



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 25, 2021

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Hurricanes defender Jacob Slavin talks about hockey, faith, charity, and racism

By Chip Alexander

Editor's note: This is part of a continuing series of profiles on the Carolina Hurricanes' players and staff designed to give people a better look at the players behind the pads. We'll be asking them about hockey, of course, but also about life — hobbies, interests, special moments — to better understand what makes them tick.

Jacob Slavin of the Hurricanes had put in 27 minutes of playing time — almost 12 of it on the penalty kill — in a 4-2 win Thursday over the Florida Panthers. The defenseman had every reason to be exhausted Friday.

But Slavin, as reliable as any player Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour has in his lineup, patiently sat through an interview with the News & Observer, discussing a variety of subjects, from hockey to social injustice to the number of letters in his name.

Chip Alexander: How does a defenseman feel after playing 27 minutes in a game and spending almost 12 killing penalties?

Jacob Slavin: "Typically pretty bad. That game was kind of a weird night because of all the penalty kill time but our kill was doing really well and there was a lot of up-ice pressure, letting our forwards do the work in the O zone. Me and (Brett) Pesce were standing in the neutral zone for a little bit of that time. No, I felt fine after the game."

CA: There was a tweet recently from the NHL Players Association about you saying your pet peeve was that your wife Kylie likes to draw pictures on your face? What kind of pictures?

JS: "No, no, she doesn't draw on my face the way the NHLPA made that look. But we'll be sitting in church or at the kitchen table or wherever and she has a pen she'll try to mark on my hand or something. I don't know why it is but I've never liked marks on my hand or my arms. She knows that gets under my skin and she tries to exploit that."

CA: What's the best thing about being a father?

JS: "That's a loaded question right there but it's the joy you get out of it, the love you have for your child. Obviously in my case it's (daughter) Emersyn. It's a love only a father can really speak to. It's super fun. It's fulfilling to be able to love someone like that. Even the love you have for a wife is different from the love you have for a child. It's unbelievable. You watch them grow, you watch them learn, you watch them get hurt and come running to you, right, and needing comfort. It's just awesome. How much I love Emersyn is beyond measure and then you look at the love God has for us and it's even more so."

CA: One day when she's older she may come to you and ask you to explain all that happened in 2020, with the pandemic and social justice issues. What will you tell her?

JS: "(smiles) I'm going to try to never remind her of it again. No, it's the world that we live in. We live in a broken world. It was a year of a lot of different stuff and a year that hopefully our world learns from eventually, and our culture and society learn from and we grow from it. But hopefully it's a year we can look back on and say that was kind of a turning point for our people."

CA: You're a man of very strong faith and the Canes had a game on Easter Sunday. Did you have a problem with that?

JS: "It came to my mind. But a hockey game, it's part of the job. But it didn't stop me from celebrating what that day meant and Jesus rising from the dead. It didn't stop me from having that celebration and enjoying it and praising God for it. Obviously I would have preferred to be able to be at home and go to church and celebrate that way, but I found a different way to celebrate. It was fine."

CA: If a young hockey player comes to you and asks how does a fourth-round draft pick from Colorado College make it to the NHL, what would you tell him?

JS: "Oh, I'm always the worst at this question. I've had a lot of people come to me and ask me for advice or what's your diet like or things like that. I'm like I'm the worst person to ask about that because my diet is not good. Obviously the work ethic you need to have needs to be there. You've got to want to get better. But the biggest thing for me is to stay humble and work hard and put the rest in God's hands."

CA: Do you have any game-day rituals or superstitions?

JS: "I would say I have my routine but not necessarily superstitions. I know what makes my body feel good and makes me prepared to play the game but if one thing goes wrong it's not like I'm a mental wreck going out for the faceoff."

CA: The "Fill the Stadium" Compassion International initiative has raised millions of dollars for underprivileged children and their families living in extreme poverty and affected by the pandemic. Why did you feel it was important to be involved?

JS: "It's important to me and Kylie also is involved with it. The resources God has given us and the platform He has given us to reach those in need is definitely one of the most important things in our life. To be able to be a part of this initiative and be able to help these children in crisis has been huge. Through COVID and 2020 they were impacted as much as we were but their basic necessities were not there anymore. To be able to have food and drinking water for them was important to Kylie and me, and it was one of those things where you want to be involved with it and glorify God at the same time and give these kids hope."

