in goal

Schuler uses the word “evaluation process” to describe the Olympic lead-up.

Every game gives another opportunity to evaluate and better understand the roster. That’s certainly the case for both teams and their goaltenders. With many of the world’s top goalies residing in the two countries, several are competing for the starting spot.

“We’re lucky we have three amazing goaltenders. I trust every single one of them in a game,” Brandt said.

Sunday’s starting goaltenders were a contrast in age and experience, being 20 and 31 years old, respectively. Szabados, making her pre-Olympic debut against the United States, started the 2014 Olympic gold-medal game. U.S. starter Maddie Rooney still wears her maroon-and-gold UMD Bulldogs mask alongside her red, white and blue USA sweater.

Both played well. Szabados said she felt like she got into a rhythm early en route to making 27 saves. Rooney stopped 24 of 26 shots, including a Meghan Agosta breakaway in the first period and multiple chances from Poulin. Brought in as the third goalie to Alex Rigsby and Nicole Hensley, Rooney continues to get more opportunities to play.

Szabados shares Canada’s net with 2017 Patty Kazmaier winner Ann-Renée Desbiens and Geneviève Lacasse. Each has started multiple games.

“Our other goalies, we needed to make sure they had opportunities against the U.S. so we can see how they can do as we go forward, keeping in mind that we’re still in an evaluation process,” Schuler said about starting Szabados. Desbiens and Lacasse each started one of the two games against the U.S. in the Four Nations Cup.

Playing one another multiple times not only helps the two teams form identities and focus on strengths and weaknesses, but also defines a rivalry.

“Both teams are great teams. It’s fun anytime we get to play (the U.S.),” Szabados said. “I think that’s why we play each other so many times. We



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have that respect for each other, and it helps both teams prepare. Obviously the World Championships and Olympics are a different level, but those games leading up are what prepares you for it."

Two months to go. A lot can change for two teams between now and the opening ceremony. That's something both teams are counting upon to happen over the final three exhibition games, played Tuesday in Winnipeg, Dec. 15 in San Jose and Dec. 17 in Edmonton.

"I feel really good where we're at. It's going to be scary what we look like in a few months," said Kessel about the months of work her teammates and her have put in.

What does she think they'll look like? "The best team in the world."

The Athletic LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086741 Websites

The Athletic / Red Wings debacle in Montreal raises questions about direction of the franchise

By Craig Custance 19 hours ago

Well, that could have gone better. A home-and-home with a Montreal Canadiens team that is the Red Wings' direct competitor for the only realistic playoff spot they're chasing – the No. 3 seed in the Atlantic – not only extended Detroit's losing streak, it's now put everyone on high alert at Little Caesars Arena.

It was six periods of hockey to send the Canadiens a message and, boy, did they ever.

"The last five periods have been the worst five periods of hockey we've played this year," Red Wings GM Ken Holland said during a Sunday evening phone conversation, after Detroit lost 10-1 on Saturday and 6-3 on Thursday. "We didn't compete. We didn't play smart, didn't dig in. Certainly very disappointing."

To say the least.

And so the hopes of gaining a foothold in the playoff race during the friendliest part of their schedule are now dashed. Up next on Tuesday is a Winnipeg Jets team that is emerging as one of the best in the Western Conference, loaded with young talent that will only draw more envy from Red Wings fans.

The collapse raises a slew of questions, starting with the head coach:

How much time does coach Jeff Blashill have left in Detroit?

This topic was the impetus behind the phone call to Holland on Sunday and he declined to talk about his coach. Really, it's a no-win situation. If he throws his support behind Blashill, it ends up looking like the typical ill-fated endorsements that often end up precluding a coaching change.

In theory, he could come out and say that Blashill is the coach no matter what until the end of the season to put to rest any speculation. But again, there's no benefit to boxing himself in like that. The reality is that Blashill isn't safe. If the Saturday loss to the Canadiens is a sign that the team has completely tuned him out, and it's followed by similar performances this week, a change would have to be made. It would be inexcusable to stay the course.

But to Blashill's credit, and I realize I'm treading on thin ice with a fan base holding torches and pitchforks, the team had been playing hard for him until this point. The Wings didn't always play smart. They weren't always consistent. But these two games are the first time you suspect they're tuning him out.

Heading into the second Montreal game, when Niklas Kronwall was posed with the question as to whether the heat should be moving to the head coach, he definitely bristled.

"This has nothing to do with any type of structure, doesn't matter what the coach says. If the players don't do it for 60 minutes, it doesn't matter what he says. We have to do way better job individually and as a team obviously. Just be better, make the right play," Kronwall said. "If we don't it's going to be tough because our B game isn't good enough."

They didn't play with the kind of conviction Kronwall spoke with, a consistent problem with this team. They tend to say the right thing without translating it onto the ice. If that continues, if there's too much B and C game, a coaching move has to happen.

If the Red Wings make a move at coach, what does it look like?

This is where it gets complicated. The Red Wings have a general manager in the final year of his contract so now is not the time to be making long-term solutions behind the bench. The reality is, Holland isn't the person who should be making that call beyond this season right now.

There are plenty of qualified candidates available, like Dave Tippett and Dan Bylsma to start, but it would be counterproductive to make that move midseason. If there's a new GM in place this summer, he deserves the opportunity to make that call and not be saddled with a veteran coach on a long-term contract.

Not only that, but bringing in a veteran coach might be counterproductive in terms of the impact on long-range plans. If this is a lost season, and it's trending in that direction, there's no sense in patching it with solutions that might get in the way of better lottery chances.

Lastly, the coaching market is going to open up even more in the offseason if the Red Wings decide they don't want to bring Blashill back for the final year of his deal next season. Along with the veterans out there now, it's possible that Washington's Barry Trotz hits the market as will other coaches whose teams don't reach expectations. The Red Wings shouldn't make any long-range plans until they know exactly who's available.

The best course of action, if a change has to happen, is to promote Todd Nelson from Grand Rapids and give him an extended look as the coach of the Red Wings. Nelson interviewed for the Coyotes opening in the offseason and impressed management there with his modern philosophies. He's ready to be an NHL head coach somewhere and at some point, it makes sense to see if it's Detroit.

Is there a trade to be made in the short term?

Holland said he's been working the phones but the reality is that the most likely trades involving the Red Wings are going to happen closer to the trade deadline.

"The answer, for the most part, has to be internal," Holland said on Sunday.

Barring a miraculous turnaround, defenseman Mike Green will get moved but his contract is hefty enough that most contending teams will want to wait until closer to the deadline before taking it on.

That doesn't leave a lot of trade options (something we'll dig into with more depth this week). The Red Wings' roster and the trade options are a bit reminiscent of the time in 2002 when former Tigers GM Dave Dombrowski went off during a season-ticket-holder event, running through the roster of overpaid players and his inability to move them.

"I love Dean Palmer, he's a great guy. If you can trade him tomorrow, give me a call. That's \$8.5 million on our budget next year," Dombrowski said in a recorded speech. It went on from there.

This Red Wings group is no different, loaded down with bad contracts given by Holland when they were still trying to contend. Out of respect for what they've done for the organization, Holland won't even broach the idea of a trade for Henrik Zetterberg and Kronwall.



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The contracts for Justin Abdelkader, Jonathan Ericsson, Frans Nielsen, Darren Helm and Danny DeKeyser are currently unmovable.

Trevor Daley is on a reasonable contract and could be moved, something Holland should absolutely entertain if the opportunity presents itself. Maybe there's a market for Jimmy Howard but you don't get the sense yet that Holland is quite ready to completely pull the plug on the whole operation this season and beyond, something a Howard or Daley trade would do.

Which brings us to the final point.

Red Wings owner Chris Ilitch has been publicly mum on the direction he wants the team to take this year. (Photo: Paul Sancya/Associated Press)

Where does ownership stand with the general manager?

Holland is being hit with a barrage of criticism and without knowing the mandate from ownership, it's fair. There's no margin for error with the Red Wings because they are loaded down with contracts that Holland negotiated.

There's no help banging down the door from Grand Rapids, especially on defense, because the drafting under Holland over the last five years or so hasn't been good enough. The Red Wings were built on drafting and developing but they have failed to hit on enough impact players in recent years to sustain that level of success they've enjoyed in the past. And while there appears to be talent coming into the organization from recent drafts, it's still not the type of talent that's going to turn the ship in the short term.

If ownership's mandate is to keep the Red Wings competitive and help fill the stands of the new arena, then it's hard to pile on Holland for not embracing a full rebuild.

The problem is we don't know. We only know that the franchise has a GM operating in the final year of his contract, not an ideal circumstance for long-term building.

At some point, Red Wings owner Christopher Ilitch owes it to the fans to present his vision. Does he have the stomach for a proper tear-it-down rebuild that could take a good five years to complete? Does he prefer the team competes while waiting for bad contracts to expire?

Because right now, it's floundering. The coach's future is uncertain. The GM doesn't know if he'll be employed in Detroit beyond this season. The team's play is reflecting the uncertainty.

Fans, especially those paying big money to watch it all go down in the new arena, deserve better.

The Athletic LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086742 Websites

The Athletic / Seattle City Council approves KeyArena renovation proposal, so what's next?

By Katie Strang 8 hours ago

Seattle is one step closer to landing an NHL franchise following Monday's city council vote to pass a proposal that details a \$600 million plan to renovate KeyArena.

The Seattle City Council, in a full council hearing that lasted more than two hours, voted affirmatively, by a vote of 7-1, to pass the Oak View Group's Memorandum of Understanding outlining a proposal to privately finance the rehabilitation of the former home of the Seattle SuperSonics and nearly double its current square footage.

Seattle has long been rumored to be a potential landing spot for the NHL should the league consider another expansion franchise and the city's hopes of making that a reality gained serious traction in the wake of Monday's development.

Under the current terms of the proposal, championed aggressively by the Tim Leiweke-led Oak View Group, construction on the project would begin in 2018 with the completion date slated for 2020.

And though the plan is not contingent upon an anchor tenant in the form of either an NBA or NHL team, the state-of-the-art arena is expected to further the city's chances of luring an expansion franchise.

"It certainly puts us in the driver's seat," Seattle City Council president Bruce Harrell said during Monday afternoon's meeting, which was streamed live on the city's website.

How it happened: After an opening session devoted to public comments, as well as a chunk of time allotted for council members to address both the benefits of the proposed plan and some of the various concerns, the eight members of the council voted, 7-1.

Councilmember Mike O'Brien, who has served on the council since 2010 and represents District 6, was the lone "no" vote, and he said his preference would be to abstain from the vote entirely.

Before the plan was moved to a vote, O'Brien proposed an amendment regarding the "exclusivity clause," of the MOU, citing concerns about OVG having any sort of power over the city's flexibility to make deals with other entities over the life of the 39-year lease.

That amendment was supported by council member Kshama Sawant but was ultimately defeated. O'Brien said he hoped by the time the plan progressed to the stage of reviewing transactional documents that he would change his mind.

"I think it's critically important that we do this right and I'm not convinced, in looking at the MOU, that we're there quite yet," O'Brien said. "My preference would have been to abstain today and wait to see what those transaction documents look like, but our council rules prohibit abstentions on the full council. ... I'm going to vote no on this, but I want to let the folks know that are continuing to negotiate this that I hope to be in a place, when the transaction documents are ready, that I feel confident voting yes on those documents when they're here."

What it means: Nothing is imminent. And the NHL has promised nothing to Seattle, despite the city's bid to build an arena in hopes of securing a team. However, this is considered the first significant step in making a strong case for an expansion franchise.

Seattle, as was detailed here last week, would presumably be an appealing market to the league for a number of reasons: a rapidly-growing population, a strong regional foothold in the Pacific Northwest, a built-in rivalry with the Vancouver Canucks and a city chock-full of corporate dollars.

That offers no guarantee, however, it's worth noting that the last expansion franchise — awarded in 2016 to billionaire banker Bill Foley — netted \$500 million in expansion fees. Even if the league has no current plans to expand — an NHL source indicated this is indeed the case — it certainly remains an enticing option in the near future, assuming everything moves forward according to plan.

What's next: The MOU now must be signed by the Mayor of Seattle Jenny Durkan, who recently took office (her predecessor, Ed Murray, stepped down in September following multiple allegations of sexual abuse), in order to become official. That is slated to happen later this week, according to those with knowledge of the process.

