



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • January 21, 2021

## THE NEWS & OBSERVER

### More Carolina Hurricanes' games postponed due to coronavirus

By Chip Alexander

The Carolina Hurricanes, with five players on the NHL's COVID-19 protocol list, have had their next two games against the Florida Panthers postponed by the league.

As the Canes continue to navigate their way through various COVID-related issues, including quarantine, the decision was made by the league Wednesday to postpone Carolina's scheduled home opener Thursday and Saturday's game with the Panthers at PNC Arena. The postponements were announced a day after the league postponed the Hurricanes' game in Nashville against the Predators.

The NHL on Tuesday reported that the Hurricanes' Jordan Staal had been joined on the COVID protocol list by defenseman Jacob Slavin and forwards Teuvo Teravainen, Warren Foegele and Jordan Martinook. Staal, the Canes captain, was placed on the list Friday, missing games against the Detroit Red Wings on Saturday and then the first game Monday against the Predators.

The five players remained on the COVID list on Wednesday. The league said the Canes' training facility has been closed, effective immediately, and that the NHL would review and revise the Hurricanes' schedule.

The Hurricanes became the first NHL team to have games postponed for COVID reasons since the regular season began last week. The Dallas Stars had their regular-season schedule reworked after a cluster of COVID cases during training camp.

No NHL team other than the Hurricanes had more than two players on the COVID list on Tuesday. The NHL report is released each day after 5 p.m.

The Canes were to begin a six-game homestand on Thursday. Their next scheduled games are against the Tampa Bay Lightning on Jan. 26 and Jan. 28 at PNC Arena.

NHL's COVID protocol

The NHL is listing players this season that are not available and termed "COVID protocol related absences." Being placed on the list does not indicate that a positive test for coronavirus has been confirmed, although that can be one reason for the reported absence.

An initial positive test might remain unconfirmed. Those with COVID symptoms could be in isolation. A player could be in quarantine and considered a high-risk close contact. There could be a quarantine for travel.

When a player tests positive, they must self-isolate and the team is instructed to conduct contact tracing. If the player's second test is negative he is required to test negative again for two consecutive days before being removed from the league's protocol.

The NHL also has said: "No additional detail will be provided either by the League or the Club, including the precise reason the Player is unavailable or how long he might be out."

The COVID-19 protocol list does not cover team coaches or support staff members; only players.



### Hurricanes next two games, including home opener, postponed after COVID cases

By Lauren Brownlow

The NHL announced Wednesday that due to five Carolina Hurricanes being on the NHL's COVID protocol list, the Hurricanes' games on Thursday and Saturday will be postponed. Thursday was scheduled to be the home opener at PNC Arena.

The Hurricanes will not play until Tuesday, January 26 at the earliest now.

The Hurricanes already had captain Jordan Staal on the COVID-19 list as of January 15 (last Friday). On Tuesday, the NHL announced the team's second game against the Nashville Predators would be postponed due to safety concerns.

Later Tuesday afternoon, the Hurricanes released an updated COVID protocol list that added Teuvo Teravainen, Jacob Slavin, Jordan Martinook and Warren Foegele.

The NHL's protocol list does not specify whether a player has contracted the virus or is a close contact of a positive case.

The NHL release Wednesday also says that the Hurricanes will close their training facilities "effective immediately" and will remain closed until further notice. The NHL also said it is in the process of "reviewing and revising" the Hurricanes' regular-season schedule.



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## Hurricanes Games Postponed at Least Through January 23

By NHL PR

NEW YORK - The National Hockey League announced today that as a result of the five Carolina Hurricanes Players currently on the NHL's COVID Protocol Related Absence List, the team's games will be postponed at least through Saturday, Jan. 23.

As an appropriate precaution, the team's training facilities have been closed, effective immediately, and will remain

closed for Players until further notice. The League is in the process of reviewing and revising the Hurricanes' regular season schedule. The Hurricanes organization has, and will continue to follow, all recommended guidelines aimed at protecting the health and safety of its Players, staff and community at large as set by the NHL, local, state and national agencies.

## Hurricanes games postponed through Jan. 23 because of COVID-19

Were scheduled to play next two against Panthers, makeup dates to be announced

The Carolina Hurricanes have had all games postponed through at least Saturday after five players were placed on the COVID-19 protocol list Tuesday.

In addition, the Hurricanes training facilities will remain closed for players until further notice.

The NHL announced Wednesday the Hurricanes games against the Florida Panthers at PNC Arena on Thursday and Saturday have been postponed. The announcement came one day after Carolina's game against the Nashville Predators at Bridgestone Arena on Tuesday was postponed for what the NHL said was "out of an abundance of caution to ensure the health and safety of players, coaches and game day personnel and in consultation with medical experts."

The rescheduled dates for the games will be announced at a later time.

Carolina forwards Warren Foegele, Jordan Martinook, Jordan Staal and Teuvo Teravainen, and defenseman Jaccob Slavin were placed in COVID-19 protocol on Tuesday.

The Hurricanes are next scheduled to play the Tampa Bay Lightning at PNC Arena on Jan. 26.

Seven NHL games have been postponed so far this season. The Dallas Stars had their first four games postponed and rescheduled because of COVID-19 issues: against the Panthers on Thursday (now Feb. 22) and Friday (now May 3), and the Lightning on Sunday (now May 4) and Tuesday (now May 10).



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## Super 16: Lightning remain No. 1 in power rankings

Golden Knights get first-place votes; Canucks, Oilers drop out of rankings

By Dan Rosen

The Tampa Bay Lightning's two straight wins against the Chicago Blackhawks were enough to keep the defending Stanley Cup champions in the top spot of the Super 16 power rankings eight days into the regular season.

The Lightning were ranked first or second by all 14 participating writers with 11 of the voters ranking them at No. 1, convinced by their back-to-back wins against Chicago by a combined 10-3.

The Vegas Golden Knights were ranked No. 1 by the other three voters.

Twenty-four teams were ranked at least once.

The Dallas Stars had the widest range among the 14 voters, likely because they have yet to play a game this season. They were ranked as high as No. 2 and as low as No. 16.

To create the Super 16, each of the 14 participating staff members put together his or her version of what they think it should look like. Those were submitted and a point total assigned to each.

The team that was selected first was given 16 points, second got 15, third 14 and so on down to No. 16, who got one point.

Here is the Super 16:

### 1. TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING (2-0-0)

Total points: 221  
Preseason rank: No. 1

The Lightning have eight players who've scored at least one goal and 13 at least one point. Forward Steven Stamkos leads them with five points (two goals, three assists).

### 2. VEGAS GOLDEN KNIGHTS (4-0-0)

Total points: 207  
Preseason rank: No. 3

Alex Pietrangolo appears to be a fit; the defenseman scored his first goal with Vegas in a 5-2 win against the Arizona Coyotes on Wednesday and entered averaging more than 26 minutes of ice time per game. The Golden Knights have shown resiliency by coming back to win games against the Coyotes and Anaheim Ducks after falling behind in each of them.

### 3. COLORADO AVALANCHE (2-1-0)

Total points: 180  
Preseason rank: No. 2

The Avalanche responded to their season-opening 4-1 loss to the St. Louis Blues by scoring 11 straight goals across five periods before allowing two in the third period of a 3-2 win against the Los Angeles Kings on Tuesday. Nathan MacKinnon scored his 500th NHL point against the Kings.

The center has 191 goals and 309 assists in 528 games, all with the Avalanche.

### 4. WASHINGTON CAPITALS (2-0-2)

Total points: 161  
Preseason rank: No. 6

The Capitals added forwards Alex Ovechkin and Evgeny Kuznetsov, defenseman Dmitry Orlov and goalie Ilya Samsonov to the list of players who are unavailable due to COVID-19 protocols on Wednesday. They were also fined \$100,000 for player violations of the NHL's COVID-19 protocols.

### 5. TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS (3-2-0)

Total points: 144  
Preseason rank: No. 9

John Tavares, Mitchell Marner, William Nylander and Auston Matthews have combined for 10 goals. The Maple Leafs have nine different goal scorers and are 6-for-16 on the power play (37.5 percent).

### 6. ST. LOUIS BLUES (2-1-1)

Total points: 139  
Preseason rank: No. 4

The Blues overcame their first bit of adversity this season. They lost 8-0 to the Avalanche on Jan. 15 and trailed the San Jose Sharks 2-0 in the first period Monday before coming back for a 5-4 win. Forward Jordan Kyrou's speed is a positive factor.

### 7. PHILADELPHIA FLYERS (3-1-0)

Total points: 125  
Preseason rank: No. 5

Travis Konecny has scored four goals, including a hat trick in a 5-2 win against the Penguins on Jan. 15. The forward has scored a team-high six points (four goals, two assists), all in Philadelphia's three wins. But the Flyers are playing without Sean Couturier, who is expected to be out at least two weeks with a rib injury sustained Jan. 15. The center won the Selke Trophy last season, given to the best defensive forward in the NHL.

### 8. MONTREAL CANADIENS (2-0-2)

Total points: 116  
Preseason rank: No. 15

Jake Allen got his first win with the Canadiens when he made 25 saves in a 3-1 victory against the Edmonton Oilers on Monday, when rookie defenseman Alexander Romanov scored his first NHL goal. Montreal won two in a row in Edmonton by a combined 8-2 and started a set of three games in four nights against the Vancouver Canucks at Rogers Arena on Wednesday with a 6-5 shootout loss.

### 9. NEW YORK ISLANDERS (2-1-0)

Total points: 107  
Preseason rank: No. 12



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Semyon Varlamov has shutouts in each of his starts, making 24 saves in a 5-0 win against the New York Rangers on Jan. 14 and 27 in a 1-0 win against the Boston Bruins on Monday. Varlamov was scheduled to start against the Rangers on Jan. 16 but was injured in warmups. Ilya Sorokin allowed five goals in his NHL debut.

### 10. CALGARY FLAMES (2-0-1)

Total points: 101  
Preseason rank: NR

Jacob Markstrom has a .935 save percentage (six goals against on 93 shots) and 1.99 goals-against average in his first three starts for the Flames. He allowed two goals on 59 shots in two games against the Vancouver Canucks, his former team, in wins Jan. 16 (3-0) and Monday (5-2).

### 11. BOSTON BRUINS (1-1-1)

Total points: 95  
Preseason rank: No. 8

The Bruins have allowed five goals, but they have scored three goals, none at even strength, proving their offense is a work in progress without right wing David Pastrnak, who is still recovering from offseason hip surgery.

### 12. CAROLINA HURRICANES (2-1-0)

Total points: 81  
Preseason rank: No. 10

Andrei Svechnikov has factored in on five of the Hurricanes' nine goals (three goals, two assists) and Carolina has scored seven goals in the third period. The Hurricanes have had all games postponed through at least Saturday after five players were placed on the COVID-19 protocol list.

### 13. DALLAS STARS (0-0-0)

Total points: 62  
Preseason rank: No. 7

The Stars are scheduled to play their season opener against the Nashville Predators at Bridgestone Arena on Friday. Their first four games were postponed and moved to later in the season because of precautions related to COVID-19.

### 14. NASHVILLE PREDATORS (2-1-0)

Total points: 50  
Preseason rank: NR

Though Filip Forsberg has scored in each of his first three games, the Predators are struggling on the power play. They're 1-for-11, including 0-for-6 in two straight wins against the Columbus Blue Jackets (3-1 and 5-2).