CA: On your Instagram page you wrote: "My wife and I hated that it took having a Black daughter to open our eyes to racism and injustices." What did you mean by that?



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JS: "It's not like it was, 'Oh, wow, racism never existed before Emersyn came into our life.' It's like with anything else in life, and I was talking to Kylie about this the other day, if we all of a sudden had a child with Down Syndrome we would obviously know more about the ins and outs about Down Syndrome. For us, we knew that racism existed, we knew that it was there. But once we were living more in that world, more so, with Emersyn coming into our life, it was truly trying to understand her culture and where she came from, and what she was going to have to go through in life. We didn't want to go into it naive. We wanted to be prepared, we wanted to give her the best chance as a child. So once we really got into her world, then we realized all the ins and outs of racism that still exist and all the biases that exist still. The people that we talk to in our lives who are a BIPOC community, we talk to them about things. We became more educated on it and in becoming more educated I can say it truly opened our eyes to it because we weren't fully aware of what all went on."

CA: A lot of people say the tweet of Emersyn getting excited about your indoor goal celebration in front of the TV, with all of her giggles. Does she still get a big kick out of your cellys?

JS: "We have fun. She's a little bit older now and there will be times when random things make her funny. That night with that video is one of those nights where she got a big kick out of a celly. Now sometimes if we're playing and I celly in a different way she'll say, 'No, no Daddy, like this' and she'll show me how to celebrate. She can definitely light up a room."

CA: Did she critique your celly after your recent goal against Nashville?

JS: "She did not, actually. I told Kylie if I score this year I'm going to have to drop my stick and give it the ol' Emersyn

celebration but we haven't seen too many pucks go in the back of the net for that to happen."

CA: Quick hockey question, why do you wear No. 74?

JS: "That's the number I was given when I came to the team."

CA: And what's the story about the first names in your family siblings and number of letters?

JS: "Justin, Jordan, Jaccob, Josiah, Jeremiah. They're all J's and the first four have six letters. That's what Grandma wanted. Then she passed away and Jeremiah got more than six. But we kept the J's going."

CA: Every coach has their own coaching style. What's Rod Brind'Amour's best attribute as a coach?

JS: "One thing I like about it personally is just how much he cares about us as people. You see it in the way he treats us, the way he talks to us, the way he goes about individual relationships on the team. He truly cares about each and every one of us. When you have that care there, you have more respect for him as a coach. That's one of the things I like the most, just his care for people."

CA: You have a team that will be in the playoffs for a third straight year. What did you guys learn from the last couple of years that you can apply this year?

JS: "Just that every game counts. Whether it's Game 1 of the series, Game 7 of the series, you can't let your foot off the gas. We have a good squad this year, have all the pieces in place. We've just got to be ready to go from the start of the playoffs and like Rod always talks about, just making sure we have that consistency there and we're ready for the task."



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The race atop the NHL Central between the Panthers and Hurricanes just got tighter

By Chip Alexander

The Carolina Hurricanes are done with the Florida Panthers.

At least for now. Check back during the Stanley Cup playoffs.

The Canes and Panthers played their eighth and final regular-season game Saturday at the BB&T Center, going to overtime before an Aleksander Barkov goal won it 4-3 for the Panthers.

Barkov carried the puck down the right wing and past the Canes' Andrei Svechnikov in overtime, getting off a shot from the right circle that got through Canes goalie Alex Nedeljkovic, who was making his third straight start.

The victory by the Panthers prevented the Canes (31-10-6) from clinching a spot in the playoffs, which if and when they do clinch will be their third consecutive trip to the postseason for the first time since the franchise relocated from Hartford.

The Canes, who played Saturday with a patchwork lineup, finished 6-0-2 in the season series against the Panthers, but officially clinching a playoff berth will have to wait. They maintained their Central Division lead over Florida (31-13-5), though, with 68 points, and have two games-in-hand on the Panthers.

"We got a point out of this, we came in and got three out of four (points)," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said, noting the 4-2 win Thursday over the Panthers. "Short-staffed and everything else, I think that's a win for us in a lot of ways."

Defenseman Dougie Hamilton scored twice for the Canes, the second on a power play, and Carolina led 3-1 in the third after defenseman Brett Pesce scored on an outside shot.