An Environmental Impact Study, financed by OVG in hopes of expediting the process, must be approved, and according to the Seattle City Council, there are several transactional documents that still must be reviewed and signed. According to a release issued by the Council following Monday's vote, the MOU "will soon be memorialized in a



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Development Agreement, Lease Agreement and Seattle Center Integration Agreement.”

Though Leiwke was in attendance for the vote on Monday, it has been relatively quiet on OVG’s end in recent weeks and there is the sense that the parties involved hoping to see this process move forward are leery that any sort of public stumping could derail progress made in recent weeks.

Sources told The Athletic last week that both David Bonderman and Jerry Bruckheimer are expected to spearhead an ownership group behind Seattle’s push for a team, though neither has made any public statements recently.

The NHL’s Board of Governors meeting will take place in Florida later this week, and though it is not believed to be an official topic on the agenda, it would not be a shock if the Seattle vote and Houston’s reported interest in obtaining an NHL franchise become topics of discussion.

Items of interest: Councilmember Lorena Gonzalez was absent from the meeting. One of her spokespersons told The Athletic last week that she was out of the country but was scheduled to return in time for the vote. Gonzalez missed the meeting on account of an apparent travel complication ... While there seemed to be an overwhelming majority of support among those in attendance for the meeting, there were multiple citizens who expressed concern that the arena was taking priority over some of the city’s other pressing issues such as homelessness and income inequality ... One of KeyArena’s current tenants, the WNBA Seattle Storm, in a letter read aloud to the council, expressed support for the plan ... Councilmember Sawant explained her affirmative vote as a reluctant one and expressed concern from the massive tax benefits a big business was extracting from the city.

The Athletic LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086743 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Maple Leafs’ Nylander-at-centre conversation has been renewed again

Chris Johnston

December 4, 2017, 5:04 PM

You can chart the evolution through Mike Babcock’s own words.

The Toronto Maple Leafs coach has repeatedly been asked a variation of the same question – is William Nylander a centre? – during a 10-month stretch where he’s been deployed almost exclusively as a winger.

Feb. 2, 2017: “I see Willy as a centre, for sure.”

April 25, 2017: “Willy’s not going to be a centre next year.”

Dec. 4, 2017: “Well obviously it’s something that who knows? I mean if I’ve got to use him, I’ll maybe try him there. I’m trying to catch Willy, I’m trying to catch Mitch [Marner], I’m trying to catch all those young guys being good. When you play centre you’re often caught being bad. I don’t really need to catch him doing that, so that’s why he isn’t there.”

The conversation was renewed after Tyler Bozak missed Monday’s practice with an illness. Nylander skated between James van Riemsdyk and Marner in his absence – a development of debatable news value given Babcock’s daily use of the blender and the fact Toronto’s next game isn’t until Wednesday night against Calgary.

In all likelihood, Nylander was nothing more than a practice placeholder.

The 21-year-old will have to show Babcock that he can handle the defensive zone responsibilities before he’s consistently penciled in down the middle. The coach hasn’t said that outright, but it lingers between the lines.

Nylander is already a capable faceoff man – winning 54.7 per cent of 214 draws this season, most of them on his strong side – and a positive driver of possession. Recently the points have started to come after a dry spell.

There are signs of progress in his game even if he’s officially considered a right-winger by traditional standards. Truth be told, that’s an outdated label in a league where coaches have shifted the responsibilities assigned to each position.

“If I had my way, we wouldn’t have right wing, left wing and centre,” Edmonton’s Todd McLellan said last week. “We’d just have three forwards and they’d just play.”

“Everybody has to be able to play down low, everybody’s interchangeable up front,” he continued. “The first guy on the forecheck isn’t always your left-winger, it isn’t always your centreman. They’re forwards and that’s how they play.”

There’s an extra layer of interest around the conversation in Toronto because Bozak is currently playing out the final year of his contract and there isn’t a natural replacement waiting in the organization. Cap realities will make it challenging for the team to re-sign Bozak or wade into a free-agent pool that could include John Tavares, Mikael Backlund and Lars Eller, among others, this summer.

Even though Patrick Marleau has played a fair bit in the middle this season, that’s come out of necessity for Babcock. He trusts the 38-year-old at centre more than Nylander, Marner or even Bozak in certain situations on the road.

It’s certainly not the kind of long-term solution the Leafs will need to settle on at some point. With Auston Matthews and Nazem Kadri slotted in the top two spots for years to come, Nylander could eventually become the No. 3 – hence the heightened interest any time there’s even a whiff of opportunity to play him there.

Even though Babcock’s tune has changed in the last year, he hasn’t ruled out the possibility entirely.

We just aren’t likely to see it this week when the Flames visit Air Canada Centre. In the NHL, the front office worries about the big picture while the head coach concerns himself with today.

“I’m just trying to win the game against Calgary,” Babcock told reporters on Monday. “Let’s go from there.”

And let nature take its course.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086744 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Markus Naslund talks Sedins’ ascension and who’s next for Canucks

Megan Stewart

December 4, 2017, 7:52 PM

It was a welcome return, even if he wasn’t actually in the building.

Vancouver Canucks fans heard from former captain Markus Naslund when the retired player voiced the tribute to Daniel Sedin, marking the twin’s 1,000th NHL point in a ceremony Saturday night at Rogers Arena.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • Dec. 5, 2017

By the end of the 2-1 win over the Toronto Maple Leafs, the 37-year-old Swede had 1,002 points.

Naslund praised his compatriot that night in a video celebration and again today in a phone interview with Andrew Walker and Scott Rintoul on Sportsnet 650. He said he was honoured to participate in the ceremony and remembers the Sedin twins as teens before they were drafted second and third overall in 1999. In Sweden, he said, they broke records and played at the highest level of the game at a young age, showing their "extreme potential" all the way through.

"The commitment they've got for the sport and what they have done throughout their career is what's really taken them to another level. That is tough to predict ahead of time, but it's been a tremendous career for them both," he said.

Daniel has frequently said he and brother Henrik looked to Naslund as a mentor, but the senior skater who retired in 2009 at 35 years of age said he wasn't the role model he could have been.

"I almost feel bad that I didn't give them enough attention because I saw them as so mature at an early age. They didn't ask for a lot of help," said Naslund, who had 869 points over 16 seasons, including 12 of those in Vancouver. The Canucks retired his No. 19 and he understands how it feels to sense your own "NHL mortality" in the twilight of your playing days.

"You see a lot of guys who get older and still have egos, which neither Daniel or Henrik has."

Naslund is not troubled by the fact he is not a member of the Hockey Hall of Fame. "I don't think I played at a high level long enough and didn't win a Stanley Cup and didn't reach the plateaus you need to be considered," he said. "I'm happy with my career but I don't look at myself in that category."

At the other end of his NHL career, Elias Pettersson is only beginning his ascent and has "great potential" as a highly-skilled player now leading the Swedish Hockey League. The upside is also promising with Jonathan Dahlen, he added.

"The Canucks have two very interesting players coming up here."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086745 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Oilers rallying around Laurent Brossoit after near-collapse

Mark Spector

December 4, 2017, 5:43 PM

EDMONTON — It's always a long, dusty road to get to that intersection of Preparation St. and Opportunity Ave. And sometimes, when you finally get there, the lights are busted. Or you read the damned map wrong, and you're pointing south, not north.

In the real life National Hockey League those "long road" stories don't always have a Hollywood happy ending. So when apprentice Laurent Brossoit stepped in for injured Cam Talbot, his first big chance to be an NHL No. 1, we wondered:

Is this the Disney moment?

After all those games in all those leagues — BCHL, WHL, ECHL, AHL, NHL — from the cold obscurity of the Alaska Aces to the barbecue of a basketball town that is Oklahoma City, is this where a minor-league caterpillar turns into a big-league butterfly?

Well, on Saturday night in Calgary Brossoit had his second start since Talbot went down. On Monday morning, Jim Matheson's lede in the Edmonton Journal story said it all: "OK, now what?"

"I assess the game honestly, and there were goals I wasn't happy with," Brossoit said of a 7-5 Oilers in Calgary, where he nearly blew a 6-1 lead with 15 minutes to play. "I wouldn't be in the league if those were goals I was happy with.

"I played the score, and learned a lesson. I'll be better for it."

Brossoit is just 24. When the Oilers gave up on Devan Dubnyk it was 2014, a full decade after they'd made him the 14th-overall choice in the 2004 draft.

Dubnyk was nearly 28, and had failed miserably at his big chance. His confidence had more holes than a Trump alibi, and three other teams would give up on Dubnyk before he resurrected himself in Minnesota.

Brossoit isn't there yet, but here's the reality: Philadelphia is in town Wednesday, the Oilers are desperate to win a home game against a team that has dropped 10 straight, and undrafted 23-year-old Nick Ellis — Brossoit's backup — has yet to play his first NHL minute.

This intersection is a two-way stop: Either the Oilers show faith in Brossoit, or they start Ellis — or a goalie they trade for in the next 48 hours — and tell the world they're moving on from the guy they call L.B.

"Certainly rebuilding L.B. right now is one of our goals," said head coach Todd McLellan.

So coach, do you know who gets the start Wednesday?

"I don't at this point. We'll get through (Tuesday) and go from there."

(Gulp.)

Brossoit was a little better than OK against Toronto Thursday, and pretty good with limited work for two dominant Oilers periods at Calgary Saturday. But with the score 6-1, he opened up.

Sam Bennett and Johnny Gaudreau scored bad-angle goals from below the circle. A couple wrist shots whistled past, and Edmonton was clinging to a 6-5 lead in a game it had led by five moments before.

"You know what it came down to? I let my body cool off," he said Monday. "In a situation like that, where we take full control, I know next time to just be sure I'm ready to go both mentally and physically."

After a day off Sunday, on Monday morning the job of patching up the young goaler's psyche fell to his veteran teammates. Guys who all know that Brossoit is the best option currently, and they can't beat Philly if he isn't feeling like a winner.

"We've just got to let him know, we've all been there. We've all had off nights, or plays that haven't gone our way — especially early in our career," said Mark Letestu, who doesn't have to reach back very far to Kris Russell's own-goal for a talking point. "Rusty — perfect example. He had a tough night, owned it, came back and had a great night against Calgary two nights later."

This is what team sports are about, right? Reaching down that proverbial mountain, extending a hand for the guy who might be falling behind. Tightening the group; sharing the tough times.

"It's not all on him," said Letestu, a fourth-line guy who is a true leader inside this room. "The weight he's probably carrying, finally getting an opportunity to show what he has, and maybe it doesn't go his way ... I've talked to him about keeping it big picture. Don't let 10 minutes of a hockey game define you. The other 50 minutes were pretty good."

And once the kid gets sorted out, it's time to address the rest of the team.

"As a leadership group you have to say, 'Hey, he's going to be all right. He's going to be fine.' As a leadership group there's a role to be played there. Let's all get behind this guy, and get 'er goin'."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Preparation St. and Opportunity Ave.

Sometimes, it's a pretty rough neighbourhood.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086746 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Karlsson and Doughty poised to set new course for star free agents

Chris Johnston

December 4, 2017, 11:55 AM

There's a siren call to be found in Drew Doughty and Erik Karlsson's willingness to speak so freely about free agency that may or may not arrive 18 months from now.

It hints at a new approach. The possibility that two of the NHL's top players might be looking to disrupt the established way of doing things.

Superstars always exchange the leverage of potentially hitting the open market for the security of long-term, guaranteed-money contracts where they already are. It has been that way, almost without exception, since the salary cap was instituted in 2005 following a season lost to a lockout.

Player movement was further complicated following another lockout, and the signing of a new collective bargaining agreement in January 2013. That brought about contract term limits, salary variance restrictions and a cap recapture penalty.

Here we are now with labour uncertainty again clouding the horizon and the possibility of a 2019 superclass of UFA defencemen that includes Karlsson, Doughty and Oliver Ekman-Larsson. None of those men will know what the NHL's next system looks like while negotiating his next contract. However, we can bank on a couple things:

- 1.) They'll want to exert maximum control over the process.
- 2.) They'll mitigate their personal risk in the 2020-21 season, when salaries aren't likely to be paid in full because of another lockout.
- 3.) They will give no discounts for loyalty, geography or in the name of building a contender.