### 15. MINNESOTA WILD (3-1-0)

Total points: 38  
Preseason rank: NR

Rookie forward Kirill Kaprizov has scored five points (one goal, four assists) in his first five NHL games, including in overtime of the Wild's season-opening 4-3 win at the Kings. But Minnesota has one power-play goal in 20 opportunities following its 3-2 win against the Ducks on Wednesday.

### 16. PITTSBURGH PENGUINS (2-2-0)

Total points: 17  
Preseason rank: No. 13

The Penguins rallied to win two consecutive games against the Capitals, coming back from down 2-1 and 3-2 to win 4-3 in a shootout Jan. 17. They scored the last three goals, including a 5-on-3 shorthanded goal from forward Teddy Blueger and the overtime winner from center Sidney Crosby, in a 5-4 win Tuesday. Crosby has scored has five points (three goals, two assists).

Others receiving points: New Jersey Devils 16, Florida Panthers 15, Winnipeg Jets 14, Arizona Coyotes 4, Buffalo Sabres 4, Edmonton Oilers 3, Vancouver Canucks 3, Columbus Blue Jackets 1

Dropped out: Canucks (No. 11), Oilers (No. 14), Blue Jackets (No. 16)

### HERE'S HOW WE RANKED 'EM

#### AMALIE BENJAMIN

1. Vegas Golden Knights; 2. Tampa Bay Lightning; 3. Colorado Avalanche; 4. Washington Capitals; 5. St. Louis Blues; 6. Philadelphia Flyers; 7. Toronto Maple Leafs; 8. Montreal Canadiens; 9. Calgary Flames; 10. New York Islanders; 11. Boston Bruins; 12. Carolina Hurricanes; 13. Nashville Predators; 14. Edmonton Oilers; 15. Florida Panthers; 16. Minnesota Wild

#### TIM CAMPBELL

1. Tampa Bay Lightning; 2. Dallas Stars; 3. Colorado Avalanche; 4. Washington Capitals; 5. Vegas Golden Knights; 6. Boston Bruins; 7. Philadelphia Flyers; 8. St. Louis Blues; 9. Minnesota Wild; 10. Toronto Maple Leafs; 11. Calgary Flames; 12. Carolina Hurricanes; 13. Nashville Predators; 14. New York Islanders; 15. Montreal Canadiens; 16. Pittsburgh Penguins

#### BRIAN COMPTON

1. Tampa Bay Lightning; 2. Vegas Golden Knights; 3. Calgary Flames; 4. Colorado Avalanche; 5. Montreal Canadiens; 6. Washington Capitals; 7. Toronto Maple Leafs; 8. St. Louis Blues; 9. New York Islanders; 10. Carolina Hurricanes; 11. Nashville Predators; 12. Minnesota Wild; 13. Philadelphia Flyers; 14. Boston Bruins; 15. Arizona Coyotes; 16. Florida Panthers

#### NICHOLAS J. COTSONIKA

1. Tampa Bay Lightning; 2. Vegas Golden Knights; 3. Montreal Canadiens; 4. Calgary Flames; 5. Florida Panthers; 6. New Jersey Devils; 7. Toronto Maple Leafs; 8. Philadelphia Flyers; 9. Washington Capitals; 10. Colorado Avalanche; 11. St. Louis Blues; 12. Carolina Hurricanes; 13. New York Islanders; 14. Minnesota Wild; 15. Nashville Predators; 16. Winnipeg Jets

#### TOM GULITTI

1. Tampa Bay Lightning; 2. Colorado Avalanche; 3. Vegas Golden Knights; 4. Washington Capitals; 5. Calgary Flames; 6. St. Louis Blues; 7. Carolina Hurricanes; 8. Philadelphia Flyers; 9. Dallas Stars; 10. Toronto Maple Leafs; 11. New



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York Islanders; 12. Montreal Canadiens; 13. Boston Bruins; 14. Nashville Predators; 15. Minnesota Wild; 16. Pittsburgh Penguins

ADAM KIMELMAN

1. Tampa Bay Lightning; 2. Vegas Golden Knights; 3. Washington Capitals; 4. Toronto Maple Leafs; 5. Calgary Flames; 6. Colorado Avalanche; 7. Montreal Canadiens; 8. Nashville Predators; 9. Philadelphia Flyers; 10. St. Louis Blues; 11. New York Islanders; 12. Winnipeg Jets; 13. Carolina Hurricanes; 14. Boston Bruins; 15. Buffalo Sabres; 16. Minnesota Wild

ROBERT LAFLAMME

1. Tampa Bay Lightning; 2. Colorado Avalanche; 3. Vegas Golden Knights; 4. Washington Capitals; 5. Philadelphia Flyers; 6. New York Islanders; 7. Toronto Maple Leafs; 8. Montreal Canadiens; 9. Carolina Hurricanes; 10. St. Louis Blues; 11. Boston Bruins; 12. Calgary Flames; 13. Pittsburgh Penguins; 14. Nashville Predators; 15. Minnesota Wild; 16. Dallas Stars

MIKE G. MORREALE

1. Tampa Bay Lightning; 2. Vegas Golden Knights; 3. Dallas Stars; 4. St. Louis Blues; 5. New York Islanders; 6. Colorado Avalanche; 7. Calgary Flames; 8. Washington Capitals; 9. Boston Bruins; 10. Toronto Maple Leafs; 11. Philadelphia Flyers; 12. Montreal Canadiens; 13. Carolina Hurricanes; 14. Vancouver Canucks; 15. Buffalo Sabres; 16. Columbus Blue Jackets

TRACEY MYERS

1. Vegas Golden Knights; 2. Tampa Bay Lightning; 3. Toronto Maple Leafs; 4. Washington Capitals; 5. St. Louis Blues; 6. Philadelphia Flyers; 7. New York Islanders; 8. Colorado Avalanche; 9. Nashville Predators; 10. Minnesota Wild; 11. Montreal Canadiens; 12. Carolina Hurricanes; 13. Boston Bruins; 14. Calgary Flames; 15. Arizona Coyotes; 16. New Jersey Devils

BILL PRICE

1. Tampa Bay Lightning; 2. Colorado Avalanche; 3. Vegas Golden Knights; 4. New York Islanders; 5. Toronto Maple

Leafs; 6. Boston Bruins; 7. Philadelphia Flyers; 8. Montreal Canadiens; 9. St. Louis Blues; 10. Dallas Stars; 11. Washington Capitals; 12. Carolina Hurricanes; 13. Calgary Flames; 14. Nashville Predators; 15. Minnesota Wild; 16. Pittsburgh Penguins

SHAWN P. ROARKE

1. Vegas Golden Knights; 2. Tampa Bay Lightning; 3. Colorado Avalanche; 4. St. Louis Blues; 5. Boston Bruins; 6. Washington Capitals; 7. Toronto Maple Leafs; 8. Montreal Canadiens; 9. Dallas Stars; 10. Philadelphia Flyers; 11. Carolina Hurricanes; 12. Pittsburgh Penguins; 13. Minnesota Wild; 14. Winnipeg Jets; 15. Nashville Predators; 16. New York Islanders

DAN ROSEN

1. Tampa Bay Lightning; 2. Vegas Golden Knights; 3. Colorado Avalanche; 4. Philadelphia Flyers; 5. Toronto Maple Leafs; 6. Washington Capitals; 7. Montreal Canadiens; 8. St. Louis Blues; 9. New York Islanders; 10. Boston Bruins; 11. Carolina Hurricanes; 12. Dallas Stars; 13. Pittsburgh Penguins; 14. Calgary Flames; 15. New Jersey Devils; 16. Winnipeg Jets

DAVID SATRIANO

1. Tampa Bay Lightning; 2. Vegas Golden Knights; 3. Colorado Avalanche; 4. Washington Capitals; 5. Toronto Maple Leafs; 6. St. Louis Blues; 7. New York Islanders; 8. Boston Bruins; 9. Philadelphia Flyers; 10. Montreal Canadiens; 11. Calgary Flames; 12. Carolina Hurricanes; 13. Dallas Stars; 14. Nashville Predators; 15. Minnesota Wild; 16. Pittsburgh Penguins

MIKE ZEISBERGER

1. Tampa Bay Lightning; 2. Vegas Golden Knights; 3. Colorado Avalanche; 4. Washington Capitals; 5. St. Louis Blues; 6. Boston Bruins; 7. Toronto Maple Leafs; 8. Montreal Canadiens; 9. New York Islanders; 10. Philadelphia Flyers; 11. Carolina Hurricanes; 12. Calgary Flames; 13. Winnipeg Jets; 14. Nashville Predators; 15. New Jersey Devils; 16. Minnesota Wild



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**AP** ASSOCIATED PRESS

## Ovechkin on COVID list, Caps fined \$100K; Canes games off

By Howard Fendrich

WASHINGTON (AP) — Alex Ovechkin and three other Washington Capitals players were added to the NHL's COVID-19 list Wednesday and the team was fined \$100,000 by the league for violating coronavirus protocols, including a gathering in a hotel room.

In addition to three-time MVP Ovechkin — one of just eight players in NHL history with more than 700 goals — the Capitals joining the COVID-19 list were center Evgeny Kuznetsov, defenseman Dmitry Orlov and top goalie Ilya Samsonov.

"I regret my choice to spend time together with my teammates in our hotel room and away from the locker room areas," Ovechkin said in a statement issued by the Capitals. "I will learn from this experience."

The Capitals themselves said they were "disappointed by our players' choice to interact in their hotel room and outside of team approved areas." Saying it accepts the NHL's decision, the team vowed to "reiterate the COVID-19 protocols in place to make sure the players are in full compliance moving forward."

Five players from the Carolina Hurricanes also are on the league's COVID-19 list, and that team's games were called off by the league through "at least" Saturday.

The postponements were announced Wednesday, a day before the Hurricanes were set to host the Florida Panthers in their home opener. The teams were scheduled to play again Saturday.

The NHL said the Hurricanes' training facilities are closed and will stay that way "until further notice." The league is reviewing and revising Carolina's schedule.

The Capitals were punished by the league for "social interactions among team members who were in close contact and who were not wearing face coverings."

This is the first instance this season of Capitals players appearing on the NHL's COVID-19 list, which could include those who test positive, have a potential exposure or face quarantine requirements.

Being on that list would make Ovechkin and the others unavailable for practice, but it is possible that they could be allowed back with the team in time to play in Washington's next game, which is Friday against the visiting Buffalo Sabres.

Washington has played four games so far, going 2-0-2.

This is not the first postponement involving the Hurricanes: Their game at Nashville on Tuesday was the the NHL's first postponement since the season began this month.

The league didn't specify which team prompted that night's postponement, although four Hurricanes players — Warren Foegele, Jordan Martinook, Jaccob Slavin and Teuvo Teravainen — were added to the daily COVID-19 list later Tuesday afternoon.

Captain Jordan Staal had been on the list since Friday, with the Hurricanes losing at Detroit on Saturday, then winning at Nashville on Monday. The league's statement said the team has followed recommended health and safety guidelines.

The Capitals share an arena in downtown Washington with the NBA's Wizards and both teams are owned by Ted Leonsis.