But the Panthers, who got a goal and three assists from MacKenzie Weegar, fought back to tie the score on goals from Gustav Forsling and then Alex Wennberg, who further energized his team and the crowd with a shorthanded goal.

"Most games against them have been like that," Hamilton said. "I feel like pretty much every game has been tight. We've had little leads and they've been pushing, pushing, pushing in the thirds. We definitely have to be better playing with the lead. Having that killer instinct. Roddy (Brind'Amour) told us we need that."

The third period had a fast-paced first seven minutes. Svechnikov never saw the puck but Brett Pesce's shot from the point hit off his skate in front of the crease and caromed past goalie Chris Driedger for a 3-1 lead at 3:01 of the third.

Forsling then made it 3-2 at 4:48 of the third with his fourth of season, slipping past Canes forward Morgan Geekie on the back side for an open shot. The Canes then had a power play after a hooking call against the Panthers, but Wennberg's strike tied it at 6:20.

"We had the game 3-1," Brind'Amour said. "That next shift can't be that. A blown D-zone coverage can't happen. That's the frustrating part. We give up a shortie, too, but that (Forsling) goal got the momentum going for them and we really didn't recover."

Added Hamilton, "They turned it on and we didn't."

The Canes were missing defenseman Brady Skjei (concussion) and forwards Jordan Martinook (lower-body injury) and Jesper Fast, a late scratch. Forward Teuvo Teravainen (concussion) is with the team and practicing but missed his 24th straight game, and forward Brock McGinn is not on the road trip.



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Shorthanded Hurricanes drop OT decision in Florida

Panthers captain Aleksander Barkov scored 24 seconds into overtime

By Cory Lavalette

Aleksander Barkov scored 24 seconds into overtime to give the Panthers a 4-3 win Saturday in Florida. Dougie Hamilton scored twice and Brett Pesce got his fourth goal of the year.

Three Thoughts

1. A quick look down the Hurricanes' roster told much of the story of Saturday night's game. Carolina was without six players — Jesper Fast, Jordan Martinook, Brock McGinn, Petr Mrazek, Brady Skjei and Teuvo Teravainen — due to injuries, and it showed.

Just two days after coach Rod Brind'Amour relied heavily on his penalty killers in an infractions-filled affair, he was again forced to lean on the top of his roster.

Sebastian Aho (21:14), Jordan Staal (21:02), Vincent Trocheck (20:44), Martin Necas (19:24) and Andrei Svechnikov (19:15) all logged more than 19 minutes at forward, while Jaccob Slavin (23:59), Hamilton (23:50) and Pesce (23:26) all played more than 23 minutes.

While it's nice to have workhorses, Carolina's system is predicated on being able to pressure the opposition shift after shift with interchangeable players. You can't do that when you have so many injuries that you're forced to play your top players so much — and it resulted in a season-low 19 shots on goal.

2. Fans who have only been watching the other three divisions this season are going to be in a treat this postseason. Everyone who follows the Hurricanes knows what a fun, up-tempo style they play. They also now know that the Panthers are the same way and feature Barkov, who could very well become the NHL's highest-paid player when he's a free agent after next season.

Don't let Carolina's 6-0-2 regular season record against Florida fool you: The series was close and will be the same way if the two teams meet in the postseason.

"I feel like pretty much every game's been tight," Hamilton said. "We've had little leads and they've been pushing, pushing, pushing in thirds."

3. The Hurricanes are done with the Panthers and Lightning for the regular season, but that doesn't mean the final nine

games before the playoffs will be easy. After a day off Sunday, those nine games will take place in just 15 days. There's no more than one rest day between games, so the only prolonged break the Hurricanes will have will be whatever comes before the start of the postseason.

Number To Know

0 — Combined 5-on-5 shot attempts for Max McCormick and Drew Shore, who played for the Hurricanes for the first time since Jan. 30 and Jan. 31, respectively. Both played due to injuries to Martinook and Fast, but Shore (4:02) and McCormick (3:42) were used sparingly.

They Said It

"When you have six guys out, this is what you're gonna get."

— Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour on his team looking worn out in the two games against the Panthers

Plus

Dougie Hamilton, Hurricanes defenseman — Carolina's top-scoring defenseman scored twice and now has five goals in April after having just three total in the season's first three months. But Hamilton — who registered a team-high five shots on goal and eight shot attempts overall — said it's not so much about results as generating chances.