How the players seek to achieve those aims is where this gets interesting. In Karlsson's words, in particular, you can detect a militant stance that suggests he's willing to endure an uncomfortable negotiation with his employer.

As we mentioned on "Hockey Night in Canada" this weekend, the Senators aren't overly comfortable with it being discussed publicly at all right now.

"I think it's time to realize that when we go to the table, it's business on both parts, not just [owners]," Karlsson told reporters last week. "That's the business part of it. That's the way every player has been treated ever since this league has started, and I think the players have been a little bit on the other side of things when it comes to negotiations."

Consider his frame of reference here: Karlsson was arguably the most outspoken player when the NHL decided to cease Olympic participation. He is also best friends with Daniel Alfredsson, the Senators legend who took perceived hometown discounts with the organization until an emotional 2013 divorce when the favour wasn't repaid.

As much as he loves living and playing in Ottawa, it shouldn't come as a surprise that the 27-year-old is prioritizing business at this stage of his career.

The same goes for Doughty. He first mused about the possibility of one day playing for the Leafs on radio this summer and dropped more crumbs during a visit to Toronto in October.

Doughty went even deeper in a conversation with The Athletic's Craig Custance last week – saying that he planned to consult with Karlsson throughout the free-agent process and expects both of them to surpass P.K. Subban's deal. Custance shared the complete audio of the interview on his "Full 60" podcast and it includes this telling exchange:

CC: So you're thinking about [free agency] already, then...

DD: Well I think about it, yeah, but obviously my first want would be to stay in L.A.

CC: Is it?

DD: Yeah, I think so. You know, I love this organization. Actually I sh— I love the players, that's where I would really, really, really feel bad is if I left some of the players. And I've done so much in this organization already, I'm comfortable here, you know, I don't know. Definitely L.A.'s going to be my No. 1 choice to re-sign here, but you never know what could happen, right?

Doughty appeared to catch himself pledging allegiance to the Kings before stepping back slightly. He's won two Stanley Cups with the franchise, sure, but he also sat out most of training camp in 2011 before signing the \$56-million, eight-year contract he's currently playing on.

By actions more than words, the best NHL players of this generation have indicated that they see little value in free agency.

There is risk in a physical sport to play a contract out to its conclusion, especially when there's an option to extend it a year early. There is also no guarantee a top free agent would set off a serious bidding war in today's NHL – not with so many contenders already over-committed on the cap. For example, if Carey Price were available this coming July 1, could he command more than the \$84-million, eight-year deal Montreal extended him to last summer?

That's what made the comments from Doughty and Karlsson stand out so much. They seem inclined to test conventional wisdom.

The pair entered the NHL together as part of the 2008 draft class and helped usher in a push towards mobile, puck-moving defencemen. They are two of the game's biggest attractions and biggest personalities. They are perennial Norris Trophy contenders.

Backed by a powerful agency in Newport Sports, they also have the gravitas to try and blaze a new trail.

Only time will tell if that's truly their intent.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086747 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Down Goes Brown Weekend Wrap: Too soon to buy Canadiens stock

Sean McIndoe

December 4, 2017, 11:23 AM

Every Monday, Sean McIndoe looks back at weekend play in the NHL and the league's biggest storylines. You can follow him on Twitter.

Opening faceoff: The great free-agent defenceman apocalypse of 2019



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • Dec. 5, 2017

We've reached the point in the season where our attention tends to turn toward the future. Things have settled in, and our view of who's good and who's not isn't swinging wildly day to day anymore. But there's still plenty of season left, so it's tempting to start thinking ahead to the trade deadline, the final stretch run, or the playoffs.

Or, as was the case this weekend, to the summer of 2019.

If that seems a little too far ahead, we can thank Drew Doughty and Erik Karlsson. The Kings' defenceman got the ball rolling with a revealing interview late last week in which he admitted he was already looking ahead to free agency, and that he would be touching base with fellow 2019 UFA Karlsson to make sure they're on the same page in terms of money. The Senators' star then stoked that fire by telling a reporter that "When I go to market, I'm going to get what I'm worth."

Well then. In a league where franchise players almost never make it to free agency, hearing Doughty and Karlsson muse about it openly was a surprise. Most players would mumble something about not thinking ahead, just being focused on winning tonight's game, and hey let's get pucks in deep. Not these two, apparently.

So naturally, fans around the league immediately started in on figuring how to react, parsing the specific words — does it mean anything that Karlsson said "when" he goes to market, not if? — and trying to figure out what number Doughty would wear for the Maple Leafs. (That last one may have just been in Toronto.) Meanwhile, fans in L.A. and Ottawa were really wishing everyone would leave them alone and go back to speculating about John Tavares.

Well, no such luck today. Instead, let's try to handicap where the two stars will end up.

Possibility #1: Both guys re-sign before actually hitting UFA status

After all the speculation, both players do what virtually everyone else does and sign extensions well before they get to the market — maybe as early as July 1 of next year.

Odds of it happening: 80%

Entertainment value for Kings and/or Sens fans: It would be more like relief than entertainment, but they'd take it.

Entertainment value for the rest of us: Minimal.

Possibility #2: Both guys re-sign, but at least one makes it to UFA status first

A.K.A. "The Stamkos"

Odds of it happening: 5%

Entertainment value for Kings and/or Sens fans: Right up there with skydiving with a faulty parachute that doesn't open the first few times you pull the chord, but eventually does.

Entertainment value for the rest of us: Strong for a day or two, then minimal.

Possibility #3: At least one guy gets traded

Hey, you can't let him walk for nothing, right?

Odds of it happening: 7%

Entertainment value for Kings and/or Sens fans: Solid. They wouldn't like it, but you'd get a ton in return for either guy. And if it did come to this, plenty of fans in Ottawa or L.A. would have already turned against the guy and talked themselves into moving on for the good of the franchise.

Entertainment value for the rest of us: Sky-high, especially if it comes after months of speculation. Trades are the best.

Possibility #4: At least one guy actually switches teams in free agency

I mean, it has happened before with star defencemen in their prime. There was Scott Niedermayer in 2006 and Zdeno Chara in 2007 and... uh... basically those two.

Odds of it happening: 7%

Entertainment value for Kings and/or Sens fans: Less than zero. Unless the departure came on the heels of a Cup win, this would be devastating.

Entertainment value for the rest of us: High, right up until the player ended up signing with your team's biggest rival.

Possibility #5: Both guys end up on the same team

They're represented by the same agency. They've already admitted they're going to work together on this. They seem like friends. Is anyone else getting a Selanne/Kariya vibe here?

Odds of it happening: 1%

Entertainment value for Kings and/or Sens fans: We'll be at the bar.

Entertainment value for the rest of us: Save us a seat; we can all drown our sorrows while we watch the same team get handed the Stanley Cup for the next few years.

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Luckily, we still have two more Cups to hand out before the Doughty/Karlsson armageddon befalls us. Let's head to the power rankings to figure out who's leading the way for this year's...

Road to the Cup

The five teams that look like they're headed towards Stanley Cup-favourite status.

5. Los Angeles Kings (17-8-3, +22 true goals differential\*): They've retaken the Pacific thanks to five straight wins and a Golden Knights slump.

4. Columbus Blue Jackets (17-9-1, +11): They've got a big Metro showdown with the Devils this week, as the two will face off in back-to-back games (with two days off in between, for some reason).

3. Winnipeg Jets (17-6-3, +22): They continue their climb up the rankings, thanks to last night's dismantling of the Senators.

Hey, is it too early to start getting excited about the Jets/Blues home-and-home in two weeks?

2. St. Louis Blues (17-8-2, +14): Because I don't think it's too early.

1. Tampa Bay Lightning (18-6-2, +28): Might want to be careful with those point shots around Nikita Kucherov, guys.

(\*Goals scored minus goals allowed, without counting shootouts like the NHL does for some reason.)

No.

We are not doing this again. Not this week. Seriously, I know you're waiting for it. Don't bother. Asked and answered. No.

We are not doing yet another round of "Gosh, maybe we were all wrong about the Montreal Canadiens."

I mean, this would be what, chapter four of that story? Five? I've already lost count, and we're not even two full months into the season yet.

We went into the year thinking the Habs were contenders — not favourites, but one of those second-tier teams that at least had a realistic



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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shot. They were the defending division champions and despite a series of weird off-season moves, they deserved some respect.

Then the season started, and they were terrible. They couldn't score, shooting a comical 3.0 per cent as a team. And when Carey Price went from slumping to out with an injury, most of us wrote them off.

So Charlie Lindgren shows up to hold down the fort, the puck starts going in at the other end, and the Canadiens win seven of 10. They were back in the race, the season was saved, and we all had a good laugh about overreacting to the first few weeks.

Then came five straight losses, with the nadir being a Saturday night blowout that saw the Leafs embarrass them 6–0 on national television.

By the time that one was over, we were hearing about how the core just wasn't good enough and the rebuild was on the way. We just didn't know who would execute it, since Marc Bergevin was halfway out the door.

Then Price came back looking like the vintage 2015 version, and ever since the Canadiens have been unbeatable. They've won five straight, outscoring opponents 24–5 in the process. That includes Saturday night's 10–1 humiliation of the Red Wings, the weekend's biggest blowout by far. Right now, the Canadiens are a woodchipper. They're back in the playoffs, holding down third spot in the Atlantic, and they'll be playing on home ice for the next two weeks.

So this is the part where we're supposed to write about how the Habs are fixed, that a healthy Carey Price changes everything for this team, and that Bergevin and Claude Julien were smart not to make any panic moves when the vultures were circling.

Well, forget it. We know how this plays out. We write that column, and the Canadiens will go out and lose 7–0 to the Blues tomorrow to launch a stretch where they drop seven of nine. Then just as we're backing the moving trucks up to the Bell Centre for the inevitable fire sale, they'll beat the Lightning 9–2 to launch a win streak. By February, they'll somehow manage to be in first place in the Atlantic and last place overall in the same month. Who knows, maybe even the same day.

And we'll be with them the whole way, writing the same "Whoops, spoke too soon" pieces. Just not this week. We all need a break right now.

So let's leave it at this: Right now, the Canadiens look very good. The Red Wings may not be anyone's idea of a powerhouse, but they're Montreal's top competition for a playoff spot, at least until the schedule-maker lets the Bruins catch up in the games-played column. Spanking Detroit back-to-back was an impressive statement. And it's possible that this Montreal team really is better than we thought.

But maybe not. Tune in next week, and the week after, and every week after that. Maybe by the end of the season we'll have at least started to figure these guys out.

The five teams that look like they're headed towards watching Rasmus Dahlin highlights and playing with draft-lottery simulations.

5. Florida Panthers (10-13-3, -14): The Atlantic Division may be sputtering, but at least they own most of the real estate in the bottom five.

4. Detroit Red Wings (10-12-5, -17): That Montreal game was ugly. You have to appreciate the symmetry, though.

3. Philadelphia Flyers (8-11-7, -9): Make it 10 straight losses for a franchise that's outright flatlining.

2. Arizona Coyotes (7-18-5, -31): Hey, look who's not on the bottom anymore. Let's hear it, Coyotes fans: We're No. 2, we're No. 2! Wait, why are all the eight-year-olds giggling right now?

1. Buffalo Sabres (6-17-4, -37): Yikes.

Last week, we went back and forth on whether the Sabres should pass the Coyotes for top spot in the bottom five. This week, there wasn't much of a debate.

Let's start with the good news: The Sabres scored a goal this weekend. It was only one, and it came in the third period of a game that was already decided. But they did score, and it was the first time they'd put a puck in the net in four games.

Now the bad news: Literally everything else.

The Sabres have lost four straight, and 11 of 12. They've dropped behind the Coyotes into dead last in the league. And despite playing in an Atlantic Division with only two good teams, they're 13 points out of the playoff race — which is to say they're not in the playoff race at all. They're done.

It gets worse. At their current pace, they'd finish the season with 49 points, which would be worse than the team's rock-bottom years of 2013–14 and 2014–15. Those seasons, as you may remember, the Sabres weren't exactly trying to make the playoffs, or do much of anything other than pad their lottery odds for Aaron Ekblad and Connor McDavid. Last season, an 81-point finish was enough to cost Tim Murray and Dan Bylsma their jobs. That sent a clear signal that expectations were rising, and all the pain of a long rebuild was supposed to pay off with a run at the post-season, at the very least.