The Wizards were cleared to return to practice Wednesday night after essentially being shut down because of a COVID-19 outbreak.

Their past five games have been postponed during a stretch in which six Wizards players tested positive for the illness caused by the coronavirus and three others were sidelined after contact tracing determined they might have been exposed.

\_\_\_ AP Sports Writer John Nicholson in Phoenix contributed to this report.



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## NHL postpones two Hurricanes-Panthers games

By Sean Leahy

The Hurricanes' next two games against the Panthers will be postponed, the NHL announced on Wednesday.

A day after four Hurricanes players were added to the league's COVID Protocol Related Absence List, the earliest they could resume play is next Tuesday against the Lightning.

From the NHL:

As an appropriate precaution, the team's training facilities have been closed, effective immediately, and will remain closed for Players until further notice. The League is in the process of reviewing and revising the Hurricanes' regular season schedule. The Hurricanes organization has, and will continue to follow, all recommended guidelines aimed at protecting the health and safety of its Players, staff and community at large as set by the NHL, local, state and national agencies.

The announcement comes one day after Tuesday's Hurricanes game against the Predators was postponed "out of an abundance of caution to ensure the health and safety of players, coaches and game day personnel and in consultation with medical experts."

On Tuesday, Warren Foegele, Jordan Martinook, Jaccob Slavin, and Teuvo Teravainen were added to the NHL's COVID Protocol Related Absence List. Captain Jordan Staal has been on the list since Friday.

What the "COVID Protocol Related Absence List" means:

From the NHL:

Such "COVID Protocol Related Absences" can be the result of a number of factors including, among others: (1) an initial positive test which remains unconfirmed until confirmatory testing is completed pursuant to the Positive Test Protocol; (2) mandated isolation for symptomatic individuals pursuant to the Positive Test Protocol; (3) required quarantine as a high-risk close contact in accordance with the Positive Test Protocol; (4) isolation based on a confirmed positive test result and/or; (5) quarantine for travel or other reasons as outlined in the COVID-19 Protocol.

Along with the Hurricanes, COVID-19-related issues have also disrupted the seasons for the Stars and Panthers. After these postponements, Florida will have played just twice in the first two weeks of the 2020-21 NHL season, while Dallas' season opener is scheduled for Friday against Nashville.



## Hurricanes' games through Jan. 23 postponed, training facilities closed

The Hurricanes will have to further modify their schedule as the team continues to battle COVID issues.

By Andrew Schnittker

The NHL announced that the Hurricanes' scheduled home games against the Florida Panthers on Thursday, Jan. 21 and Saturday, Jan. 23 have been postponed, and that the team's training facilities have been closed.

The news comes following Jaccob Slavin, Jordan Martinook, Teuvo Teravainen and Warren Foegele joining Jordan Staal on the NHL's COVID protocol related absence list and the team's game against Nashville Tuesday being postponed.

The official release from the league follows:

The National Hockey League announced today that as a result of the five Carolina Hurricanes Players currently on the

NHL's COVID Protocol Related Absence List, the team's games will be postponed at least through Saturday, Jan. 23.

As an appropriate precaution, the team's training facilities have been closed, effective immediately, and will remain closed for Players until further notice. The League is in the process of reviewing and revising the Hurricanes' regular season schedule. The Hurricanes organization has, and will continue to follow, all recommended guidelines aimed at protecting the health and safety of its Players, staff and community at large as set by the NHL, local, state and national agencies.

The Hurricanes' next scheduled game is currently set for Tuesday, Jan. 26 against the Tampa Bay Lightning at PNC Arena. Canes Country will continue to provide updates on the Hurricanes' schedule as they become available.



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## ‘A Dream Come True:’ Maniscalco Makes Official Debut

Perhaps the most exciting first season on the Carolina Hurricanes may not be from someone on the ice, but will be from that of 45-year-old rookie Mike Maniscalco, the new play-by-play voice of the Carolina Hurricanes.

By Ryan Henkel

Jordan Staal slowly glided to center ice and got in position opposite Detroit’s new captain Dylan Larkin, ready for the opening draw in Little Caesars Arena on the eve of the Carolina Hurricanes’ season opener.

As Canes fans tuned in for the start of the game, a familiar voice welcomed them in. However, it wasn’t the usual play-by-play voice, but instead that of the former sideline reporter, Mike Maniscalco.

While Maniscalco had called games for the team when the NHL returned to play last year, he didn’t view that opportunity as an official thing.

“I’ve had experience, but it was just filling in,” Maniscalco said about calling the games in the bubble during the contract dispute between the Hurricanes and John Forslund. “You want to do a good job, but it was one of those things where you knew that you were just filling in.”

Now however, the Buffalo native isn’t just filling in. Maniscalco was announced as the play-by-play voice of the Hurricanes for the 2020-21 season and he already has a few games under his belt.

For Maniscalco, his dream has now become a reality.

But Maniscalco hadn’t always dreamed of being a sports broadcaster, though. Instead, like many, it wasn’t broadcasting sports that he was interested in. It was playing them.

Maniscalco enrolled at SUNY Buffalo State College in 1993 with plans of playing football. While he didn’t get to play his freshman year, he was dedicated to making the team the next year. The summer leading up to his sophomore year he committed himself to training and lifting.

Then he injured his knee, putting those football plans on pause.

While looking for something to occupy his time, Maniscalco wound up in the lobby of the student radio station, where he overheard a certain problem.

The station’s play-by-play voice wasn’t going to be able to cover games due to conflicts with his new internship and they were afraid they wouldn’t be able to do the broadcast without him.

Overhearing this, Maniscalco couldn’t help but interject. “I can do it,” he said. “I used to call my highschool games.”

Except the thing was, Maniscalco had never called a game. He played in his high school football games, and it’s kind of hard to call a game from on the field. But he knew the game and was familiar with the team, so he felt confident.

“I became the color commentator for that season and in the next year, I became the play-by-play voice on the student

radio station for Buff State and that was it,” Maniscalco said. “I knew what I wanted to do.

“So since I was 19 or 20 years old, this has been the dream. For 25 years, this is what I’ve wanted to do. It was also pretty clear that I wasn’t going to be a professional athlete. It wasn’t the injury, but the lack of talent that really was going to impede me from being a pro athlete.”

And for those 25 years since, that has been the driving goal for Maniscalco. His journey has taken him through quite a few different broadcasting jobs, from Buffalo to Richmond, until he eventually landed in Raleigh in 2007 with a new job as the pre and postgame radio host for the Carolina Hurricanes.

Maniscalco became a staple for Hurricanes fans looking to connect with the team from his radio segments to the popular Canes Corner events that saw him sit down with players and coaches for hour long segments.

His hard work led to an eventual promotion in 2016 to the video side of things as the Hurricanes LIVE! host, web host on CarolinaHurricanes.com, and as a sideline reporter on FS Carolina and now he has made it to his dream job, a professional play-by-play broadcaster.

Asked if he was nervous leading up to his first game, Maniscalco agreed, but more so argued that it wasn’t from a fear of mistakes, but of living up to the legacies of those before him.

In true Maniscalco fashion, he rattled off a movie quote that encapsulated the moment for him.

“The great line from Gene Hackman to Keanu Reeves in The Replacements, ‘I was like a duck on the water. On the surface everything looked calm, but beneath the water my feet were going a million miles an hour.’”

The Hurricanes, in their relatively short history, had been blessed with some of the sport’s greatest talents when it came to broadcasting.

From legendary radio broadcaster Chuck Kaiton, who called every game from the Hartford Whalers induction into the NHL through relocation and up until the 2018-19 season, to John Forslund, one of the best play-by-play voices, and the only ever of the Hurricanes, those legacies left huge shoes to fill.

But Maniscalco isn’t a small man and in his 14th season with the organization, Maniscalco isn’t some new, fresh face either. He’s a pro talent, and one of the most loved members of the organization, respected by not only the fans, but the players, coaches and staff as well.

“You get nervous leading up to it, but once you’re there, you just do the job,” Maniscalco said. “That’s what it is. I’ve called play-by-play before. I can rely on that experience and the fact that I know this crew, not just the on-air talent, but the talent that is behind the scenes that really does an amazing job. All I have to do is keep the car between the line right now and everybody else takes care of everything.”



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And along with that, Maniscalco has a steady rock in his corner: the Hurricanes' color commentator and analyst for the past 22 seasons, Tripp Tracy.

"[Tracy]'s the best, honestly," Maniscalco said. "I could not ask for a better analyst because of the position that I am in. He knows the drill. His hockey knowledge sometimes I feel gets overshadowed because, since he understands the entertainment aspect of it, he's willing to say some things that are a little off the wall to get a laugh, but he really knows what he's talking about."

"He also knows everybody in the league. He'll be like, 'Hey did you get this pronunciation? Do you want me to call someone and get that for you, because I'm not sure if you know the guy or not?' He's just willing to do that, so he's been great to work with."

And having someone you can depend on is vital, especially in this season which is seeing a lot of changes from the traditional broadcasts.

For one, the season opener was called over 500 miles away, with Maniscalco and the Carolina Hurricanes broadcast team situated in PNC Arena to do the game remotely.

With only a single game feed in front of them, the broadcasting team is reliant on only that view just like everyone else watching.

"It's not as hard as people are going to make it out to be, but it's not easy," Maniscalco said. "Whatever is on that monitor, that's it. That's all I have. If anything is happening behind the play or if the puck goes off the screen you can't really see it until the camera catches up. It's not easy, but once you settle into a rhythm it becomes a little bit more comfortable and hopefully sounds a little bit more natural."

There is also the prep work that has to go into the broadcast. It isn't just knowing the names and showing up.

Maniscalco takes notes on rosters, line combinations and pronunciations, which he said is one of the most important aspects of the broadcast, for both teams days before the game. He also watches game film for upcoming opponents to try and learn tendencies and impact players as well as watching back his own calls to see where he can improve.

But what really makes a broadcast special is the little details that can be interspersed during a whistle or stoppage.

"You keep track of if someone is one game away from a milestone," Maniscalco said. "One goal away from 200 career goals or one point away from 300 career points. You do the same for the other team too, because I think the fans, while we are a Canes broadcast, want to know if someone on the other team does something special."

Not just milestones, but anecdotes, player quotes and stories that Maniscalco and Tracy can bounce back and forth and

really bring the fan experience to another level. That's a large part of what goes into the prep. Finding out these stats and stories.

Maniscalco has a few stories that he said he's keeping in his back pocket, waiting for the right moment to bring them forth, so fans will have to stay tuned in to the team's broadcasts to hear them.

Maniscalco was dialed in for his first game, but when the broadcast came to a close and the cameras turned off, he said that's when the emotions began to well up inside of him.

"Relief was the first thing I felt," Maniscalco said. "I also had a sense of pride, because this is what I wanted to do. Seeing that I actually could do it and that I now have this opportunity. I also thought of pretty much all of the folks that helped me get here, and there were a lot of them."

Maniscalco, while happy to have earned his dream job, isn't content with just having it.

"After the game, I thought of the things I could have done better," Maniscalco said. "I don't think I'm ever going to walk out of a broadcast, being like well that was great. To me there's always something that you can do better. But it was number one and they say you never forget your first, so for me, I'm going to remember it."