"Sometimes you hit the post, sometimes you hit the crossbar, sometimes you make a great shot and the goalie saves it, and sometimes you don't make a great shot that goes in," Hamilton said. "So it's just about the process of trying to get shots and not think too much about if it actually goes in or not. I think it's more about the process for me."

Minus

Morgan Geekie, Hurricanes forward — Brind'Amour said the Panthers' goal by Gustav Forsling 4:48 into the third period shortly after Carolina had gone up 3-1 was the turning point in the game. Forsling crept in from the point unmarked by Geekie to score, and then 92 seconds later Florida scored shorthanded to tie the game.

"We were in a great spot, and that next shift can't be that," Brind'Amour said. "(The) blown D zone coverage can't happen. That's on an easy one that we've shown a million times, talked about it. So that's the frustrating part. And we give up shortie after, too. But that goal got the momentum going for them, and then we didn't really recover."



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Recap: Canes Snag Point in OT Loss to Panthers

Canes lose two-goal lead in third period

By Michael Smith

SUNRISE - The Carolina Hurricanes saw a two-goal lead disappear in the third period but held on to grab a point in a 4-3 overtime loss to the Florida Panthers.

The Difference

Early in the third period, the Canes put themselves in prime position to come away with a victory and punch their ticket to the 2021 Stanley Cup Playoffs.

They stretched their lead to 3-1 when Brett Pesce's point shot rattled off Gustav Forsling (but apparently not then Andrei Svechnikov's skate?) three minutes into the third period.

But then the Panthers clawed their way back with two goals in 92 seconds to tie the game at three. Forsling netted the first goal, a one-timer off a cross-ice feed from Jonathan Huberdeau.

"We had the game 3-1 and were in a great spot. The next shift can't be that," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "That goal got the momentum for them, and we didn't really recover."

Then, the Panthers crashed the crease shorthanded, and Alex Wennberg chipped in the game-tying tally. Sam Bennett hit the post shortly after, and Florida had all the momentum.

"You're looking to put the game away on the power play, and then you give it up," Brind'Amour said. "That's tough. That's a tough pill to swallow."

The Panthers out-shot the Canes 13-6 in the third period and more than tripled them up in scoring chances (14-4), according to NaturalStatTrick.

"We definitely have to be better playing with the lead and have that killer instinct," Dougie Hamilton said. "It wasn't a very good third."

Aleksander Barkov then slipped a shot past Alex Nedeljkovic just 24 seconds into overtime to end the game.

Plus/Minus

Plus: Dougie Hamilton

In his 599th career NHL game, Hamilton led the way offensively for the Canes with two goals, his first multi-goal game of the season. It took him only two shifts before he got the Canes on the board first.

Sebastian Aho and Steven Lorentz worked to cycle the puck deep to Svechnikov, who then fed Hamilton at the point.

Hamilton's one-timer deflected up off the stick of Patrik Hornqvist and eluded Chris Driedger through traffic.

Early in the second period, Jordan Staal won the first faceoff of his team's second power play of the game. The Canes worked the puck around from high to low: Hamilton to Svechnikov to Trocheck to Aho and back to Hamilton, all quick touches that culminated in Hamilton's one-time rocket from the top of the right circle.

"It's obviously nice when it goes in," Hamilton said. "I don't think too much about if it actually goes in or not. It's more about the process of trying to get shots."

Minus: Injuries piling up

The Canes' injury list continues to swell as the physical effects of a compressed schedule take a toll. Jordan Martinook left Thursday's game with a lower-body injury, and Jesper Fast was ruled out of Saturday's rematch with a lower-body injury.

"He didn't feel right," Brind'Amour said. "We would have liked to have him, obviously. Maybe it makes a difference, but guys don't have to play right now with injuries. We just don't need to do that."

In the absence of Martinook and Fast, Max McCormick and Drew Shore were elevated from the taxi squad to the lineup. The forward lines, then, were shuffled and juggled and shuffled again.

The depleted Canes still managed to get a point out of the game and leave the state of Florida still in first place in the Central Division with six of a possible eight points through two-thirds of this road trip.