Instead, this.

So now what? It's not like Sabres fans can even settle into the "fire everyone" stage of frustration, since the team already did that in the off-season. With the draft and free agency a year away, that leaves trades as pretty much the only option for improving.

And indeed, according to reports, the Sabres are ready to start making moves. Eliotte Friedman has them willing to listen to offers on anyone other than Jack Eichel, including Evander Kane and maybe even Rasmus Ristolainen or Sam Reinhart.

That's the smart move — clearly the status quo isn't working in Buffalo. But it's also an admission of failure. This is the team that the Sabres spent the last half-decade patiently reshaping themselves into. And now it's starting to look like all those years landed them Eichel and not much else. There's some help on the way, with Alexander Nylander still making his way through the system and Casey Mittelstadt in the college ranks. But for the most part, the spoils of the rebuild are already in Buffalo. And the results speak for themselves.

Maybe this ends with the Sabres landing the franchise defenceman they need so desperately by drafting Rasmus Dahlin. Lord knows, they've earned some lottery karma over the years. That's a long way away, and it's tough to sell long-suffering Buffalo fans on a 20-per cent chance at the ping-pong balls. But right now, that may be all the Sabres have to offer.

Tape II Tape

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Quick shifts: 10 more notable moments from around the league

- On Saturday, we asked whether Cam Talbot's injury meant the Oilers' goaltending might sink them. The answer: Nope, as long as they score seven goals a night. Which they did in the weekend's wildest game, earning a 7–5 win over the Flames after nearly blowing a 6–1 lead. The full highlights are worth a WATCH:

- In other Oiler news, they reacquired Brandon Davidson on Sunday, snagging him off waivers from the Canadiens. Um, the Sabres know they need defencemen, right?

- With apologies to the Flames and Oilers, the most exciting hockey of the weekend came in a wild overtime between the Panthers and Hurricanes.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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• The Rangers got the outdoor season underway with a weekend practice at Central Park. Thousands of fans attended, many of whom were no doubt confused that the league didn't find a way to make the Blackhawks show up.

• Hey, if you're going to have too many men on the ice, you may as well get your money's worth:

• It took a little longer than we might have expected, but Arizona's Dylan Strome picked up his first NHL goal on Saturday against the Devils:

Senators' blue-chipper Thomas Chabot got his first the night before:

• The Senators snapped their seven-game losing streak in that Friday win, but got right back to looking awful in last night's 5-0 loss in Winnipeg.

• It didn't take long for Adam Henrique to make an impact in Anaheim. After being acquired in last week's big trade, he scored his first as a Duck on Saturday:

• Viktor Arvidsson helped with a marriage proposal at Saturday's game:

Viktor Arvidsson assisting in a marriage proposal, what a beauty  
[pic.twitter.com/Hd327S0QU2](http://pic.twitter.com/Hd327S0QU2)

— Spittin' Chiclets (@spittinchiclets) December 3, 2017

• Finally, Mark Scheifele continues to be one of the league's most underrated stars. This feature takes a look behind the scenes at how he prepares.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086748 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Flames Notebook: Is Sam Bennett turning a corner?

Pat Steinberg

December 4, 2017, 2:09 PM

After a successful seven-game homestand ended in November, the Calgary Flames have struggled to string together successful outings, and thus successful results, in the nine games since. While the team attempts to stop its meandering trajectory, there might be some positive traction with one embattled player.

Prior to Calgary opening a four-game homestand against the Toronto Maple Leafs on Nov. 28th, head coach Glen Gulutzan made an interesting declaration on the struggling Sam Bennett. Bennett had just three points in 23 games heading into said homestand, yet Gulutzan revealed he was coming off one of the most successful 10-game segments of his career.

Gulutzan cited scoring chances as his evidence and a little digging seems to back the coach's claim. Per NaturalStatTrick.com, Bennett has created 14 individual high danger scoring chances over his last 13 games (Gulutzan's referenced 10-game stretch and the three games since). That number means more when you compare Bennett's scoring chance outputs prior.

At the time of publishing, Bennett has played 26 games this season and has created a total of 19 high danger chances at 5-on-5. That means he had manufactured just five in the first 13 games this season, as opposed to 14 in his 13 most recent outings. That's a significant shift, so it becomes less surprising to see Bennett with five points in his last three games.

The next step for Bennett is to rely less on creating off the rush and start dictating a little more in the offensive zone. While there's no doubt he's been far more dangerous the last month or so, Bennett's possession metrics are still largely unimpressive. Below is a look at Bennett's shot-based data in the two 13-game stretches we've referenced.

Period	CF%	OZS%
Oct. 4 – Nov. 4	47.2	58.4
Nov. 5 – Dec. 2	46.3	65.2

Despite getting fed with some of the team's highest offensive starts, Bennett is still spending far too much time defending. From a team perspective, that's easier to swallow with Bennett generating meaningful opportunities, but it still points to an area of growth for him and his line.

Bennett has been playing almost exclusively with Mark Jankowski and Jaromir Jagr since the latter's return, and they've certainly had their moments. But with all of them well over 60 per cent on the zone start scale, continually being outshot at 5-on-5 isn't ideal. If they can get things closer to even, Bennett's trio could really become a dangerous depth line.

So, has Bennett really turned a corner? That answer isn't totally clear, but there's no doubt he's been a more dangerous player. If and when his all-around game follows in step, I'll be a little more convinced the answer to this query is yes.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086749 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Q&A: Daniel Briere on life and career in new autobiography

Eric Engels

December 4, 2017, 10:13 AM

MONTREAL—The way Daniel Briere tells it in his recently released autobiography *Mister Playoffs*, he went to bed one night at the beginning of the 2000-01 season convinced he'd wake up as a member of the Montreal Canadiens.

The kid from Gatineau, Que., who had scored 416 points in 198 games with the Drummondville Voltigeurs in the QMJHL before being drafted 24th overall in 1996, appeared to be on the outs with the Phoenix Coyotes. He had scored 36 goals and 92 points in 68 AHL games with the Springfield Falcons in 1997-98, managed respectable production in spite of being used sparingly over parts of the next two seasons in Phoenix, but had failed to gain the trust of Coyotes coach Bob Francis and had been placed on waivers just two games into the 2000-01 campaign.

That's when the team Briere grew up cheering for had first expressed an interest in him.

"The one thing that was scary at the time was that I had a two-way contract and my NHL salary was over \$700,000 and my salary in the AHL was \$30,000," said Briere in a telephone interview with Sportsnet this past Sunday. "If you got claimed on waivers then, teams had to keep you for a minimum of 28 days.

"Montreal was afraid to pick me up because my contract was so lopsided in NHL money, but that's when my agent (Pat Brisson) talked to the Canadiens and had agreed with them that we'd raise my salary in the minors to about \$75,000 and cut my NHL salary in half. And I was totally



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fine with that because all I wanted was to play in the NHL. I was happy. I knew we had a done deal."

Briere says in the book he had suffered the most devastating blow of his career when he woke up the next morning and was told by the Coyotes he'd be returning to Springfield, Mass. And it'll probably be a tough one for Montreal fans to absorb, learning that the purported reason the Canadiens didn't follow through on claiming Briere was because they didn't want to free up a roster spot by trading or waiving forward Juha Lind, who had spent a total of 60 games over two seasons with the team and scored a measly four goals and six assists before never appearing in the NHL again.

As for Briere, he found his way back to Phoenix, scored 11 goals in 29 games with the Coyotes to close out 2000-01, and started on the path to becoming the player who managed 307 goals and 696 points in 973 regular-season games before retiring as one of the greatest playoff performers the NHL's ever known.

Mister Playoffs, as told by Briere to Radio-Canada reporter Martin Leclerc, is a riveting read (in French) that takes you through the highlights of his life and his hockey career.

After ripping through it, we had to talk to Briere about that first brush with the Canadiens, about his decision as a free agent to choose the Philadelphia Flyers over them in 2007, and certainly about how he scored 116 points in 124 playoff games.

We also made sure to touch on the tumultuous relationship he and former coach Michel Therrien formed when the two were members of the Canadiens during the 2013-14 season.

SN: The book is filled with all kinds of fascinating material. Though we can't run through it all, we'd like to start with you on the subject of becoming an unrestricted free agent for the very first time. You had just completed your fourth season with the Buffalo Sabres, recording 95 points and co-captaining (with Chris Drury) the team to a Presidents' Trophy and a run to the Eastern Conference Final. How was the experience of going to market as one of the most sought-after players in the world?

Daniel Briere: "Very nerve-wracking, demanding, and it's weird because you go in not knowing if there's going to be interest. You have a feeling, but there are no guarantees you'll get what you think you might be worth. You don't know what the offers will look like.

"Five minutes into free agency I was completely relieved knowing that we had many, many teams call and many offers on the table that already went over and above my expectations. So the worry over whether or not a team I was interested in would call or whether or not I made a mistake not negotiating further with Buffalo all went out the window right away. That was a good feeling.

"But then comes the process of figuring out the best place to go, and we started weeding teams out until we had the Flyers, the Canadiens and the New York Rangers. And I was in contract with Chris Drury also, and when he told me he wanted to go to the Rangers that made it easy for me to call the Rangers and say I was out and that I was opening up the doors for Chris to go there.

"Then we had to focus on Montreal and Philly and there was a lot of back-and-forth trying to take in all the pluses and minuses on each side. At the end of the day, it was very close until we came to talking about the players on each team. I felt the young players coming up on the Flyers' side—Mike Richards, Jeff Carter, Scottie Upshall, Braydon Coburn—and having a chance to play with Simon Gagne and Mike Knuble tipped the scale on their side."

SN: The book reveals that the Canadiens assured you they would match any offer, and it goes into detail about how they presented their interest. Can you share with our readers just how far they went to get you?

Daniel Briere: "Someone showed up at the door, as soon as free agency opened, with a package from the Canadiens. Talking to [Canadiens

legend] Jean Beliveau, talking to [Canadiens legend and then-GM] Bob Gainey—it was almost surreal to be courted by the greatest hockey organization in the world. They gave me a DVD with Kiefer Sutherland (who at the time was playing a starring role in the critically acclaimed television series 24) in a Canadiens jersey pitching me on the team and the city. My wife at the time was crying when she saw that.

"They did it all right. There's nothing you could say that they missed the boat on with their presentation. Their presentation was simply amazing. It touched my heart, and that's why it hurt so much to turn it down."

SN: The book is called Mister Playoffs for a reason. In 2010 you put up 30 points in the playoffs and came within two wins of bringing the Stanley Cup back to Philadelphia. How do you look back at that experience?

Daniel Briere: "It was probably the best two months of hockey I played in my career.

"If I remember correctly, for the first three games of the first series against New Jersey I was held without a point (he remembers correctly) and reporters in Philly were starting to get on me. And then all of a sudden it just exploded. I finished that series strong (with two goals and five points in the final two games).

"In the second round, against Boston, it was definitely one of the best series I've ever played. Had a lot of big goals (Briere scored in five of the seven games and played a huge role in helping the Flyers overcome a 3-0 series deficit and a 3-0 Bruins lead in Game 7).

"The third round against Montreal was probably my weakest performance (he had only two goals and three points in five games), but then the finals came against Chicago. When we came home for Game 3 against Chicago—when [coach] Peter Laviolette called me into his office and told me he was going to match me up against Jonathan Toews and his line because he felt our line's puck possession would match up well against them—that was one of the greatest compliments a coach has ever given me. Without saying much, he was putting me up against the player who was probably the greatest player in the NHL at the time. We answered the bell and performed well." (Briere finished the six-game series with 12 points, falling just one point shy of Wayne Gretzky's record for most points ever recorded in a Stanley Cup Final.)

SN: If you could put your finger on it, what was it that made you consistently rise to the occasion in the playoffs?

Daniel Briere: "I think it's a combination of different factors. Growing up I always dreamed of playing in the playoffs, I always thought going to bed at night that I would score an overtime winner in the playoffs. I always wanted to be the guy that would make the difference. I visualized myself making the difference.

"I remember having conversations with Chris Drury about how most players, when they get in those big moments, they're afraid to make a mistake and afraid to screw it up. But players like us don't even acknowledge that it's a possibility that we might not make the big play happen.