For those wondering if the Big Rig will have a snazzy tagline or catchphrase, you're going to have to wait on it as Maniscalco said he isn't forcing anything.

"I think those things are best if they just happen organically," Maniscalco said. "Tripp even asked me if I had been looking in the mirror and practicing my calls. I'm not just sitting there going, 'Sweet, sassy, molasses. What a goal!' I'm not trying to do that. I think it will just happen."

Even though many fans remember the "Dear Gussy!" call from the Rangers series, Maniscalco explained that that was fulfilling a request from former Hurricanes communication director Pace Sagester.

Dear gussy, had been a phrase Sagester's grandmother used to say, so he requested that Maniscalco find a way to slip it into a broadcast.

"I was like 'Dear gussy?' Maniscalco recalled. "I've never used that in any of my sentences, ever, but I'm like, 'You know what, for you Pace, I will find a way to put that in.'"

While Maniscalco may not have a signature yet, there is one phrase he has found himself using quite often. As the puck drops, Maniscalco can be heard saying, "And away we go."

A simple phrase, but one that captures the moment, whether for the first puck drop of a new season, or the start of the next chapter for the new voice of the Carolina Hurricanes.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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## NHL postpones Hurricanes games through Jan. 23

By Matt Teague

The NHL has halted the Carolina Hurricanes' schedule through at least Jan. 23 with five Hurricanes players on the COVID-19 protocol list, the league announced Wednesday.

Carolina's club facilities will be closed until further notice.

The Hurricanes had two games against the Florida Panthers scheduled for Thursday and Saturday.

The league already postponed Tuesday's game between Carolina and the Nashville Predators due to COVID-19 concerns. Hurricanes general manager Don Waddell

confirmed three Carolina players tested positive for COVID-19 but added that one test produced a false positive.

This is the second time the Panthers have had their schedule interrupted due to the pandemic. The club was set to open its season with a pair of games against the Dallas Stars, but those contests were postponed after 17 players within the Stars organization tested positive for COVID-19 throughout training camp.

Makeup dates for the postponed games are yet to be announced.

### TODAY'S LINKS

- <https://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/article248628690.html>
- <https://www.wralsportsfan.com/hurricanes-next-two-games-including-home-opener-postponed-after-covid-cases/19482138/>
- <https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/canes-games-postponed-at-least-through-january-23/c-320503268>
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- <https://nhl.nbc.com/2021/01/20/nhl-postpones-two-hurricanes-panthers-games/>
- <https://www.canescountry.com/2021/1/20/22240949/hurricanes-games-through-jan-23-postponed-training-facilities-closed>
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- <https://www.thescore.com/s/16660334>

# SportScan

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

1182354 Carolina Hurricanes

More Carolina Hurricanes' games postponed due to coronavirus

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

The Carolina Hurricanes, with five players on the NHL's COVID-19 protocol list, have had their next two games against the Florida Panthers postponed by the league.

As the Canes continue to navigate their way through various COVID-related issues, including quarantine, the decision was made by the league Wednesday to postpone Carolina's scheduled home opener Thursday and Saturday's game with the Panthers at PNC Arena. The postponements were announced a day after the league postponed the Hurricanes' game in Nashville against the Predators.

The NHL on Tuesday reported that the Hurricanes' Jordan Staal had been joined on the COVID protocol list by defenseman Jaccob Slavin and forwards Teuvo Teravainen, Warren Foegele and Jordan Martinook. Staal, the Canes captain, was placed on the list Friday, missing games against the Detroit Red Wings on Saturday and then the first game Monday against the Predators.



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The five players remained on the COVID list on Wednesday. The league said the Canes' training facility has been closed, effective immediately, and that the NHL would review and revise the Hurricanes' schedule.

The Hurricanes became the first NHL team to have games postponed for COVID reasons since the regular season began last week. The Dallas Stars had their regular-season schedule reworked after a cluster of COVID cases during training camp.

No NHL team other than the Hurricanes had more than two players on the COVID list on Tuesday. The NHL report is released each day after 5 p.m.

The Canes were to begin a six-game homestand on Thursday. Their next scheduled games are against the Tampa Bay Lightning on Jan. 26 and Jan. 28 at PNC Arena.

### NHL'S COVID PROTOCOL

The NHL is listing players this season that are not available and termed "COVID protocol related absences." Being placed on the list does not indicate that a positive test for coronavirus has been confirmed, although that can be one reason for the reported absence.

An initial positive test might remain unconfirmed. Those with COVID symptoms could be in isolation. A player could be in quarantine and considered a high-risk close contact. There could be a quarantine for travel.

When a player tests positive, they must self-isolate and the team is instructed to conduct contact tracing. If the player's second test is negative he is required to test negative again for two consecutive days before being removed from the league's protocol.

The NHL also has said: "No additional detail will be provided either by the League or the Club, including the precise reason the Player is unavailable or how long he might be out."

The COVID-19 protocol list does not cover team coaches or support staff members; only players.

News Observer LOADED: 01.21.2021

1182434 Tampa Bay Lightning

Is Lightning-Blue Jackets a rivalry?

Eduardo A. Encina

BRANDON —The Lightning's past two postseasons ended in two very different extremes, but the one constant was the Columbus Blue Jackets.

The teams have had some epic battles under the playoff spotlight, but are they enough to call Lightning-Blue Jackets a rivalry as they embark on life as foes in this year's realigned Central Division?

"If there's any kind of rivalry there, that's for you guys to decide," Lightning defenseman Ryan McDonagh said. "But we just know it's going to be a tough game. ... All I know is that they're a tough opponent and I've always had a ton of respect for them, even before what happened a couple years ago and last year in the playoffs. We know they're going to be well-coached and well-structured and not give us anything easy."

The matchup already included former Lightning coach John Tortorella, who led Tampa Bay to its first Stanley Cup in 2004, on the opposing bench. The close games the teams played the past two postseasons added even more juice.

Following one of the best regular-season runs in NHL history, the Lightning were swept by the Blue Jackets in the first round of the playoffs two seasons ago. Tampa Bay earned redemption last season, beating Columbus in five games — propelled by a five-overtime win in Game 1 of the opening-round series — on their way to winning the Stanley Cup.

"It's weird it's a team that's not (previously) in our division but we've had so many high-tension games with them," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said. "But there is a lot of familiarity between the two teams ... and anytime you play them, if you come away with two points you're definitely going to earn it."

### Surgeon Tells People To Do This To End Toe Fungus Tonight

Thursday, the Lightning will play the first of eight games against the Blue Jackets this season, starting their first road trip with a two-game series at Nationwide Arena.

Prior to the 2018-19 playoffs, the Lightning had won six straight over the Blue Jackets. Tampa Bay's .672 points percentage all-time against Columbus is its second-highest against any opponent.

But being on the wrong end of a first-round sweep was a gut check to the Lightning, and that alone made the Blue Jackets stand out in their minds.

Columbus Blue Jackets head coach John Tortorella watches a game against the Red Wings Monday in Detroit.

"I think our feeling probably towards the Columbus Blue Jackets is a little different since our disastrous playoff in 2019, I'll tell you that," Cooper said. "It's funny, like, we've had some success against them in the regular season and we all know how that played out in 2019.

"The one thing is their core group has pretty much stayed the same and so is ours, so we really have a good feeling for each other. I think there's a major respect value on our part. Not that we disrespected them back in 2019; that wasn't it at all. But we are well aware of the damage that team can do and how hard it was to beat them in the playoffs."

Getting swept in 2019 showed the Lightning they couldn't rely simply on speed and skill in the postseason, that they had to develop an edge, add grittiness to their game to persevere against hard-nosed teams like Columbus.

So, while the Lightning don't necessarily describe the Blue Jackets as a rival, they know any win against them will be well-earned.

"I know they're a good team," said Lightning center Brayden Point, who scored the winning goal in the fifth overtime of Game 1 of last season's playoff opener. "I know they play us extremely hard. They're tough to beat. And I think we have good games against them. As far as rivalries go, I don't really know. But I know they're a heck of a team, and they're good games."

Tampa Bay Times LOADED: 01.21.2021

1182435 Tampa Bay Lightning

Are more coronavirus-related postponements coming for the Lightning?

Eduardo A. Encina

TAMPA — If the first week of the NHL season is any indication, it's quickly becoming evident that teams will have to become accustomed to shuffling schedules.

That's a situation the Lightning already have experienced, with two games scheduled for this week against the Stars rescheduled for May because of Dallas' coronavirus issues. Another shuffle could be ahead soon.

The Hurricanes on Wednesday had all their games postponed through at least Saturday a day after five players were placed on the COVID-19 protocol list and their training facilities were closed for players until further notice.

The Lightning are scheduled to be the Hurricanes' next opponent, traveling to Raleigh for games Tuesday and Jan. 28 following their two-game series Thursday and Saturday in Columbus.



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Lightning coach Jon Cooper said Tuesday it would be naive to think that teams will be able to completely avoid the virus but the goal is staying as safe as possible.

"If you're following what you're supposed to be doing, it's a percentages game and you just cut the percentages down," Cooper said. "If you follow the rules, the percentages should work out in your favor, and that's just why you have to be diligent about it."

Doctors Hide the Truth! Easy Way to Get Rid of Wrinkles at Home! No Surgery!

The Lightning are working their way through their own coronavirus situation. Forward Blake Coleman and backup goaltender Curtis McElhinney have been on the protocol list, but Coleman came off the list on Wednesday.

"We don't have the security of (a) bubble, let's put it that way, so there's a lot more onus on us as individuals," Cooper said. "But then even that breaks down a little bit, because your players have families and kids. So there's so many different things that go into this."

Wednesday was the Lightning's fifth straight off day because of the postponed games against the Stars. Tampa Bay flew to Columbus on Wednesday afternoon.

Joseph stepping in

Since Coleman came off the protocol list, he could play Thursday against Columbus. If not, wing Mathieu Joseph would likely slide into Coleman's spot on the third line, alongside Yannick Gourde and Barclay Goodrow.

Joseph practiced with that line during Coleman's absence and has made the most of the opportunities he has been given. He scored in the season-opening win over the Blackhawks while filling in for Tyler Johnson on the second line.

Cooper said Joseph's speed and relentlessness on the forecheck make him a promising replacement for Coleman, who has a goal and an assist in the Lightning's two games. Joseph needs to use those qualities because Coleman has them, Cooper said.

"If you're going to bring a lot of that same energy ... it's a big key," Cooper said. "I think (Joseph) can fit right in there, and he's a pretty tenacious player, so we should be okay."

Game time change

The starting time for Saturday's game in Columbus was moved from 7 p.m. to 2 p.m. so the game can be showcased live in prime time in Europe, the Blue Jackets said. It will be Tampa Bay's first day game of the season.

Lightning affiliate postpones game

The Lightning's ECHL affiliate in Orlando postponed Wednesday's home game against Greenville "per league Health and Safety Protocols," it said. The Solar Bears have played home games at Amway Arena with limited fan attendance.

Tampa Bay Times LOADED: 01.21.2021

1182436 Tampa Bay Lightning

Baby Yoda, Gisele and boats: Behind the Lightning's Stanley Cup parties

By Joe Smith Jan 20, 2021

It was approaching midnight after the Lightning's season opener, and the player's parking lot was clearing out.