"That's a win for us in a lot of ways," Brind'Amour said. "[The Panthers] were better than us tonight, for sure, but somehow we managed to get a point out of it, and I think that says a lot about our group."

Stats Pack

6-0-2: The Canes close out their regular-season series with the Panthers with a 6-0-2 record and 14 of a possible 16 points.

21: With two assists, Aho, the Canes' leading scorer, now is better than a point-per-game producer in his career against Florida with 21 points (9g, 12a) in 20 games.

Quote of the Night

"That kind of cost us." - Andrei Svechnikov on the Panthers' shorthanded, game-tying goal



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Up Next

Dallas marks the final leg of this six-game road trip, as the Canes and Stars will face off on back-to-back nights.



Barkov, Panthers rally past Hurricanes in OT

Wins it at 24 seconds after Wennberg ties it with shorthanded goal; Weegar scores four points for Florida

By Kurt Dusterberg

Aleksander Barkov scored 24 seconds into overtime, and the Florida Panthers rallied to defeat the Carolina Hurricanes 4-3 at BB&T Center in Sunrise, Florida, on Saturday.

Barkov carried the puck through the neutral zone and scored on a wrist shot that goalie Alex Nedeljkovic got a piece of with his stick.

"We're battling with this challenge all year, trying to find ways to win the games," Barkov said. "If you want to go all the way, there's going to be games like this, so you have to be ready."

MacKenzie Weegar scored an NHL career-high four points (one goal, three assists), and Chris Driedger made 16 saves for Florida (31-13-5), which is 5-1-1 in its past seven games and trails Carolina by one point for first place in the Discover Central Division. The top four teams qualify for the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

The Panthers finished 2-4-2 against the Hurricanes this season.

"This was a huge win for us," Weegar said. "Lots of emotions coming in before the game. We really wanted to win this one. Credit to everybody that played. We battled hard. Maybe a little bit of a slow start, but I'm happy with the way the boys played tonight."

Dougie Hamilton scored two goals, and Nedeljkovic made 32 saves for Carolina (31-10-6), which would have clinched a playoff berth with a win. The Hurricanes, who played without six injured regulars, split the two-game set, winning 4-2 here Thursday. They are 4-0-2 in their past six.

"We came in here and we got three out of four points, short-staffed," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "I think that's a win for us in a lot of ways. They were better than us tonight for sure, but somehow we managed to get a point out of it."

Panthers defenseman Keith Yandle played his 915th consecutive regular-season game dating to March 26, 2009,

passing Gary Unger (Feb. 24, 1968-Dec. 21, 1979) for the second-longest streak in NHL history. Doug Jarvis played 964 straight (Oct. 8, 1975-Oct. 10, 1987).

Hamilton gave the Hurricanes a 1-0 lead when his one-timer from the right point went in off the stick of Panthers forward Patric Hornqvist at 3:25 of the first period.

Weegar tied it 1-1 with 25 seconds remaining in the period with a one-timer from the right face-off circle off a pass from Jonathan Huberdeau, who had two assists.

Hamilton scored a power-play goal on a slap shot to give Carolina a 2-1 lead at 1:37 of the second period.

"It's obviously nice when it goes in," Hamilton said. "It's just about getting opportunities for me and getting in spots to shoot. It's just about the process of getting shots."

Brett Pesce extended the lead to 3-1 at 3:01 of the third period when his shot from the left point went in off the skate of Florida defenseman Gustav Forsling.

The Panthers then scored twice in 1:32. Forsling cut it to 3-2 at 4:48 after receiving a cross-ice pass from Huberdeau.

"We had the game 3-1 and we were in a great spot," Brind'Amour said. "Blowing defensive-zone coverage can't happen. That goal got the momentum going for them."

Alex Wennberg tied it 3-3 with a shorthanded goal at 6:20 when he backhanded the rebound of Weegar's shot in front.

"I felt a lot of passion, a lot of emotion on the bench," Florida coach Joel Quenneville said of the third-period comeback. "It was very intense, whether it was frustration or, here we are getting behind. I think that determination and perseverance found its way."

NOTES: Hurricanes forward Jesper Fast was a late scratch with a lower-body injury. ... Carolina is 22-0-3 this season when leading to start the third period. ... The Hurricanes had a season-low 19 shots on goal. ... Weegar tied the Panthers record for most points in a game by a defenseman, becoming the seventh to do it. ... Barkov scored his fifth NHL overtime goal. ... Florida leads the NHL with eight overtime wins.