"And if it didn't work out, it just meant my odds went way up for the next time I'd be in that position. Just that mentality of wanting to be in that moment was a mental challenge I wasn't afraid of, whereas a lot of guys are."

SN: You finally made it to Montreal after being bought out by Philadelphia in 2013. You say in the book that you had a conversation with general manager Marc Bergevin and coach Therrien that—without being given any guarantees—you'd be used in an offensive role, have a chance to contribute on the power play to help them fill an obvious scoring void. You ended up choosing Montreal over the Nashville Predators, and shortly after your arrival you were put on the back burner by Therrien.

The book describes one particular encounter you had in December of that season, where you were summoned to Therrien's office to review a bad sequence of yours from a previous game and were then told by the coach that, "No one respects you and no one wants to play with you."



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How do you process that event now, in retrospect?

Daniel Briere: "I'm sure he had a tactic behind it. I would hope so—with him being a coach. I just don't know and haven't figured out what it was. I would give him the benefit of the doubt of thinking it was tactical and that it wasn't just personal, but only he knows that."

SN: If he had berated or embarrassed you and then given you 16-17 minutes of ice time the next night, would you have understood it better?

Daniel Briere: "Definitely. That's what [Sabres coach] Lindy Ruff used to do. He did that to me a few times, but at least he gave me a chance to redeem myself. If you're doing it to get under the skin of a player, you gotta give them a chance to respond. If you do that and you don't give them a chance to respond, then it really serves no purpose."

"But when you're told that, the first reaction is you start questioning yourself: 'Am I a bad teammate? Is it that bad that nobody likes me, nobody wants to play with me?'"

"It's definitely a bad feeling."

SN: How much worse was it given the pressure of being a French Canadian playing for the Canadiens and feeling like you weren't getting a fair chance to prove you could contribute to the team's success?

Daniel Briere: "I was okay and willing to live with it because all I cared about was trying to find a way to help the team. If the coach or the players didn't feel like I could keep up with them, I wanted to make sure that in the room I could be the best teammate and the best leader to help them through."

"It was the same thing with Michel. I was willing to help him out in the room. I knew he had a bad reputation. I knew that coming in. But I thought he might rely on me to help him out with the dressing room."

"That he didn't was probably the thing I was most surprised with. I don't know if he felt like I was a threat to him, but it's the one thing I wish we could have a redo on."

SN: You came to Montreal having scored 109 points in 108 playoff games, and in the second round of the 2014 playoffs Therrien scratched you for what turned out to be a 4-0 loss for the Canadiens in Game 5. Your teammate at the time, David Desharnais, says in your book that he was absolutely shocked. How did you take it?

Daniel Briere: "That decision to scratch me in Game 5 made completely no sense to me. I'm not trying to be arrogant here. We all have our strengths and our weaknesses, and there's things I know I didn't do well over the course of my career, but the one thing I did was I was a gamer."

"When I saw that, I just couldn't believe it. It made absolutely no sense to me. I didn't know what the thinking was. We ended up getting beat badly that game, so in a sense maybe he did me a favour. I would not have changed the outcome of the game myself, playing on the fourth line."

"But I had an assist in the first game in Boston in overtime, I had a couple of big plays in the sweep over Tampa in Round 1—including the one in overtime when Dale Weise scored. So to me that decision just made no sense. What if we got in the crunch or got to overtime that night? You have someone on the fourth line who has done it many times and has the confidence to do it. It was just baffling to me. It got to the point where I was wondering how much he wanted to win. That's how deep it goes as a player. But at the end of the day he's the coach and he's hired to do that, and I had to go along and had no say. I had to keep moving forward, which I did for the next two games of the series."

Briere played just nine shifts and a total of 8:06 in Game 7 and got the last laugh by setting up Montreal's first goal and adding one of his own to put the Canadiens up 3-1 with less than six minutes remaining, helping them to the Eastern Conference Final.

His book, which is filled with his thoughts on experiences like that, is currently only available in French. But he did mention there is a possibility it will be released in English at some point in the near future.

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TSN.CA / Nylander practises at centre as Bozak battles illness

By Kristen Shilton

TORONTO – William Nylander stayed on the ice so long after Maple Leafs practice on Monday, the dressing room was deserted (save for media) by the time he called it a day.

With Tyler Bozak sidelined by illness, Nylander had just finished his first extended session of the season as a centre. The sophomore has slotted in sporadically at morning skates, but on Monday he was the middle man for James van Riemsdyk and Mitch Marner for the entirety of the day's drills.

When called upon, Patrick Marleau has been the Leafs' preferred centre substitute this season. That increases the likelihood Nylander was just a placeholder for Bozak, but he did enter the NHL as a centre and take reps there during the 2015-16 season. Head coach Mike Babcock said last April he wouldn't move Nylander this season, but does Monday's practice now signal a possible position change on the horizon?

"I don't know. I'm just trying to win the game against Calgary, let's go from there," Babcock said. "It's something where, who knows? If we've got to use him, we'll maybe try him there."

It was just days ago that Babcock was defending Nylander and Marner from a growing chorus of critics who seem to only notice their deficiencies. After a strong end to his rookie season and an MVP-worthy turn with gold-medal winning Sweden at the World Championships, Nylander seemed destined to avoid any hint of a sophomore slump.

Yet the transition to Year 2 hasn't been entirely smooth. Nylander has racked up only five goals and 15 assists — over 28 games. Six of those points have come in his last seven games, after he broke out of a well-documented 12-game goal drought. He's played on every one of the Leafs' lines this season, but has yet to find a combination where he thrives.

It was Babcock who pointed out that Nylander may not be dominating the scoresheet, but he's producing at the same scoring pace as he was as a rookie (the numbers are nearly identical — Nylander had six goals and 14 assists in his first 28 games last season). A coach's public vote of confidence never goes unnoticed by a player, but Nylander also has loftier goals than being "as good" as before.

"[Points] come when they come, but you try not to think about it too much," Nylander said. "Maybe same thing as last year — I started well and then got in a little dip after, but hopefully we're getting out of that now."

Nylander went through a 27-game stretch from October to December as a rookie where he scored only four goals. Once he got over that hurdle, the consistency in his game was much improved, and he's aiming to find it again. It's a taller task when the element of surprise with his opponents is long gone, but Nylander doesn't accept tougher matchups as any excuse for stagnant production.

"You have high expectations for yourself, so it doesn't matter who you play against," he said. "You still want to produce."

Leo Komarov sees a lot of Nylander, not just from his adjacent stall in the Leafs' room, but also on the ice when Nylander is rounding out his line with Nazem Kadri. The veteran has watched the 21-year-old's confidence



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blossom this season — even amid buzz from the outside that he's lost his swagger.

"I think it's a lot of just people talking. We know what's going on with this team," Komarov said. "Everyone knew he was a great player, but he's even better this year than last. ...Playing in Toronto, everyone is always talking about this or that, but I think from what I see they're doing really good and we're winning games and that's the most important thing."

One of the only Leafs to boast first-hand experience playing alongside Nylander at centre is Zach Hyman. He flanked Nylander when they were with the AHL's Toronto Marlies and again in early 2016 with the Leafs. Should Toronto need Nylander to step back in at centre, Hyman sees his speed and skating as the ultimate assets to make it a smooth transition. As for the din of questions surrounding Nylander's performance this season, Hyman shrugs them off the same way he does interrogations about his own top-line positioning. It simply comes with the territory.

"I think he handles it well, and everyone gets [talked about here, it's not just one player]," he said. "Everyone knows how he feels. But I think it's a good thing. You want to be in a position where you have pressure and in a market that appreciates you and that cares. People want to talk about the Leafs and he gets that. At the same time, when you go through tough stretches it's hard but everyone has them. He's a good player and he's confident in himself."

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TSN.CA / Struggling Marner says his puck luck 'sucks'

By Mark Masters

TSN Toronto reporter Mark Masters checks in daily with news and notes from Maple Leafs practices and game-day skates. The Maple Leafs practised at the MasterCard Centre on Monday.

Mitch Marner has now gone six games without a point despite having some glorious chances on the Western Canada road swing. What does he think of his puck luck right now?

"Ah, yeah, well it sucks," he said bluntly. "I mean, there's chances I've had that probably should go in that don't, but it's about trying to do the right things and making sure you're there defensively and I think the scoring will come so you just got to be patient with it."

Leafs head coach Mike Babcock's message at the moment is simple.

"I don't believe in luck," he said. "I believe in preparation. When you do enough work you get lucky, that kind of thing. So, to me, worry about things you can control. You can control your work ethic and just get to work. That's it."

Marner on his puck luck right now: 'It sucks'

Mitch Marner admits that it's not ideal when he's missing scoring chances that he should be capitalizing on but he's remaining focused on all aspects of his game and knows the scoring will eventually start to come.

Leafs aim to be 'dominant' at home, not 'cute'

Babcock put his players through a 45-minute on-ice session on Monday, which is a bit longer than usual. He noted it was designed, in part, to get the jet lag out of the legs. After spending most of the last two weeks on the road, Toronto has two home games in the next seven days — against Calgary on Wednesday and then Edmonton on Sunday, with a date against the Penguins in Pittsburgh in between (Saturday night).

"We have to do a better job at home," Babcock said. "Sometimes you get a little cuter at home and cute doesn't lead to winning a whole lot of hockey games. It leads to a whole lot of turnovers, so we got to do a better job here at home of getting ourselves re-established. We should be a dominant, dominant home team."

The Leafs have lost their last two games at the Air Canada Centre, dropping to 8-5-0 on the season in Toronto.

Babcock sticking with 'safe' Polak

Roman Polak remained on the third blueline pair alongside Andreas Borgman at practice even though the veteran defenceman struggled at times during the recent road trip, taking a pair of penalties on Thursday in Edmonton. He would've sat in the box again on Saturday in Vancouver, but the Canucks scored on a delayed call.

"Polie's a big, heavy guy," Babcock said. "He plays safe so that's a big part of it, too. If you feel safe with a guy out on the ice ... a guy's more likely to play."

Polak has played the last four games after sitting out the previous three weeks as a healthy scratch. He gives Babcock another option on the penalty kill. For most of the season, the Leafs have leaned heavily on Ron Hainsey and Nikita Zaitsev when short-handed.

Hainsey leads the NHL in average short-handed ice time per game (4:28) while Zaitsev is third (3:43).

Coach not fretting over PK workhorse Hainsey

Is Babcock worried Hainsey may wear down?

"No, I think he's only playing like 22 minutes a night or something like that. I guarantee you that Hainsey doesn't want to play less. I think with Polie back in the lineup that will slow down ... We're not taking a ton of penalties anyway."

Hainsey averages 21:53 of ice time per game.

Dreger: The Maple Leafs are a top team in the NHL

TSN Hockey Insider Darren Dreger joins Landsberg in the Morning with guest hosts Matt Cauz and Dave Feschuk to discuss the Maple Leafs west coast road trip which saw them go 2-1, Auston Matthews returning to health, the Canadiens hot streak and the Senators struggles.

Lines at Monday's practice

Forwards

Hyman-Matthews-Brown

Marleau-Kadri-Komarov

van Riemsdyk-Nylander-Marner

Martin-Moore-Leivo

Soshnikov

Absent: Bozak (illness)

Defencemen

Rielly-Hainsey

Gardiner-Zaitsev

Borgman-Polak

Carrick

Goalies

Andersen

McElhinney

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

By Scott Cullen

A Canucks milestone, free agent defencemen from 2019 in the news, Price is back in fine form, Ducks-Devils trade and more in TSN Hockey's Top 10 Storylines of the Week.

### DANIEL SEDIN HITS 1,000

Vancouver Canucks left winger Daniel Sedin became the seventh active player to cross the 1,000-point threshold, picking up three points in Thursday's 5-3 win at Nashville.

The 37-year-old is not playing so much this season, 14:14 time on ice per game is his lowest since 2003-2004, and the Sedins are left to a supporting role at this stage of their careers, but hitting a milestone like this is a reminder of just how productive they have been for a long time.

In his illustrious career, Daniel's most productive stretch was from 2006-2007 through 2010-2011, when he put up 429 points in 390 games, winning the 2010-2011 scoring title with 104 points.