The TV trucks from NBCSN were packing up. The Blackhawks, who just lost 5-1 to the defending Cup champions, were boarding their bus on the way back to their hotel.

That's when Lightning defenseman Mikhail Sergachev walked down the ramp carrying the Stanley Cup.

This was the final day hockey's holy grail would be in town, with Cup keeper Phil Pritchard starting his drive to Toronto the following morning. But it had one last unscheduled appointment. Sergachev's parents, Alexander and Ludmilla, along with younger sister, Anna, had just arrived in town the day before from Russia. Pritchard said the family members weren't able to be in Amalie Arena that night for the game due to the required quarantine, but Sergachev wanted them to get to see the Cup up close. They chatted. They took photos. They hugged.

Pritchard has been through countless moments with the Cup the past quarter-century, but this one sticks out.

"I was able to stand near and listen to him explain it in Russian, I'm sure it was emotional for the entire family," Pritchard said. "It's pretty powerful to be there for it. And that's what it's all about — the team off the ice is just as important as the team on the ice."

The Stanley Cup the Lightning hoisted — after 65 days in the "bubble" in Toronto and Edmonton — might have been the hardest one to win, considering the circumstances. And the resulting tour with the trophy was certainly as unique as Pritchard has ever experienced. Due to the coronavirus and resulting protocols, players and staff couldn't bring the Cup back to their hometowns for a 24-hour span, a tradition that began in 1995. There are many families who have yet to see their sons with the Cup in person, including Steven Stamkos' parents, Chris and Lesley, who are in Toronto.

Gatherings with the Cup were limited to 10 or fewer, which included the two Cup keepers and one representative from the team. There were temperature checks and plenty of hand sanitizer. But in some ways, the Stanley Cup reached more people in a winning team's town than ever before, with Pritchard spending around three full months in the Tampa Bay area (banking those Marriott points, no doubt).

Everyone saw the Cup at the boat parade in downtown Tampa and the rally at Raymond James Stadium. The trophy was on a yacht for Nikita Kucherov, Andrei Vasilevskiy and Alex Volkov's days, interrupted a bachelorette party with coach Jon Cooper and — yes — held a baby Yoda from Star Wars fanatic, trainer Mike Poirier. But there were tons of behind-the-scenes trips to schools, hospitals, police stations and mayor's offices all over Tampa and surrounding cities such as St. Petersburg and Clearwater. Stamkos and defenseman Ryan McDonagh visited children at a local cancer center.

The Lightning won the Cup without their fans being able to see any of their games in person. But the Cup, over the course of 90-plus days, was all over the community.

"For everyone involved, it was about sharing with the extended family, which is Bolts Nation and Distant Thunder," Pritchard said. "From Jon Cooper and the coaching staff to the equipment guys, they wanted to share it with as many people as they could, and that's what makes it really special."

A bachelorette party poses with Lightning coach Jon Cooper and the Stanley Cup. (Craig Campbell / Hockey Hall of Fame)

What Pritchard remembers most about his time with the Lightning and the Cup is the return — and the reunion.

The Cup accompanied the team back on its charter flight from Edmonton in late September, with most players taking their turn with it. It sat on the table during card games, and on Conn Smythe winner Victor Hedman's lap as he slept. Pritchard listened as players talked about how they came together on their November 2019 trip to Sweden, a turning point in their season.

And when the team landed in Tampa at SheltAir Aviation, players and staff got to see families they hadn't been able to hug in a couple of months. Wing Blake Coleman called it the best day of his life, other than the birth of his daughter, Charlie, who got to sit in the Cup that day. Stamkos showed off the Cup to 2-year-old son Carter, giving him a kiss on the cheek.

Owner Jeff Vinik high-fived players as they de-boarded, with Hedman carrying his Conn Smythe Trophy.



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"It was everything I could have imagined," he said.

They took trolleys down Bayshore Blvd, yelling at fans who lined the street and ended up back at Amalie for a private celebration with family, friends and some fans.

"All of our wildest dreams came true," Stamkos said. "Let's party, baby!"

The first few weeks mostly were group celebrations with the Cup, from golf outings and a team dinner at Eddie V's to a boat tour to Egmont Key. A half dozen players brought the Cup to a Tampa Bay Buccaneers game, posing for a photo with Tom Brady's wife, Gisele Bündchen. Alex Killorn had the trophy at Bern's, where he ate lobster bisque out of it.

"The bad part is we couldn't bring it anywhere," Killorn said. "The positive side is that the Cup was in Tampa all summer. I was in Tampa, so I had plenty of time with it. More time than I probably would have had in different situations."

Pritchard said while not every player got a specific day with the Cup, they did their best to make sure everyone had at least some time with it. Hedman had some private time with the Cup at his Davis Islands home, with the trophy ending up in the waterfront yard of Stamkos on several occasions. Forward Mathieu Joseph said his favorite moment with the Cup was getting to share it with his parents and brother, Penguins defenseman Pierre-Olivier, who was in town.

"It was something I'll remember forever," Joseph said.

On another night, Cooper visited multiple bars around Tampa with the Cup. He surprised a bachelorette party at District Tavern. The Cup made appearances at the Hub and Hatrick's among other places before Cooper brought the Cup to his Anna Maria home. He made sure to show it off first at some restaurants he and his family frequent on the island.

"Honestly, I can't explain the feeling," Cooper said on "The Two-Man Advantage Podcast" with The Athletic's Pierre LeBrun and Scott Burnside. "I have people say, 'Well, what's it like?' I was like, 'You know what? Nobody really wants to see Jon Cooper nor really cares, but as soon as you're with the Stanley Cup, it's like walking in with Mick Jagger.' It is. It is such a remarkable trophy."

"I've had it in my house where we just sit, me or maybe my son (Jonny), or my wife (Jessie), and it's the girls (Julia and Josie). You just look at it with that sense of accomplishment but understanding, it just exudes history. And you look at it and look at the names on it and the people that have won it and you know the sweat and tears and everything that went into winning it and to think 100 years before that happened. It's a treasure to be around regardless of what day of the week it is or who you're with."

The yacht where Vasilevskiy, Kucherov and Volkov had their parties was brought over from South Florida by agent Dan Milstein. Yannni Gourde also chose to have a day with the Cup on a boat.

"The bay had a big role in the Cup's travels," Pritchard said.

Members of the Lightning's training and equipment staff had time with the Cup, along with director of analytics Mike Peterson, who hosted a small gathering in the backyard of his Tampa home. Most every day, the Cup was somewhere, whether it was at a police station, fire station, hospital. It visited three mayors, from Tampa's Jane Castor to St. Petersburg's Rick Kriseman and Eric Seidel of Oldsmar. It hit all the tourist attractions in the area, from Busch Gardens, Clearwater Marine Aquarium and Dali Museum.

There was a day at Amalie Arena when team employees could bring their families for photos with the Cup, and something similar with season ticket members.

"I came down in 1992 when the team had its kickoff press conference," Pritchard said of the beginning of the Lightning franchise. "You look back to then and now, this is a hockey town, community. The youth hockey rinks, the high school rinks, it's here to stay. And that's all driven by the Tampa Bay Lightning."

VIEW THIS POST ON INSTAGRAM

A POST SHARED BY ALEX KILLORN (@AKILLORN17)

The day before the Lightning opener, the Cup made one last home stop.

Pritchard took it to Stamkos' house on Davis Islands, with the families of Hedman and McDonagh also joining for some backyard pictures by the water. There is still hope among the players that they can get a day with it back in their hometowns, once it's safe to do so.

"There's been some discussions about it, but we'll see," Pritchard said. "Let's hope we can get through this season OK and see how it goes. The easiest thing is for (the Lightning) to win again and everything will be solved."

The Cup was at center ice for a pregame presentation for the Lightning opener, which happened without fans in the building. It was still special to see the banner unveiling, with Pritchard noting how replicas of the banner were being hung all over the Tampa Bay region that afternoon.

"They made everyone feel part of it," Pritchard said.

Once the game was over, a Lightning 5-1 victory, Pritchard put the Cup in the middle of the dressing room (careful not to touch the logo). He left when Cooper walked in, thinking his speech would be private. Cooper addressed the team, and singled out the player of the game, as he did after every game during the playoff run. Back then, the player would say a few words, then place the game puck on an opening in a Stanley Cup cutout. Sixteen wins, 16 pucks.

But when wing Ondrej Palat was called up to the middle of the room, he was given a special prize: a miniature Stanley Cup. Every player received one that night, with Stamkos posting on Twitter how his son was thrilled to see it the next day.

"It was powerful," Pritchard said. "Very touching to see all the guys get one."

SOMEONE WAS HAPPY TO SEE WHAT DADDY BROUGHT HOME LAST NIGHT 🥰 PIC.TWITTER.COM/UHB6QHO8QK

— STEVEN STAMKOS (@REALSTAMKOS91) JANUARY 14, 2021

The next morning, Pritchard and Hockey Hall of Fame colleague Howie Borow packed up their Chevy minivan, putting the seats down to hold the trophies, from the Cup to the Conn Smythe and Prince of Wales. They drove more than 10 hours to stop overnight in North Carolina, just north of Charlotte, with the plan to get to Toronto by the next day.

Pritchard reflected on the whirlwind Cup tour in Tampa Bay, managing the tropical storms to the pandemic-forced protocols, and seeing all the smiles on the faces of people in the area. When Vinik told the crowd at the Raymond James Stadium rally that this Cup "is for you," he wasn't kidding.

"The whole tour was a community effort," Pritchard said. "Because they wanted to get it to as many people as they could."

Now Pritchard gets to quarantine and rest up with much-deserved time off, awaiting his destination for next summer.

"Let's keep our fingers crossed and see what happens," Pritchard said. "Come middle of July, who knows? We could be back in Tampa before you know it."

The Athletic LOADED: 01.21.2021

1182362 Dallas Stars

Stars entering season seeking 'redemption year' still fueled by Stanley Cup Final loss

By Matthew DeFranks 6:28 PM on Jan 20, 2021 CST

Grand accomplishments cast grand shadows — long ones, dark ones, inescapable ones even.

The shadow that emanates from the Campbell Bowl that the Stars won as last season's Western Conference champion will hang over the season they begin Friday.



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The exuberance from three postseason series wins will be there. The devastation from losing Game 6 of the Stanley Cup Final will be there. The insight gained from a new playing style will be there. The absence of the Cup will be there.

Dallas is now nearly four months removed from losing to the Lightning in Edmonton, denying the franchise its second Stanley Cup in the city's history. It returns almost the entire roster along with head coach Rick Bowness.

That means that so many players on the Stars roster haven't forgotten the feeling of misery present after losing Game 6, personified best by captain Jamie Benn sitting alone in the dressing room, still in his pads long after the rest of his teammates departed.

"Just a tough situation, obviously," Benn said. "Two wins away from winning the Stanley Cup. You work hard your whole life to achieve that goal, and it just didn't happen. Just a tough situation."

For the second straight season, the Stars enter the year wondering what could have been.

In 2019, they lost to the eventual Stanley Cup champion in double-overtime of Game 7, when a few close calls in the extra period could have changed the outcome.