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AP ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barkov's OT winner lifts Florida past 1st-place Carolina 4-3

By Bill Whitehead

SUNRISE, Fla. (AP) — Aleksander Barkov scored 24 seconds into overtime to help the Florida Panthers tighten up the Central Division standings with a 4-3 win over the Carolina Panthers on Saturday night.

After a turnover in the Panthers' end, Barkov raced the length of the ice and fired a shot that trundled in for his 22nd goal.

In winning for just the second time (2-4-2) against Carolina, the Panthers pulled within one point of the Hurricanes. Florida has seven games left in the regular season, Carolina nine.

Florida's MacKenzie Weegar had a goal and two assists, Gustav Forsling and Alex Wennberg scored, and Chris Driedger made 16 saves.

Carolina's Dougie Hamilton scored twice, Andrei Svechnikov posted a goal and an assist, and Alex Nedeljkovic stopped 33 shots.

Just 3:25 into the game, Hamilton fired a long shot that deflected in off the stick of Florida's Patric Hornqvist.

Nedeljkovic stopped Sam Bennett's shorthanded breakaway bid and Nikita Gusev's 3-on-2 tip, but Bennett redeemed himself by forcing a turnover that Weegar rocketed in with 25 seconds left in the frame.

On a power play in the second, Hamilton blasted in his eighth goal at 1:35 — just eight seconds into the man advantage — to put the Hurricanes up 2-1.

Svechnikov built the Carolina edge to 3-1 when a shot deflected off his skate at 3:01 of the third, but Forsling

trimmed the lead 1:47 later. Wennberg backhanded in a tying shorthanded goal at 6:20.

PULLING AWAY

Florida's Keith Yandle skated in his 915th consecutive game, pushing the defenseman past former center Garry "Iron man" Unger, who turned the feat while playing for the Toronto Maple Leafs, Detroit Red Wings, St. Louis Blues and the Atlanta Flames.

Yandle, 34, has not missed a game since March 22, 2009, when he was a member of the Arizona Coyotes.

Doug Jarvis holds the NHL record with 964 straight games.

NICKED UP

Due to Carolina's injuries, coach Rod Brind'Amour said Saturday morning that he was shuffling his lines and getting players like defenseman Joakim Ryan in the lineup.

"We needed to get him in," Brind'Amour said.

Blueliner Brady Skjei (concussion protocol) missed his second game while forwards Teuvo Teravainen (concussion) and Brock McGinn (upper body) were out for their 24th and 10th games, respectively.

SPECIAL NIGHT

On Hockey Fights Cancer Night, the Panthers drew 4,838 fans for their final meeting against the Hurricanes.

UP NEXT

Both teams will play Monday in the first of back-to-back road games — Carolina at Dallas, Florida at Nashville.



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The Hockey News

Future Watch: Redoing the 2020 NHL Draft

Six months after the 2020 NHL draft, some prospect would be selected higher today. But the lack of action has limited the amount of movement

By Brian Costello

Anaheim, Carolina, Nashville and Pittsburgh are teams that made multiple bargain selections in the 2020 NHL draft according to scouts who evaluated prospects for The Hockey News Future Watch 2021 issue.

Those four teams each had two picks who would have made moves upward were the 2020 to be held again today. That's the consensus opinion of a panel of nine scouts who evaluated the top 310 NHL-affiliated prospects in the game. A byproduct of the Future Watch project is when distilling the top 100 prospect results you can look back at recent drafts to see how they might unfold in the present day. The most interesting is typically the most recent draft. But because the COVID-19 pandemic affected the schedules of developmental league to varying degrees, there aren't as many big movers compared to previous post-draft recaps of earlier years.

How would the top 10 sort out? Which second-rounders would have moved up into the first? Which first-rounders would have slid down to the second? Did any teams get multiple bargains?