While production is down this year, the Sedins remain play drivers, controlling 57% of shot attempts during 5-on-5 play, so while the twins may be in their twilight of their careers, they remain productive contributors, even in their diminished role.

### FREE AGENT DEFENCEMEN

The 2019 free agent class of defencemen – headlined by Erik Karlsson, Drew Doughty and Oliver Ekman-Larsson – is very interesting, not least of all because at this early point in the process there is still the possibility that these guys might move.

This could all be fanciful dreaming, by teams that hoping that might be able to lure one of these premier talents in free agency, but Karlsson and Doughty both had some interesting comments this week.

Doughty told The Athletic's Craig Custance that he'd be discussing free agency with Karlsson. "Right now, we'd be gauging off what Subban makes," Doughty said, referencing Subban's \$9-million cap hit. "I think both of us deserve quite a bit more than that."

For his part, Karlsson insisted, "I will get what I'm worth."

Neither of these stances are especially controversial, but it's unusual for hockey players to talk about how much money they will be seeking on a new contract. Doughty noted that there will be some pressure on the 2019 free agent defencemen to set a new standard for the position.

### PRICE RETURNS

The Montreal Canadiens' season was fading away, as they had gone seven straight without a regulation win, and the outlook was bleak. But a funny thing happened on the way to the draft lottery: the Habs got superstar goaltender Carey Price back from injury and Price, who had struggled early in the season, was in fine form, stopping 128 of 133 shots in his first four games back in the lineup.

The Canadiens are hardly fixed, as they are still ranked 29th in goals per game (2.48), but if Carey Price is healthy and back to being Carey Price, then they are going to have a chance to be competitive, which is a whole lot better than things looked even a week ago.

### HENRIQUE-VATANEN DEAL

A couple of teams looking to address positional needs used their depth elsewhere on the roster to swing a significant trade.

The Anaheim Ducks have had their centre ice position gutted by injuries, so they made a deal to acquire Adam Henrique from New Jersey, sending puck-moving blueliner Sami Vatanen to the Devils.

### DORSETT DONE

One of the big surprises for the Vancouver Canucks early in this season was the production they received from gritty right winger Derek Dorsett, a 30-year-old who missed most of last season after he had neck surgery.

He scored six goals in the first 10 games in this season, stunning production from a player who had scored more than seven goals in a season once, all while remaining his feisty self – he leads the league with 74 penalty minutes in 20 games.

Nevertheless, word came this week that Dorsett's career is finished, that he can't continue to play because of the risks involved with his surgically-repaired neck. He ends his career with 127 points, 105 (regular-season) fights and 1,314 penalty minutes in 515 games.

### SENS SLUMPING

It's not a great time for the Ottawa Senators. Friday's 6-5 win at the Islanders ended a seven-game winless streak, a miserable stretch that saw them score just nine goals.

Even after the win at the Islanders, the next five games are on the road, so that's not an ideal situation, and if this season gets away from them that will be a significant disappointment after last season's appearance in the Eastern Conference Final.

There was also another round of the Senators insisting that they are not for sale, with rumours suggesting that the team lacks the funds to develop LeBreton Flats for a new arena.

### MATT MURRAY INJURY

After winning back-to-back Stanley Cups, the Pittsburgh Penguins have started this season slowly, in part because their goaltending has not been as strong as it has been in recent seasons.

Matt Murray, who is the clear No. 1 between the pipes for the Penguins, had a .906 save percentage through 21 games, and suffered a lower-body injury after a collision with Philadelphia Flyers winger Jakub Voracek, and that leaves the Penguins in a precarious spot.

In the past few seasons, the Penguins have had the luxury of having either Murray or established veteran Marc-Andre Fleury in net, but with Fleury gone to Vegas in the expansion draft, a Murray injury leaves Pittsburgh with 22-year-old Tristan Jarry in net and Jarry has appeared in just five NHL games in his career.

Jarry did record a 34-save shutout at Buffalo Friday, but this is still a dicey situation if Murray is going to be out long-term.

### FLYERS SLIDING

Heading into Saturday's afternoon contest against Boston (which they are losing), the Philadelphia Winless in nine, the Philadelphia Flyers are starting to feel the heat, with fans calling for head coach Dave Hakstol to be relieved of his duties (if not necessarily in such amicable terms).

The Flyers haven't been entirely awful – there is some bad luck involved in losing four of those games in overtime and one in a shootout – but the season is getting away from the Flyers and if they don't turn it around soon, they'll be looking ahead to next season, probably sooner than expected.

### KESSEL

With Sidney Crosby going through an early-season slump (he's since emerged and is producing in typical fashion again) and Evgeni Malkin injured, the early scoring leader on the Pittsburgh Penguins is Phil



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Kessel, who has 32 points in 27 games, a career-best 1.19 points per game.

Kessel is generating 3.7 shots per game, his highest since 2013-2014, though he played two-and-a-half minutes more per game back then; that's encouraging for the 30-year-old winger's production moving forward, but beware the power play. Kessel has scored 17 of his 32 points with the man advantage, tied with Steven Stamkos for most power-play points in the league.

### WILLIAM KARLSSON

The Vegas Golden Knights made out pretty well in the expansion draft, but even Vegas has to be surprised by the immediate impact they've received from centre William Karlsson, who came from Columbus.

Karlsson, 24, has scored 10 goals in the past 10 games and is tied for fifth in the league with 14 goals. He has 24 points in 25 games, one off of tying last year's career-high. He's shooting 25.5% right now, so that's not going to continue, but Karlsson has been shooting more (28 shots on goal over the past 10 games), so that will help to offset when his percentages start to fall.

The good news out of this for Vegas is that Karlsson is young enough to be a building block. He will be a restricted free agent next summer and is looking at a hefty increase in salary from the \$1-million he's making this season.

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1086753 Websites

TSN.CA / Sparks seeing the results of more serious approach

By Kristen Shilton

TORONTO — There was nowhere Garret Sparks wanted to be more than in his net last April, guiding the Toronto Marlies through a playoff berth they'd fought hard to earn.

But that chance was cut short for the netminder. During the second game of the Marlies' first-round series against Albany, Sparks suffered a leg injury that would cap off a roller-coaster year spent battling ailments, veteran competition and a few problems of his own making.

Instead of practising with his teammates, Sparks was relegated to doing rehabilitation exercises in the dim hallway outside Ricoh Coliseum's visitor dressing room. Some days it was strength work with resistance bands; others involved pushing a weight-laden sled back and forth the length of a dingy carpet.

When the Marlies' playoff run ended in a second-round defeat, Sparks used the ultimate sports platitude — "best shape of my life" — to describe his progress. With a long summer looming, Sparks resolved not to let the headway he made go to waste.

"Last season was a huge period of growth for me, from how it started, to having my season just taken from me at the end after all I'd done," Sparks said after practice recently. "It was a lot of things happening to me in a short period of time. [The season] was up, it was down. It was adversity, it was success. It was being out, coming back, finding your game again. It gave me an opportunity to maybe step back and focus on the important things, the things that make me better, the things that make my game better and remove everything else that I didn't think contributed to what I'm trying to do here."

The next four months were transformative for Sparks, both mentally and physically. He became an eager student of his own health and nutrition, dropping 10 pounds by shunning empty calories and remaining

purposefully hungry. Any outside distractions that once pulled his focus from the goal of being an elite netminder were cast aside.

In coach speak, Sparks finally put in the work.

Since he entered the American Hockey League in 2012, Sparks has consistently posted strong numbers. In 31 games last season, the Elmhurst, Ill., native put up a 21-9-0 record, 2.16 goals-against average and .922 save percentage. But it's not enough to simply be a good AHL player. Sparks magnified his focus in the off-season to take the next step.

The results so far speak for themselves. After 14 games Sparks leads all AHL goaltenders with double-digit starts in goals-against average (1.64) and is second in save percentage (.944) with an 11-3-0 record.

"My whole mentality is in economy of movement and energy and how all those things are related," he said of what's changed this season. "But the way to become economical is to put in the work to perfect those movements and put in the work to give your body an opportunity to get to the positions you need to get to. I did a lot of that, not with performance in mind but longevity, health and overall functionality in net. I wasn't saying, 'Hey, I'm doing this so I'll have incredible numbers.' I'm doing it because I'm going to do things right from this point on."

Sparks is first to admit he hasn't always followed that path. Since the Maple Leafs drafted him in the seventh round, 190th overall, in the 2011 NHL Entry Draft, Sparks has had just one stint with the big club, when stakes were at their lowest. He was recalled for 17 games with the Leafs in November and December of the 2015-16 season, the one head coach Mike Babcock prefaced with a promise of pain in store for fans.

Sparks' debut was the opposite of painful, a 3-0 shutout of the Edmonton Oilers that drew tears of disbelief from the goalie in an on-ice interview. He was the first goaltender in franchise history to blank a team in his NHL debut. But from there, Sparks was average at best. His final numbers were a 6-9-1 record, 3.02 goals-against average and .893 save percentage.

Mike Parson watched every game Sparks played for the Leafs, and has seen at least the highlights from most of his games with the Marlies. It was Parson who scouted Sparks for the Ontario Hockey League Guelph Storm when he was their goaltending coach. At the time Sparks was relatively unknown but Parson saw his potential and encouraged the Storm to draft him in the eighth round of the 2009 OHL Priority Selection.

Parson, who has since left hockey to work in finance, helped mould the "raw, passionate" goaltender from an early age, and they remain close. He knew instinctively that Sparks didn't give that NHL tour his best effort.

"We have a little philosophy between the two of us that we've had since junior, which is 'be happy, but never satisfied,'" Parson said. "I thought he got too comfortable after about the third or fourth game. I saw his mannerism in the net change as the games went on. I thought he was too comfortable, and I thought he did not stick to that mindset."

"I don't know if my focus was there the way it is now," Sparks admitted. "I was caught up in the fact I was in the NHL and I was there at the same time as a bunch of other guys I've come up through the system with. We were all just a little bit starstruck and enjoying the experience, the people we were playing against, the cities we were going to. There were no expectations on us to win hockey games and my mentality wasn't as sharp."

Sparks' standing with the Leafs took a hit last November when he was suspended three games by the Marlies for violating team policy on social media use. Sparks was an administrator on a Facebook page for goalies and directed violent and sexist language at another user who was mocking a disabled person. The incident drastically altered his approach to online interactions.

"I always saw myself as someone normal who gets the opportunity to play a professional sport," Sparks said. "I was really open and honest with people. I thought that would be a good thing. I thought that made me



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different and human, but really it just made me vulnerable to things getting in the way of where I want to be.”

Other than a few emergency recalls, Sparks hasn't gotten a look from the Leafs since his first go-around. But they've kept the 24-year-old close, signing him to a two-year, \$1.35-million contract extension over the summer that will include the first one-way clause of his career next season. When that kicks in Sparks will be owed his full \$700,000 salary regardless of where he plays, while Toronto will also have \$850,000 on the books for current backup Curtis McElhinney.

Despite the fact the Leafs have traded for, signed, released and claimed several goalies in the last 15 months alone, management maintains Sparks has a future with the team.

“The only thing we have to get is to try and keep him healthy,” said general manager Lou Lamoriello in July. “Every time things seem to go well he gets an injury. He's working very hard at it this summer, we've put him in a two-year contract to make him understand that we believe in him and now it's up to him to do what has to be done to get that opportunity.”

With the departure of Antoine Bibeau as an untended restricted free agent in June, Sparks started the season with college free agent Kasimir Kaskisuo as his main competition for AHL ice time. That is until Toronto swapped Tobias Lindberg and a 2018 sixth-round pick with the Vegas Golden Knights for goalie Calvin Pickard on Oct. 7.

Pickard was coming off a starter's gig with the Colorado Avalanche last season, and suddenly the Marlies' crease was looking awful crowded.

“It's a wake-up call every time you're out of the net and he's in the net, that you have to be at your best when you're back in there. I don't think either of us has taken a second off since he got here,” said Sparks. “Obviously when the organization brings in another goalie, you immediately go to how it impacts you. But I think the only thing it did to impact me was give me a partner here who stabilizes the second half of this goaltending tandem with NHL experience and an insightful mind. He's a great teammate and he pushes me every day.”