In 2020, the Stars were ravaged by injuries in the Final, and their depth was not enough to counter the Lightning's skill. (Dallas was without Ben Bishop, Radek Faksa, Roope Hintz, Blake Comeau and Stephen Johns, and Tyler Seguin played with a torn labrum in his hip.)

"When you get that close and you don't have your full roster, that's what sticks with you," Bowness said. "Tampa, give them credit. They beat us and they deserve the Stanley Cup because they beat us. The underlying frustration is that when you get that close, man, you want to be able to put your best team on the ice. We just simply weren't able to do that."

Comeau called the separated shoulder the toughest injury of his now 15-year career. Faksa's broken wrist robbed him of a chance to play in the Final.

For the players on the ice, the feeling lingered for weeks following the bubble.

"It was definitely an empty feeling," Stars forward Andrew Coglianò said. "I don't think I've ever experienced that. I've had some decent runs where I was in the conference finals, and then lost in Game 7. This one was different."

"When you don't get what you wanted and you're so close to seeing your captain Jamie Benn be rewarded the Stanley Cup, it was tough. It was a tough feeling, and I think it took definitely weeks to get over it. It took some time to really process where we were and what happened."

Defenseman John Klingberg's backcheck in the dying seconds of Game 6 is an enduring image of the Stars effort in defeat. How long did it take for him to get over the loss, if he had at all?

"It's going to stick with you for a while and forever, I would say," Klingberg said. "It's never fun to lose in the finals. I've been able to win the finals on the World Juniors stage and the World Championship stage, and lost the final in the Swedish League and won the final in the Swedish league."

"It's obviously way more fun to win, and that's why you do this. You love to compete, and you love to be a part of a team that's successful and always has a chance to win."

"I think it's just going to be a redemption year for us. ... We're right there, and we put a lot of pressure on us as a team to be that successful and be a team that's always going to battle for the Stanley Cup."

The Stars will be reminded of both the joy of winning the West, and the sting of losing the Cup on Friday when the franchise raises a Western Conference Champions banner to the rafters of American Airlines Center ahead of the opener against Nashville.

After that, the banner will just cast a shadow.

"We walked out of there feeling 'OK, we gave it everything we possibly could,'" Bowness said. "We didn't leave anything on the table, and that's rewarding. The underlying frustration is that we're missing a few key parts here, but that's hockey."

"Those are the thing you can't control, and you learn to live with it."

Dallas Morning News LOADED: 01.21.2021

1182363 Dallas Stars

Stars waive former first-round pick Julius Honka signaling possible end to his run with Dallas

By Matthew DeFranks 1:39 PM on Jan 20, 2021 CST

The Stars trimmed their roster Wednesday morning by assigning eight players to AHL affiliate Texas and waiving defenseman Julius Honka.

The moves came two days before the Stars open the season Friday against Nashville, and signaled a healthier team after 17 positive coronavirus cases interrupted training camp and forced the postponement of the team's first four regular season games.

Dallas sent forwards Riley Damiani, Tye Felhaber, Adam Mascherin and Riley Tufté, and defensemen Joseph Cecconi, Ben Gleason, Jerad Rosburg and Ryan Shea to Texas. The players remained in training camp as the Stars slowly started to integrate sick players back into practice.

Currently, the AHL season is scheduled to begin Feb. 5.

Honka was a 2014 first-round pick by the Stars, and his waiving may signal the official end of his time in Dallas. If none of the other 30 teams claim him on waivers, the Stars can choose whether to assign him to Texas or the taxi squad.

Waiving Honka was a predictable outcome, with spots on the Stars blue line already spoken for, and Honka requiring waivers to be purged from the NHL roster. It's also a transaction that follows two years' worth of stagnant development for the 25-year-old, right-handed defenseman.

In 2018-19, Honka was healthy scratched for the final 35 games of the regular season and all 13 playoff games. During the postseason, he was no longer skating with the NHL group, instead lumped in with the black aces. In the summer of 2019, Honka did not sign a contract as a restricted free agent and did not report to training camp, instead requesting a trade from the organization.

He spent last season playing in Finland's Liiga and then signed a two-way contract with the Stars worth the league minimum in the NHL. When Joel Hanley missed the second day of training camp earlier this month, it wasn't Honka that elevated to the NHL group. It was Jerad Rosburg instead.

For Honka, the best case scenario is that he gets claimed by another team. If he clears, it's unlikely Texas would prioritize his power play time over prospects Ben Gleason and Ryan Shea (or Thomas Harley if he's in the AHL). If the Stars keep him on the taxi squad, it would be tough for a player that has watched so many NHL games in the last two years sit again.

But with another organization, Honka would receive a fresh start and fresh eyes.

For the Stars, if Honka does leave the organization, Dallas would lose the only player in its 2014 draft class that ever reached the NHL. The other eight draft picks never made it to the NHL.



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It would also mean the loss of an asset for nothing after general manager Jim Nill tried to trade Honka over the last couple seasons. The Stars lost 2013 first-round pick Valeri Nichushkin in 2019 when they bought out his contract.

Briefly: Forward Blake Comeau will miss Friday's season opener with an undisclosed issue, coach Rick Bowness said. Comeau has not practiced since Saturday, and Ty Dellandrea should fill in for Comeau on the Stars' checking line. Dellandrea is a right-handed center that can also play wing, and should also kill penalties.

Here's who participated in Stars practice Wednesday:

Forward lines

Jamie Benn – Roope Hintz – Denis Gurianov

Joel Kiviranta – Joe Pavelski – Alexander Radulov

Andrew Cogliano – Radek Faksa – Ty Dellandrea

Nick Caamano – Jason Dickinson – Jason Robertson

Justin Dowling

Defensive pairs

Esa Lindell – John Klingberg

Jamie Oleksiak – Miro Heiskanen

Andrej Sekera – Mark Pysyk

Joel Hanley – Taylor Fedun

Goaltenders

Anton Khudobin

Jake Oettinger

Second practice group: Joel L'Esperance, Tanner Kero, Julius Honka, Thomas Harley, Landon Bow, Colton Point.

Missing from practice: Blake Comeau, Rhett Gardner.

5 on 4 power play units

Unit 1: Jamie Benn, Roope Hintz, Joe Pavelski, Denis Gurianov and John Klingberg.

Unit 2: Radek Faksa, Jason Robertson, Joel Kiviranta, Alexander Radulov and Miro Heiskanen.

5 on 3 power play units

Unit 1: Joe Pavelski, Jamie Benn, Alexander Radulov, Miro Heiskanen and John Klingberg.

Unit 2: Radek Faksa, Roope Hintz, Jason Robertson, Denis Gurianov and Miro Heiskanen.

4 on 3 power play units

Unit 1: Jamie Benn, Joe Pavelski, Denis Gurianov and John Klingberg.

Unit 2: Alexander Radulov, Jason Robertson, Roope Hintz and Miro Heiskanen.

Penalty kill forward pairs

Jason Dickinson – Ty Dellandrea

Andrew Cogliano – Nick Caamano

Justin Dowling

Penalty kill defensive pairs

Esa Lindell – Andrej Sekera

Jamie Oleksiak – Mark Pysyk

Joel Hanley – Taylor Fedun

Dallas Morning News LOADED: 01.21.2021

1182364 Dallas Stars

Could Miro Heiskanen win the Norris Trophy? 6 former winners on Stars defenseman

Saad Yousuf Jan 20, 2021

Miro Heiskanen is already one of the best defensemen in the NHL.

The 21-year-old Dallas Star has been a quietly dominant presence since he entered the league in 2018. He's represented Dallas in the NHL All-Star Game and been arguably the team's best player during a playoff run that ended in the Stanley Cup Final. The highest accolade for NHL defensemen is the Norris Trophy. Is Heiskanen good enough to win one?

Who better to ask than those who have already done so?

Our panel consists of six former Norris Trophy winners, including four active players and two retired Hall of Famers, with 13 Norris Trophies between them. Doing the heavy lifting is arguably the greatest defenseman in NHL history, Nicklas Lidstrom, who won the award seven times in his illustrious career. San Jose Sharks defenseman Erik Karlsson won it a couple of times earlier in his career in Ottawa in 2012 and 2015. New Jersey's P.K. Subban (2013), Tampa Bay's Victor Hedman (2018), Nashville's Roman Josi (2020) and former Devils legend Scott Niedermayer (2004) all have a trophy to their name as well.

Here's what they had to say about the possibility of Heiskanen joining their ranks.

When you watch or play against Miro Heiskanen, what stands out to you the most about him?

Erik Karlsson: First of all, he's a really good skater. We all know that. In order to be a good skater, you've got to have good hockey knowledge and be at the right spot at the right time, know when to go full speed and know when not to. I think that's one of the things he does really well. I think he's a really good player in timing things, which to me, is what makes him stand out and what makes it look easy to other people sometimes, but it's actually not that easy.

Roman Josi: The first thing that comes to my mind is his skating ability. He's such a smooth skater. Just playing him in that playoff series (in 2019), for his age, he was unbelievably calm with the puck, using his speed or just making good passes. He's a really smart player. For forwards, it's really hard to forecheck against Miro. He's always moving. When you see a forechecker coming, it's hard for him to hit you if you keep your feet moving or you make a quick move. He's really good at that, escaping forechecks and different situations. Nobody gets to hit him really. He's an unbelievable player.

Nicklas Lidstrom: He's a fluid skater and it looks effortless when he's bringing the puck up the ice. He's really strong defensively and very seldom makes mistakes. He looks mature in his decision making where some young defensemen can make mistakes and have trouble recovering from them during games.

Victor Hedman: His skating ability, first of all. He can get up and down the ice very, very fast. He's the first guy on the offense, and he's the first guy back. When you go into a playoff series, you obviously pre-scout teams' tendencies and their best players. We spent a whole lot of time on Miro and trying to get him off his game. It's tough. He skates himself out of trouble, and he's so dynamic in the way he does things. It's tough to contain. You can try to limit his opportunities offensively, but it's tough to contain him over a series. Just his skating ability, he's so smooth out



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there. He takes two strides, and he's up in the play. Everything seems so effortless.

P.K. Subban: His skating. I'll say it again: His skating is phenomenal. I look at him, he's strong. I think obviously being just (21 years old), there's some room for him to get stronger. Once he gets even stronger, the game's going to become even easier for him, if you can imagine that. He makes the game look so easy now with the way he skates and moves out there. It's special. He was one of the best skaters in the league at 19 years old, and he's fun to watch. What I take from his game that's a highlight, and maybe one of his strongest points, is positionally. Defensively, his positioning is pretty good.

How has the NHL defenseman evolved over time?

Karlsson: I've been in this league now for 12 years, and I feel like every season has been very different for the way that goals are scored and how it goes. I've had seasons where I've scored 20 goals, and I've had seasons when I score two or three goals. It always changes, and you always have to adapt. The good teams are really good at doing that, and the good players as well. I do think it feels like the game is so fast now that you need all of the five guys involved in the offense, and that obviously involves the defensemen because the defensive team is going to have five good skaters on the ice, and they're going to be covering a lot on the ice. You need to be able to attack from a lot of different areas before you can find holes. One thing that the league is trending towards is having guys being able to just skate. That makes them able to cover spots, cover holes that 10 years ago guys couldn't do.

Josi: I think it's more of the defensemen attacking as well. When I came into the league, it wasn't always like that. There were only a couple of guys that did that, but now I feel like everybody is doing it. It's become more of a skating game for defensemen.

Hedman: You have unbelievable players that are ready to play right away and play at a high level. The difference is that they're so good with the puck, they're great skaters and defend well. It's the whole package right away.

Scott Niedermayer: Now you look at the makeup of teams, for the most part, all of the defensemen on a roster skate and have the skill that maybe back then in the '80s and '90s, there was only one or two guys that played the game that way. If you have a bit of size now, that's great, but it's really not nearly as important as being able to skate, control the puck, possess the puck and defend with your skating.

Subban: Sometimes, I see some of the moves I used to do when I came into the league in 2007 weren't as traditional. I see it happening more regularly now from the back end, which is interesting. It speaks to the skill levels of some players coming into the league. When I got to the NHL, there were maybe one of two guys on the defensive core (of a team) that could move pucks and play the power play and really impact the game offensively. Now you're looking at at least three or four guys that can shoot the puck, can skate and make plays and usually, all six of them can skate and make a pass. I think in the league now, there's so much more skill, so many more players that can make a difference, and it's fun.

How much of a role does the market you play in play a role in getting attention for the Norris Trophy?

Karlsson: I do understand that guys follow certain teams and see certain games only, and the rest is just what you hear and what we see on TV with highlights and stuff. It's tough for that many people to give a unanimous vote on who is best. In order to do that, you need that exposure, I think. He definitely got that last year ... Unfortunately, that's something that you need since it is (media) casting the votes that not necessarily see every player playing every game, which is a big difference. At the end of the day, you've just got to be on the right side of the thing. There's a little bit of politics in it. You've got to get a lot of exposure throughout the whole year.

Josi: I think in today's world, the media can watch any game. Obviously, there is some more attention on some different teams, but I think it's pretty fair. I think if you play well, you're going to get the recognition for it. Obviously, there are still going to be guys that are underrated because you don't see them as much on TV, but I don't think it's a disadvantage, to be honest.

Lidstrom: I don't necessarily think the market that you play in plays a big role in who wins the Norris, but I do think you have to put a few solid seasons together to be recognized as a top D-man.

Hedman: It's all about the opportunity to play and what kind of role you have on the team. Miro's playing for a great organization and a great coach. He plays a big role, he's a No. 1 defenseman and he plays a lot of minutes. I think that's all that matters, especially at that age. You need to play and play big minutes. If you play well enough, you're going to get the recognition anyway. It doesn't matter where you play. I think you're going to get the recognition if you play well. He's off to a good start in Dallas and just going to get better.

Niedermayer: It has something to do with it. I think that is a good point, but not only are they looking at your individual points and stats and things but they're looking in the broader context of have you helped your team compete? By getting to the Stanley Cup Final, you're definitely going to get a lot of recognition, no matter what if you're playing in Toronto or wherever. All of the eyes are on the game of hockey at that point. I think that's always been a criteria for people voting on the Norris Trophy.

Subban: The voting is very subjective. Not always do the votes go the way that they should, not always are the right players selected. I don't think there are any wrong players selected, though. I mean, when you look at it every year, when a player wins it, it's usually one of the top guys in the league. It's very difficult to win one. It takes a lot in an 82-game season, it takes a lot in a shortened season. You need a lot of bounces. You talk to a lot of guys that won the Norris Trophy, they'll tell you, 'Yeah, I had a good year, but man, did (teammates) exceed expectations; man, did our goaltender play well; man, our penalty kill was one of the tops in the league; man, our power play was clicking.' You need a lot of things working in your favor, I find, to be in that situation when it comes.

In your mind, what does a Norris Trophy defenseman in today's game look like?

Karlsson: I think it's hard to say. I think for the forwards and for other awards, it's more specific to one thing, whereas for the defensemen, it goes a little bit back and forth. Sometimes it's the better defensive guy and sometimes it's been an offensive guy ... You have to be a good skater to keep up, and Miro is one of those guys that is still young and (his) body is feeling fresh on all nights, and he's definitely taking advantage of it. He's making some noise that way. At the end of the day, you're going to have so many good guys now that are going to put up good numbers and other guys that are going to do other quality stuff that takes the stats out.

Josi: I think it's a mix of both, offense and defense. I think you have to be good defensively. As a defenseman, that's the first thing. But the offense has become such a big part of the game, especially the defensemen. There are so many defensemen that can create and jump up and play offense. I feel like every coach talks about five guys attacking and five guys playing defense.

Lidstrom: Being able to play a lot of minutes and not drop in level of play. Some players, when they reach a certain amount of minutes, are prone to mistakes when fatigue sets in. If you can play against the opponents' best players, play on the penalty kill and power play and still outperform the players you're facing on most nights, you will get the recognition. I took most pride in being effective defensively. I was looked upon as being an offensive player when I started in the NHL but was able to become stronger on the defensive side of the puck and therefore become a sound all-around player.

Hedman: I think you've got to be a complete defenseman. You have to be able to contribute offensively and be an elite defender at the same



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time. I think that's what (voters) look at. If you score a lot of points, you get recognition but at the same time, you look at how you defend, if you play in all situations of the game, you play in the last minute of the game. Regardless of if you're up or down, do they put you on the ice? You've got to be able to thrive in different situations.

Niedermayer: There definitely is an offensive side to it, whether that's fair or not. With it being the one award for defensemen, they take all of these things into consideration. Obviously, points is going to get the headline for any player. It probably is skewed that way a little bit, maybe more than it should be. What pops into my head is a well-rounded game, a consistency, having done it for longer than a year or two. I find it that a lot of defensemen have a great year, but it seems like the guy that's had four or five really good years in a row will probably win that trophy, even if that player's single year might be better.

Subban: I think you've got to be able to do it all. You have to be able to play both sides of the puck. You have to be physical, be able to skate, make plays and play big minutes. But even aside from the minutes, there are a lot of people that have played a lot of minutes in this league but aren't very productive in during time, so you also have to be productive with the minutes that you get. I don't think you necessarily have to be playing half of the game every game to be the best player on the ice or best defenseman on the ice, but when you're out there, are you making a difference at both ends of the rink? I think that's important as well.

Final thoughts

Karlsson: Miro, I think, has come in, made an impact right away, and he's going to keep just getting better with the experience he's going to gain through the things he's going to go through throughout his career. If he keeps doing what he's doing, at the pace that he's on, he's definitely going to be one of the guys that is going to get a lot of recognition through the bigger media outlets. He's an extremely good player.

Hedman: It takes time, but Miro has right away proven in this league that he's an elite defenseman. It's going to be a lot of fun to watch him keep developing. I'm going to have a front-row seat here for a lot of games again (this season). Regular season games are a little bit different than the playoffs, but it's going to be a lot of fun to watch.

Subban: I played against him in Nashville for a few years, and I got to see a little bit more of him in the playoffs when we played them in (2019). I really thought in the playoffs, you could see where his game could go and the level that he can get to ... I think for his age, how he uses his body and how he positions himself in the defensive zone, the way he moves on the blue line offensively, there's no question that he's on the path to being a Norris Trophy winner. I think he has that potential. Everything has to just fall in line.

The Athletic LOADED: 01.21.2021

1182355 Chicago Blackhawks

Philipp Kurashev's autumn in Switzerland fueled his Blackhawks breakthrough

Blackhawks brass challenged Kurashev to improve his pace of play this fall, and the 21-year-old forward did exactly that with HC Lugano. He scored his first NHL goal Tuesday.

By Ben Pope Jan 20, 2021, 5:32pm CST

Philipp Kurashev's celebration after his first NHL goal Tuesday was as casual as they come.

An almost-inadvertent stick raise. The slightest of fist pumps. A gentle bump into the glass. A brief huddle with linemates Dominik Kubalik and Pius Suter.

Any fan in the BB&T Center who didn't know otherwise would've assumed it was just another goal in a long career.

But the milquetoast reaction was fitting for Kurashev, 21, whose road to the NHL wasn't as glamorous as Kirby Dach's or as well-documented as Ian Mitchell's, but it made a talented, impactful player out of him nonetheless.

After a solid yet unspectacular (and injury-plagued) 2019-20 season with the Rockford IceHogs, during which Kurashev had 19 points in 36 games, Blackhawks brass laid out clearly what he needed to do to take the next step: play faster.

"He has the tendency and the skill to be able to slow the game down, draw players to him, bide time and find the open man," general manager Stan Bowman said this month. "But that transition from junior to pro hockey, right away it wasn't as easy for him, and he didn't have as much time. So now we've tried to get him to do everything quicker."

COVID-19's changes to the NHL calendar actually worked out perfectly, giving him a chance to gradually increase the pace of his game in a lower-pressure but still competitive environment.

Kurashev returned home to Switzerland and played for HC Lugano, two hours southwest of his hometown of Davos. On a roster laden with former NHL forwards (Mikkel Boedker, Mark Arcobello, Daniel Carr, etc.), Kurashev was highly productive with 14 points in 15 games across all competitions.

"They wanted me to play with more pace and be responsible defensively," said Kurashev, who's as soft-spoken and unassuming off the ice as on it. "So that's what I was working on. I watched a lot of video stuff. There was a great coaching staff and players, too, in Lugano, so a lot of guys improved me in those areas."

And how exactly did he quicken his pace?

"Just always moving my legs," he said. "If you're always first on pucks and stuff like that, that's how you can do it."

As oversimplified as that explanation sounds, Kurashev's autumn in Switzerland made a huge difference. Always considered one of the Hawks' more intriguing forward prospects because of his dynamic playmaking ability — a refreshing contrast to the grinder roles Brandon Hagel, MacKenzie Entwistle and others project to fill — Kurashev had suddenly refined the other aspects of his game, as well.

He arrived in Chicago for training camp this winter looking far more NHL-ready than Bowman or coach Jeremy Colliton expected.

"He has great vision, creativity, skill, a lot of patience with the puck," Bowman said. "He's able to make plays [and] create offense, which is something that's important in today's game."

"What you're seeing now on the ice is the skill set is coming through but at an NHL pace."

Kurashev debuted in the Hawks' second game against the Lightning, playing on the wing despite being a natural center, and has dominated puck possession and chance creation in the three games since.

The Hawks have a 38-25 shot advantage and 20-8 scoring-chance advantage with Kurashev on the ice this season. He ranks as the best on the team in the latter category.

Carl Soderberg's expected arrival Friday will further increase the competition for roster spots, but Kurashev's rapid rate of improvement and great potential should keep him as a regular in the lineup.

"He's skilled, fast, has a great shot," Kubalik said Tuesday, lauding Kurashev's overhauled pace of play. "Those skills are going to make him good. Really happy that he got the first [goal] under his belt, and I'm pretty sure there are going to be lots of them."

Chicago Sun Times LOADED: 01.21.2021



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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1182356 Chicago Blackhawks

Andrew Shaw's puck retrieval bringing new element to Blackhawks' power play

"[Shaw] gets pucks back and he's willing to get to the net," Jeremy Colliton said. "That's something we've struggled with in the past, since I've been here anyway."

By Ben Pope Jan 20, 2021, 6:30am CST

Andrew Shaw has been a part of the Blackhawks' top power play unit.

Andrew Shaw was a staple on the Blackhawks' top power-play unit back in 2013-14 and 2014-15.