But what is Sparks' next step? Parson is adamant his protégé is finally ready to be a full-time NHL goalie, and at least one Western Conference scout agrees he would be a solid backup. Yet the Leafs have a system in place with their goaltending, where the backup only plays on the second night of a back-to-back, which is why they re-signed McElhinney to a two-year, \$1.7-million contract last June. Better a 34-year-old spends his time charting faceoffs from the bench than a mid-20s upstart who needs playing time to keep improving.

Sparks has no control over when or if his time will ever come with the Leafs. McElhinney is a solid veteran with average numbers this season (2-2-0, 3.07 goals-against, .900 save percentage) but without extenuating circumstances, the Leafs likely won't alter their goaltending plan in-season. Should the strategy be forced to change, Sparks will be more than ready to contribute.

“His confidence is the main thing I've seen [this season], and the main thing he's seen in himself,” Parson said. “The more work [he] put into being a good goalie in the [off-season] means when you start to hit a bit of a speed bump, his valleys aren't nearly as severe as they used to be. And so he's becoming more consistent. That's what you see from a pro goaltender who really understands the game and will one day be an elite goaltender in the NHL.”

For now, Sparks has a personal blueprint to follow. With security mostly an illusion in sport, he's micromanaging where he can to possibly create his own – there's the pads he personally designed that he says have helped him make saves he wouldn't have before, the unrelenting commitment to his physical health and that pursuit of being as perfect as possible between the pipes.

“This year [Garret]'s really put together the whole package,” said Marlies head coach Sheldon Keefe. “He's here early. He's putting in a lot of work to take care of his body, both in being in good shape and staying healthy. So the biggest thing is he's been able to [play] consistently. He's been a

great goalie in this league, but he's had interruptions to his season almost every season I've been here. This year he hasn't had that and he's proving he's top of the class in this league.”

TSN.CA LOADED: 12.05.2017

1086754 Websites

TSN.CA / TradeCentre: Five options for Oilers in net

By Frank Seravalli

Laurent Brossoit has made just two starts for the Edmonton Oilers with Cam Talbot on the injured list, but his leash was never going to be long with Oil Country in full desperation mode.

The Oilers' season could swirl down the drain with two more weeks of shoddy goaltending. Brossoit, 24, has allowed five or more goals in three of his last five starts and has an .872 save percentage this season.

Oilers GM Peter Chiarelli is working the phones to acquire a stopgap in Talbot's absence, hastened by Brossoit's shaky outing on Saturday night as Edmonton nearly blew a 6-1 lead in the Battle of Alberta. Talbot is expected to be out until at least Dec. 14, according to coach Todd McLellan.

But who is out there for the Oilers?

Cap space isn't an issue – at least not this season. For teams looking to accumulate assets, the Oilers have all of their draft picks. The only complication is that the Oilers are just one contract shy of the 50-man limit, likely necessitating a body-in, body-out trade.

After the re-addition of Brandon Davidson, claimed off waivers Sunday from Montreal and expected to play Wednesday against the Flyers, defencemen Eric Gryba and Yohann Auvitu will likely soon be scratched off McLellan's lineup card. Inconsistent winger Anton Slepyshev, 23, is another potential trade chip.

Here are five potential targets for the Oilers in goal:

1. Chad Johnson (Buffalo): The man who saved the Calgary Flames' season last year is available. Sabres GM Jason Botterill is seeking assets (read: draft picks) in return for the pending UFA. Johnson went 12-3-0 with a .939 save percentage from last Nov. 3 to Dec. 10, while Brian Elliott found his game with the Flames in a similar hole to the one the Oilers are now. Johnson, 31, was actually the Oilers' top target to backup Talbot in 2016, but he signed with the rival, and then got \$2.5 million from the Sabres on a one-year deal last July 1. There may be competition: The Pittsburgh Penguins could also be sniffing around on Johnson.
2. Michael Hutchinson (Winnipeg): The Jets aren't actively looking to move Hutchinson, not with Steve Mason sidelined with a concussion, but Chiarelli also knows Hutchinson well after drafting him in Boston. Hutchinson, 27, has a gaudy .951 save percentage with the AHL's Manitoba Moose this season. He was the odd man out in training camp to Connor Hellebuyck and Mason following a three-year run in the NHL. Eric Comrie has been backing up Hellebuyck with Mason out. Hutchinson is a pending UFA with a \$1.15 million cap hit.
3. Michal Neuvirth (Philadelphia): Neuvirth was the Oilers' original No. 1 choice in free agency to backup Talbot in 2015, Chiarelli's first summer with Edmonton, but he inked a two-year deal in the goalie graveyard that is Philadelphia. The Oilers ended up trading for Anders Nilsson five days later. Neuvirth, 29, has a .915 save percentage in eight starts for the Flyers this season and is known as an incredibly streaky goalie. When he's hot, few are better. The Flyers could spell the rest of the season with



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Alex Lyon or Dustin Tokarski backing up Elliott if the return is right. The complication for Edmonton is that Neuvirth has another year on his deal at \$2.5 million and the accounting must make sense with Connor McDavid's contract kicking in.

4. Calvin Pickard (Toronto): The Maple Leafs acquired Pickard from Vegas in exchange for winger Tobias Lindberg and a sixth-round pick on Oct. 6 - the day after he was waived by the Golden Knights. A number of teams have been kicking themselves for not claiming Pickard. The 25-year-old has a .933 save percentage in eight appearances with the Marlies. His acquisition cost will be higher than others on this list and the Leafs, who appear to be in no rush to move Pickard, may not be willing to throw a life preserver to Edmonton before facing them again on Sunday night.

5. Petr Mrazek (Detroit): Mrazek has struggled to find his game recently for the Red Wings, but a solid netminder is buried somewhere in those pads. Two seasons ago, he capped off an 83-game run that saw him post a .920 save percentage for the Winged Wheel as a 22-year-old. He has just an .899 save percentage in his last 59 appearances. Mrazek counts \$4 million against the cap this season. He is just 25, a year older than Brossoit, and will be a restricted free agent after this season. That would make his acquisition cost higher than others, even though the Wings have also used Jared Coreau, who is in the AHL. That might be too rich for the Oilers, who know Talbot may only be a few weeks from returning - hopefully at the calibre he played at last season that got them within a couple goals of the Western Conference final.

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TSN.CA / Sabres goalies garnering trade interest

Robin Lehner , The Canadian Press

The struggling Buffalo Sabres are receiving calls on the availability of their goaltenders, according to TSN Hockey Insider Darren Dreger.

Dreger reports teams to inquire about both Chad Johnson and Robin Lehner, who have combined for a 6-17-4 record this season.

Teams are calling Buffalo, inquiring on Chad Johnson and Robin Lehner. Just checking on availability.

— Darren Dreger (@DarrenDreger) December 4, 2017

The Pittsburgh Penguins are believed to be among the teams in the market for a veteran backup option, along with the Edmonton Oilers.

Lehner (5-12-2) has started 18 games this season, posting a 2.98 goals against average and a .903 save percentage.

Johnson, who spent last season with the Calgary Flames, has struggled in 11 appearances, posting a 1-5-2 record with a 3.64 goals against average and a .883 save percentage.

The Sabres sit last in the NHL with 16 points this season.

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

By Scott Cullen

A Canucks milestone, free agent defencemen from 2019 in the news, Price is back in fine form, Ducks-Devils trade and more in TSN Hockey's Top 10 Storylines of the Week.

DANIEL SEDIN HITS 1,000

Vancouver Canucks left winger Daniel Sedin became the seventh active player to cross the 1,000-point threshold, picking up three points in Thursday's 5-3 win at Nashville.

The 37-year-old is not playing so much this season, 14:14 time on ice per game is his lowest since 2003-2004, and the Sedins are left to a supporting role at this stage of their careers, but hitting a milestone like this is a reminder of just how productive they have been for a long time.

In his illustrious career, Daniel's most productive stretch was from 2006-2007 through 2010-2011, when he put up 429 points in 390 games, winning the 2010-2011 scoring title with 104 points.

While production is down this year, the Sedins remain play drivers, controlling 57% of shot attempts during 5-on-5 play, so while the twins may be in their twilight of their careers, they remain productive contributors, even in their diminished role.

FREE AGENT DEFENCEMEN

The 2019 free agent class of defencemen - headlined by Erik Karlsson, Drew Doughty and Oliver Ekman-Larsson - is very interesting, not least of all because at this early point in the process there is still the possibility that these guys might move.

This could all be fanciful dreaming, by teams that hoping that might be able to lure one of these premier talents in free agency, but Karlsson and Doughty both had some interesting comments this week.

Doughty told The Athletic's Craig Custance that he'd be discussing free agency with Karlsson. "Right now, we'd be gauging off what Subban makes," Doughty said, referencing Subban's \$9-million cap hit. "I think both of us deserve quite a bit more than that."

For his part, Karlsson insisted, "I will get what I'm worth."

Neither of these stances are especially controversial, but it's unusual for hockey players to talk about how much money they will be seeking on a new contract. Doughty noted that there will be some pressure on the 2019 free agent defencemen to set a new standard for the position.

PRICE RETURNS

The Montreal Canadiens' season was fading away, as they had gone seven straight without a regulation win, and the outlook was bleak. But a funny thing happened on the way to the draft lottery: the Habs got superstar goaltender Carey Price back from injury and Price, who had struggled early in the season, was in fine form, stopping 128 of 133 shots in his first four games back in the lineup.

The Canadiens are hardly fixed, as they are still ranked 29th in goals per game (2.48), but if Carey Price is healthy and back to being Carey Price, then they are going to have a chance to be competitive, which is a whole lot better than things looked even a week ago.

HENRIQUE-VATANEN DEAL

A couple of teams looking to address positional needs used their depth elsewhere on the roster to swing a significant trade.

The Anaheim Ducks have had their centre ice position gutted by injuries, so they made a deal to acquire Adam Henrique from New Jersey, sending puck-moving blueliner Sami Vatanen to the Devils.

DORSETT DONE



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One of the big surprises for the Vancouver Canucks early in this season was the production they received from gritty right winger Derek Dorsett, a 30-year-old who missed most of last season after he had neck surgery.

He scored six goals in the first 10 games in this season, stunning production from a player who had scored more than seven goals in a season once, all while remaining his feisty self – he leads the league with 74 penalty minutes in 20 games.

Nevertheless, word came this week that Dorsett's career is finished, that he can't continue to play because of the risks involved with his surgically-repaired neck. He ends his career with 127 points, 105 (regular-season) fights and 1,314 penalty minutes in 515 games.

### SENS SLUMPING

It's not a great time for the Ottawa Senators. Friday's 6-5 win at the Islanders ended a seven-game winless streak, a miserable stretch that saw them score just nine goals.

Even after the win at the Islanders, the next five games are on the road, so that's not an ideal situation, and if this season gets away from them that will be a significant disappointment after last season's appearance in the Eastern Conference Final.

There was also another round of the Senators insisting that they are not for sale, with rumours suggesting that the team lacks the funds to develop Lebreton Flats for a new arena.

### MATT MURRAY INJURY

After winning back-to-back Stanley Cups, the Pittsburgh Penguins have started this season slowly, in part because their goaltending has not been as strong as it has been in recent seasons.

Matt Murray, who is the clear No. 1 between the pipes for the Penguins, had a .906 save percentage through 21 games, and suffered a lower-body injury after a collision with Philadelphia Flyers winger Jakub Voracek, and that leaves the Penguins in a precarious spot.

In the past few seasons, the Penguins have had the luxury of having either Murray or established veteran Marc-Andre Fleury in net, but with Fleury gone to Vegas in the expansion draft, a Murray injury leaves Pittsburgh with 22-year-old Tristan Jarry in net and Jarry has appeared in just five NHL games in his career.

Jarry did record a 34-save shutout at Buffalo Friday, but this is still a dicey situation if Murray is going to be out long-term.

### FLYERS SLIDING

Heading into Saturday's afternoon contest against Boston (which they are losing), the Philadelphia Winless in nine, the Philadelphia Flyers are starting to feel the heat, with fans calling for head coach Dave Hakstol to be relieved of his duties (if not necessarily in such amicable terms).

The Flyers haven't been entirely awful – there is some bad luck involved in losing four of those games in overtime and one in a shootout – but the season is getting away from the Flyers and if they don't turn it around soon, they'll be looking ahead to next season, probably sooner than expected.