His ice time and usage on the man advantage had declined over the past half-decade, however, including his time with the Canadiens and return to Chicago last year.

Now, Shaw is back on the top unit and adding a much-needed scrappy element that the unit has missed throughout coach Jeremy Colliton's tenure.

"He gets pucks back and he's willing to get to the net," Colliton said. "That's something we've struggled with in the past, since I've been here anyway, getting pucks back and extending the zone time so we don't have to break out two or three times. Even off a lost faceoff, just finding a way to stop the kill from clearing it [is important]."

Shaw's impacts on the power play have come from a different position than he filled in the past, too.

Instead of using him as a net-front guy like the Canadiens and Joel Quenneville-led Hawks normally did, Colliton has instead stationed Shaw in the slot — not as a primary shooting threat, like most slot guys in other teams' power-play setups, but as a roaming retriever.

His location in the middle of the zone gives him opportunities to track down rebounds and engage opposing penalty killers in puck battles in all corners of the zone, rather than simply around the net.

Shaw said the transition from net-front to the slot was a "little bit of an adjustment" but he feels he's done "really well" there.

"[I'm] being a support, being a threat to shoot the puck and sustaining pucks, getting them back, making sure we can have that zone time," he said. "A tired penalty kill makes mistakes, and that's when we're going to capitalize. Just got to keep working for them, competing for them and being there for them."

All three of the Hawks' currently injured forwards — Jonathan Toews, Kirby Dach and Alex Nylander — were deployed often last season on the Hawks' meager 28th-ranked power play. Toews and Dach saw a lot of time in the slot and net-front roles, and their absences have forced Colliton to turn to the likes of Shaw, Dylan Strome and Pius Suter to fill those gaps.

In the slot, Shaw is still close enough to the blue paint to head there when necessary, either to temporarily replace Strome — the top unit's current net-front guy — or when a rebound pops loose in the lower slot.

Shaw and Strome's gritty work down low has given Patrick Kane and Alex DeBrincat plenty of time and space on the wings, and they've been characteristically dangerous there. As a result, the Hawks have begun this season 5-for-12 on the power play.

Shaw himself hasn't directly gotten in on the scoring yet, but Colliton sees him as a sneaky possibility in the future, especially if opponents start keying more on DeBrincat.

"[He] has some touch, too — he's shown he can score in the past," Colliton said. "We haven't hit the slot a ton in the first few games, but it's certainly a good option for us."

The unexpected power-play success has merely added to an overall happy time for Shaw, who worked through more than a year of concussion symptoms to return for the 2021 season.

Mindful that one more unfortunate hit could end his career, he's utilized new self-protection techniques through this season-opening road trip. Overall, though, Shaw's return to NHL competition has gone about as smoothly as he could've imagined.

"Being away from the game, it's tough to jump in and have your timing perfect," he said. "Whether it's supporting your teammates or getting in on pucks, it took a little time to get there."

"[But] I've felt pretty good. My energy's there. Timing was off the first game, but I think I figured it out."

Chicago Sun Times LOADED: 01.21.2021

1182357 Chicago Blackhawks

4 things we learned about Blackhawks after 0-3-1 road trip

BY CHARLIE ROUMELIOTIS

The Blackhawks opened the 2020-21 season with a four-game road trip and came away with one out of a possible eight points.

Here are four things we learned about the Blackhawks:

### 1. A true open goaltending competition

The Blackhawks have played only four games and all three of their goaltenders have already gotten a shot between the pipes:

Malcolm Subban started the season opener against the defending Stanley Cup champion Tampa Bay Lightning and gave up five goals on 33 shots for a save percentage of .848.

Collin Delia started the next two against the Lightning and Florida Panthers and allowed 10 goals on 66 shots for a save percentage of .848.

Kevin Lankinen made his NHL debut on Tuesday, stopping 23 of 28 shots for a save percentage of .821.

It's the first time in franchise history the Blackhawks have used three different goaltenders in their first four games. This is going to be a season-long goaltending competition and it's just getting started.

### 2. A bunch of rookies will get a legitimate shot

Four Blackhawks rookies have made their NHL debuts this season and it's only been four games: Philipp Kurashev, Lankinen, Ian Mitchell and Pius Suter.

Wyatt Kalynuk was on the active roster and took part in pregame warmups for two of the four road games, which means he could be next in line on the defensive end. Or, perhaps, Lucas Carlsson, who played in six games last season.

Brandon Hagel, who appeared in one game last season before the NHL put its season on pause because of the COVID-19 pandemic, replaced Matthew Highmore in the lineup on Tuesday. The younger guys are certainly going to get extended looks this season.

### 3. Scoring at 5-on-5 will be a challenge

Over the last few seasons, the Blackhawks have played high-risk, high-reward hockey. They've scored a lot, but they've also given up a lot.



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The Blackhawks have allowed 20 goals through four games, which was to be expected given the youth movement and inexperience in goal. But they've scored only three goals at 5-on-5, which is an indication of how challenging it will be to score at even strength this season without Kirby Dach (wrist), Alex Nylander (knee) and Jonathan Toews (medical issue) in the mix.

#### 4. Is the power play actually good?

This brings us to our next point: If the Blackhawks are going to have trouble scoring at 5-on-5, they need to at least capitalize on their power-play chances after finishing 28th in that department with a 15.2 percent success rate. And so far, they are.

The Blackhawks have scored a power-play goal in four straight games and are 5-for-12 on the season for a success rate of 41.7 percent. That clip is unsustainable, but the power play can't be a momentum-killer like it was last season. It needs to be a confidence-builder for the Blackhawks.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 01.21.2021

1182358 Chicago Blackhawks

Lady Gaga does Jim Cornelson impression at Biden inauguration

BY ALEX SHAPIRO

On a historic day filled with pomp and circumstance, Chicagoans might have reflexively cheered on their couches while Lady Gaga sang the National Anthem. That's because Gaga took a page out of Jim Cornelson's playbook by distinctively pointing at the flag as she belted out "and our flag was still **\*\*\*there\*\***."

C-Span

Gaga did live in Chicago for a few years, so there's a reasonable chance she did pick up Cornelson's trademark point at a Blackhawks game.

While the crowd gave Gaga a respectable round of applause after her performance, it was certainly not like the roars she would've received if Joe Biden's inauguration had taken place at the United Center.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 01.21.2021

1182359 Chicago Blackhawks

Chicago Steel NHL draft prospect Matt Coronato doesn't stop moving, producing

By Scott Powers Jan 20, 2021

Motor is one of those words you hear associated with NHL draft prospects all the time.

You ask a draft prospect about their game and they'll often tell you about their "high motor." They know scouts love to hear that.

Chicago Steel coach Brock Sheahan hears it plenty in the USHL. A lot of his players want to think they play consistently hard. It's only when he points to Matt Coronato they realize what a high motor really is.

Coronato, a 5-foot-10, 183-pound winger, has the "motor" NHL teams are actually looking for in players.

"The way he competes consistently is a gift," Sheahan said. "I don't know if he's had a shift off in the two years he's been here so far. I think a lot of people say they work hard consistently. I've never seen a guy with his

motor combined with his skill set as well. But his compete level is high end."

Coronato is like a one-person play every time he steps on the ice. He's here. He's there. He's everywhere. He's just constantly moving regardless of the zone and finds ways to get puck touches because of that.

Because of his playing style, the Steel broadcasting team has begun calling Coronato "The Bison" and make a bison sound when he scores.

"They say it's because I ram hard to the net, or they have some metaphoric explanation to it that doesn't make too much sense to me," said the 18-year-old Coronato, who is from New York. "I think it's funny. It is funny, so I like it right now."

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— CHICAGO STEEL (@CHICAGOSTEEL) DECEMBER 12, 2020

The question Coronato and anyone who plays like him often gets is why they play that way. It's something coaches would love to understand better and teach other players. The problem is most high-motor players can't pinpoint why they play as they do.

"I don't know if there's a place it really stems from," Coronato said. "I think I understand and know that my work ethic is, if not the biggest part of my game, one of them. So going into every game, I'm mentally prepared, I'm mentally focused, as well as physically prepared. I know going into every night I want to be ready to go and ready to work every single shift."

That work is paying off now for him and the Steel this season, but it's also setting up for a much larger individual payoff. Coronato, who will play at Harvard next season, is in his NHL draft year, making it the perfect time to take his game to another level.

Through 19 USHL games this season, he leads the league with 40 points, which is the same point total he had in 45 games last season. He leads the league with 17 goals and is tied for first with 23 assists. He's produced a point in all 19 games and has a USHL-record 28-game point streak dating back to last season. He's also had 13 multi-point games this season.

The Steel staff expected Coronato to improve this season, but no one was thinking he'd be averaging 2.11 points.

"I think I've been most impressed with the variety of ways he has created offense whether it's for his teammates or himself," Steel general manager Ryan Hardy said. "Like the playmaking stuff is something he really wanted to work on over the summer, and he's shown a lot of growth there. I think he's scoring goals in a lot of different ways. He's scoring on the power play. He's scoring around the net. He's scoring off the line rush. Just the versatility in the way he's scoring goals, the way he has evolved his game to make more plays and the consistent relentless work habits that have always made him good, I think that's been the perfect combination that has got him producing at an incredible rate."

NHL teams are taking notice, too. With the USHL being one of the top junior leagues playing right now, NHL scouts have seen Coronato plenty in recent months. That should benefit him come July. Just last season, Steel players Brendan Brisson and Sam Colangelo improved their draft stock with impressive performances. Brisson went in the late first round and Colangelo in the early second round.

Coronato was probably projected as a third- or fourth-round draft pick before this season. He's now probably worked himself up boards to go in the first or second round.

"He has a scorer's touch," one NHL amateur scout said. "He has good hands and skill. He has a powerful shot. He's a playmaker and sees the ice well. He has offensive zone instincts as well, plus he excels on the power play."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Coronato has been moving up The Athletic draft analyst Scott Wheeler's board, too. Coronato was ranked 45th in Wheeler's most recent rankings, but Wheeler admitted he'd be closer to a first-round pick as of now.

"He has been a lot of fun to watch and fits in really well with the possession style the Steel play," Wheeler said. "I'd say he's equal parts finisher and playmaker, too, which gives him some versatility and should help him establish himself as an impact player right away at Harvard next year. I think people sleep on how strong he is at times as well. He's not tall, but he's physically mature on the puck. I'm a big fan. Some of his production is skewed because of his team and the way the COVID has touched many USHL programs, often watering down the talent level, but he's legit as a second-line projection at the NHL level, I think."

Sheahan thought Coronato had made strides in just the last two seasons and believes there's more to tap into.

"I think when we looked at him, can he add other pieces to his game," Sheahan said. "The awareness, the ability to get to know the rink, the ability to use his teammates consistently, and I think he's shown that he can do that and he's getting better and better at that. He's not just a 1-on-1, break-you-down player. He's aware of where his teammates are."

"He can obviously use his skill set to break down players 1-on-1. He can use his speed. He's using more speed change instead of just going one speed all the time. But I think he's shown he can make plays, he's aware of time and space. He's worked really hard at that through video, practicing and our development sessions and he's seeing the fruits of his labor so far and I don't see it changing. He's going to continue to get better, I think."

The Athletic LOADED: 01.21.2021