### KESSEL

With Sidney Crosby going through an early-season slump (he's since emerged and is producing in typical fashion again) and Evgeni Malkin injured, the early scoring leader on the Pittsburgh Penguins is Phil Kessel, who has 32 points in 27 games, a career-best 1.19 points per game.

Kessel is generating 3.7 shots per game, his highest since 2013-2014, though he played two-and-a-half minutes more per game back then; that's encouraging for the 30-year-old winger's production moving forward, but beware the power play. Kessel has scored 17 of his 32 points with the man advantage, tied with Steven Stamkos for most power-play points in the league.

### WILLIAM KARLSSON

The Vegas Golden Knights made out pretty well in the expansion draft, but even Vegas has to be surprised by the immediate impact they've received from centre William Karlsson, who came from Columbus.

Karlsson, 24, has scored 10 goals in the past 10 games and is tied for fifth in the league with 14 goals. He has 24 points in 25 games, one off of tying last year's career-high. He's shooting 25.5% right now, so that's not going to continue, but Karlsson has been shooting more (28 shots on goal over the past 10 games), so that will help to offset when his percentages start to fall.

The good news out of this for Vegas is that Karlsson is young enough to be a building block. He will be a restricted free agent next summer and is looking at a hefty increase in salary from the \$1-million he's making this season.

TSN.CA LOADED: 12.05.2017

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TSN.CA / Pondering what the next Doughty and Karlsson deals might look like

By Travis Yost

While the Kris Russell own-goal story dominated media coverage last week, an interesting discussion was kicked up by Los Angeles Kings defenceman Drew Doughty.

Doughty didn't mince words when talking about his next contract – his current deal is set to expire at the end of the 2018-19 season. He's looking at a mega deal and he knows he'll get it. More interestingly, Doughty mentioned that he'd speak with fellow superstar defender Erik Karlsson to see what type of money the Ottawa Senators captain would be looking for when his contract expires that same summer.

Karlsson – who is as buttoned-up as any hockey player with the media – came out with an unexpectedly straightforward tone. "I'm going to get what I'm worth, and it's going to be no less, no matter where I'm going," Karlsson told the Ottawa Sun.

I thought that statement was fascinating. It's exceedingly rare you see hockey players so direct and blunt about their contractual future – doubly so for a player who still has more than a year on his current deal. You can read between the lines on what Karlsson inferred there, but I think it's safe to take him at his word. The Senators aren't getting him at a hometown discount. If Ottawa somehow lets him walk – 30 other NHL franchises (a) will line up to sign him; and (b) should expect to pay through the nose.

This all raises an interesting question about where the Doughty and Karlsson contracts will go. There are a couple of interesting factors at play here. Doughty is unquestionably a top-five defender in the league. Karlsson is undoubtedly the best defender in the league. The rumour mill is hot about the NHL salary cap increasing by 6.6 per cent next year to \$80 million. If the league does realize that sort of growth, you can expect top-tier players' contracts to eat into it proportionately.

I was curious about how top-tier NHL defenders have been paid as a proportion of the cap, if only to provide some sort of guidance for what a Doughty/Karlsson contract could look like. I think it's safe to assume that they'll both ask for and get max term, which means an eight-year deal that would carry both players into their late 30s. But the dollar value? That's a bit vaguer.



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The one good thing about hockey's current financial landscape is that it's pretty predictable. Top-tier players generally eat into the same percentage year-over-year, which means that if you can reasonably forecast where the salary cap is going to go, you can also reasonably forecast where a player's contract should land.

To illustrate this, I pulled out the prevailing salaries and cap hits of top-tier players (the five highest-paid players, by position) since the 2014-15 season. As you can see, the numbers rise proportionally with the increase of the salary cap. So, for the most part, the percentage of the cap that these players consume generally remains constant.

Embedded Image

A top forward will likely consume about 13.4 per cent of the cap, a top defender will consume about 10.6 per cent of the cap, and a top goalie will consume about 10.0 per cent of the cap. (It's possible that forwards have eaten a tiny bit into defender salaries if you look at the trended data, but for the most part it's reasonably flat. Even if it were a trend, I'd expect Karlsson and Doughty to reverse that course.)

Something to keep in mind about the defender bucket: it's comprised of seven players – P.K. Subban, Shea Weber, Ryan Suter, Kris Letang, Dion Phaneuf, Victor Hedman and Aaron Ekblad. There's little doubt Karlsson is a better player than any of those names, and that's also mostly true for Doughty. So when you consider the percentage of the cap that these guys consume, you should recognize that there's probably going to be another premium that Los Angeles and Ottawa have to pay.

What does this mean for a potential Doughty/Karlsson contract? Let's assume that Doughty gets about 11 per cent of the cap in any given year, and the league continues to grow around 3.8 per cent year-over-year – that's the average growth realized in the interval measured here. Let's assume that Karlsson gets paid 12 per cent of the cap at any given year, which is what the league's highest-paid defender did over the measured interval. Their contracts could look like this (assuming there's no back-diving structure):

Now, this is one swing at a player forecast. Maybe you rate Doughty and Karlsson the same. Maybe you think that the cap grows more than it does. Maybe you think the cap stagnates and teams squeeze these guys harder than we would expect. There are a billion different scenarios that could impact their next contracts in either direction.

But knowing what we know today, the numbers noted above are what I'd consider realistic estimates. It's hard to envision Doughty or Karlsson getting anything less than a \$10 million AAV deal, and there's a very real chance that it could get into the \$11 million range for a player like Karlsson.

That could be why Doughty and Karlsson set such a strong tone more than a year out from the expiration of their respective contracts. Their agents have to be pretty comfortable that a huge payday is on the horizon. The question is: which teams will pay it?

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TSN.CA / Rumour Mill: Doughty, Karlsson to top \$9M AAV?

TSN.ca Staff

Keep up to date on the latest rumours and speculation around the NHL beat with TSN.ca's Rumour Mill.

Thinking Ahead?

Los Angeles Kings defenceman Drew Doughty is set to become a free agent in the summer of 2019 and he's already thinking about the monetary value of his contract.

In a recent interview with Craig Custance of The Athletic, Doughty said he'd like to stay in touch with Ottawa Senators defenceman Erik Karlsson - also a UFA in 2019 - ahead of the process, so the two can gauge their value together.

And it appears Doughty does already have a benchmark in mind.

"Right now, I guess we'd be gauging off what P.K. [Subban] makes. I think both of us deserve quite a bit more than that," Doughty told Custance.

Subban has the highest cap hit of any defenceman in the NHL at \$9 million with the contract he signed with the Montreal Canadiens in 2014. Brent Burns owns the second highest cap hit among defencemen at \$8 million. He signed an eight-year, \$64 million extension with the San Jose Sharks last November.

According to CapFriendly, Doughty has a \$7 million cap hit, while Karlsson carries a \$6.75 million AAV.

Both Karlsson and Doughty will be 29 in the summer of 2019. As TSN Hockey Insider Pierre LeBrun pointed out Wednesday, staying in touch won't be hard as they're both clients of Newport Sports Agency.

Good for the Kids?

Toronto Maple Leafs general manager Lou Lamoriello joined Overdrive on TSN Radio 1050 Toronto on Wednesday and said facing adversity can be good for the team's young players. Both Mitch Marner and William Nylander have struggled to find the back of the net in their sophomore seasons, but Lamoriello believes those struggles could serve as a teaching point for duo.

Lamoriello: Adversity is good for Nylander and Marner

OverDrive hosts Bryan Hayes, Jeff O'Neill & Jamie McLennan are joined by Maple Leafs GM Lou Lamoriello to get his opinion on how the Leafs are playing so far this season and his thoughts on William Nylander and Mitch Marner's struggles.

Spark from Within?

The Ottawa Senators dropped their seventh straight game on Wednesday night and have now won just twice since making a blockbuster move to acquire Matt Duchene from the Colorado Avalanche.

The Senators called up 2015 first-round pick Thomas Chabot earlier this week, but he sat out against the Montreal Canadiens on Wednesday. TSN 1200's Ian Mendes believes Chabot should be in the lineup Friday against the Islanders simply as a spark for the team's lacklustre power play.

Power play was flat again tonight. For that reason alone, Thomas Chabot should be in the lineup Friday at NYI.

— Ian Mendes (@ian\_mendes) November 30, 2017

Chabot has three assists in five games with the Senators this season. He also has two goals and seven points in 13 games with the AHL's Belleville Senators.

Ending their skid in Brooklyn won't be an easy task for the Senators. The Islanders not lost in regulation at home this season, owning an 8-0-2 record.

Unlikely Match?

According to Adrian Dater of BSN Denver, the Colorado Avalanche are among the teams who have interest in Pittsburgh Penguins defenceman Ian Cole, but a trade seems unlikely.



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As Dater notes, the Avalanche - despite their 12-9-2 start - are not in a position acquire rental players and already have prospects who could by NHL-ready on the blue line by next season.

He believes the Avalanche would want Cole to sign an extension with the team in any deal, but wonders how interested the back-to-back Stanley Cup champion would be in signing with last season's worst team.

Cole has been a healthy scratch in three straight games for the Penguins and it's unclear if he'll rejoin the lineup on Friday against the Buffalo Sabres. TSN Hockey Insider Bob McKenzie shut down rumours that a trade is imminent and believes Pittsburgh will only trade Cole for the right return.

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USA TODAY / What could have been: Team USA's potential Olympic roster if NHL players were participating

Kevin Allen, USA TODAY Sports Published 2:48 p.m. ET Dec. 4, 2017 | Updated 2:58 p.m. ET Dec. 4, 2017

USA Hockey officials are in the final stages of determining their men's roster for the 2018 Olympic hockey tournament, scheduled for February in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

Because the NHL is not allowing its players to go for the first time since 1994, the American squad, to be announced Jan. 1, will consist of players from European professional leagues, the American Hockey League and college ranks.

Projections of that team will be coming over the next couple of weeks, but what if the NHL had allowed its players to participate in the Winter Olympics?

Here is what the American team might have looked like:

## Centers

Auston Matthews, Toronto Maple Leafs; Vincent Trocheck, Florida Panthers; Jack Eichel, Buffalo Sabres and Dylan Larkin, Detroit Red Wings

Discussion: The Americans are stronger at center than they were in 2014, but the USA's top centers aren't as experienced as centers from other countries. If Ryan Kesler was healthy, he would be on the team.

## Left wings

Johnny Gaudreau, Calgary Flames; Anders Lee, New York Islanders; Chris Kreider, New York Rangers; Jason Zucker, Minnesota Wild

Discussion: Max Pacioretty has netted 30 or more goals five times over the past six seasons, so it's hard to leave him off the list. He's having an off year — eight goals (on 117 shots) and 16 points — but you'd have to be looking for reasons to add him at the last minute. Matthew Tkachuk and James van Riemsdyk would have to be under consideration.

## Right wings

Patrick Kane, Chicago Blackhawks; Blake Wheeler, Winnipeg Jets; Phil Kessel, Pittsburgh Penguins; T.J. Oshie, Washington Capitals

Discussion: It's probably too early for Brock Boeser, although he looks like he could contribute. Right wing is a strength for the Americans. Oshie has extra value because of his shootout ability.

## 13th forward

Jake Guentzel, Pittsburgh Penguins

Discussion: As a general rule, you would want an extra center in case there are injuries. Guentzel can play center or wing. Tyler Johnson, Paul Stastny and Derek Stepan are also possibilities here.

## Defensemen

Left-shot: Ryan Suter, Minnesota Wild; Zach Werenski, Columbus Blue Jackets; Ryan McDonagh, New York Rangers; Nick Leddy, New York Islanders

Discussion: Cam Fowler should receive consideration, along with Shayne Gostisbehere and Brady Skjei. It is time for some younger players to be given an opportunity.

Right-shot: John Carlson, Washington Capitals; Seth Jones, Columbus Blue Jackets; Charlie McAvoy, Boston Bruins; Dustin Byfuglien, Winnipeg Jets

Discussion: Justin Faulk would be in the conversation, along with Kevin Shattenkirk and Erik Johnson.

## Goalies

Jonathan Quick, Los Angeles Kings; John Gibson, Anaheim Ducks; Connor Hellebuyck, Winnipeg Jets

Discussion: When you consider what Quick's good health has meant to the Kings this season, he seems like a clear No. 1.

USA TODAY LOADED: 12.05.2017