In doing this exercise, you do so with an open mind. Scouts are still projecting – they're just doing so with additional games of information, most notably the 2021 world juniors. The intelligence given to us by our panel of nine scouts, directors of player personnel and GMs is a blended opinion of how these prospects have progressed in the limited action since the 2020 NHL draft. In many cases, the merged results won't be the same thought processes as individual teams. For example, Buffalo drafted Ottawa 67's right winger Jack Quinn eighth overall. Our panel thinks he would go No. 13 if the draft was held again today. Yet ask the Sabres and they might be content to take him again at No. 8, especially considering the only realy hockey he played were seven games at the WJC and 14 games as an underage in the AHL.

The point here isn't to second-guess the selection of NHL teams at the time of the 2020 draft. It's to show the progression of these draft prospects over the short term. How they ultimately develop, of course, is a long-term timeline.

For the Future Watch project, we asked these scouts to consult a list of 310 NHL prospects (the top 10 from each of the 31 teams) and to establish their own top 60 list, based on a five- to 10-year projection window of NHL upside. Most of the NHL-affiliated players on this list of 310 were from drafts prior to 2020 or free agents. But 81 of them – about 26 percent – were selected last October.

With this information culled from our scouting panel, we can redux the 2020 draft if it were to be held again today. Two players from the 2020 draft made the immediate jump to the NHL. Alexis Lafreniere of the New York Rangers and Tim Stutzle of the Ottawa Senators fast-tracked this Future Watch rating exercise. For the sake of argument, we'll rank them Nos. 1 and 2 even though there's a decent chance other 2020 draftees returned to junior, college or Europe may surpass one or more of them in coming seasons.

Here's how the first round would play out, based on the scouting committee's evaluation of their progression in this pandemic-altered season of 2020-21.

First round:

1. Alexis Lafreniere, LW (taken 1st by NY Rangers)
2. Tim Stutzle, C (taken 3rd by Ottawa)
3. Quinton Byfield, C (taken 2nd by Los Angeles)
4. Jamie Drysdale, D (taken 6th by Anaheim)
5. Lucas Raymond, LW (taken 4th by Detroit)
6. Jake Sanderson, D (taken 5th by Ottawa)
7. Yaroslav Askarov, G (taken 11th by Nashville)
8. Alexander Holtz, RW (taken 7th by New Jersey)
9. Anton Lundell, C (taken 12th by Florida)
10. Seth Jarvis, C (taken 13th by Carolina)
11. Cole Perfetti, C (taken 10th by Winnipeg)
12. Marco Rossi, C (taken 9th by Minnesota)
13. Jack Quinn, RW (taken 8th by Buffalo)
14. Rodion Amirov, LW (taken 15th by Toronto)
15. Dylan Holloway, C (taken 14th by Edmonton)
16. Lukas Reichel, LW (taken 17th by Chicago)
17. Kaiden Guhle, D (taken 16th by Montreal)
18. Braden Schneider, D (taken 19th by NY Rangers)
19. Dawson Mercer, C (taken 18th by New Jersey)
20. J-J Peterka, RW (taken 34th by Buffalo)
21. Connor Zary, C (taken 24th by Calgary)
22. Hendrix Lapierre, C (taken 22nd by Washington)
23. Jacob Perreault, RW (taken 27th by Anaheim)
24. Yegor Chinakhov, RW (taken 21st by Columbus)
25. Mavrik Bourque, C (taken 30th by Dallas)
26. Tyson Foerster, RW (taken 23rd by Philadelphia)
27. Justin Barron, D (taken 25th by Colorado)
28. Jake Neighbours, LW (taken 26th by St. Louis)
29. Brendan Brisson, C (taken 29th by Vegas)
30. Brock Faber, D (taken 45th by Los Angeles)
31. Thomas Bordeleau, C (taken 38th by San Jose)

Early second round:

32. Vasily Ponomarev, C (taken 53rd by Carolina)
33. Luke Evangelista, RW (taken 42nd by Nashville)
34. Shakir Mukhamadullin, D (taken 20th by New Jersey)
35. Ozzy Wiesblatt, RW (taken 31st by San Jose)
36. Theodor Niederbach, C (taken 51st by Detroit)
37. Calle Clang, G (taken 77th by Pittsburgh)
38. Ridly Greig, C (taken 28th by Ottawa)
39. Joel Blomqvist, G (taken 52nd by Pittsburgh)



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Making a good impression is Nashville. The Predators nabbed Russian goalie Yaroslav Askarov 11th overall. He'd go four spots higher at No. 7 today. And the Preds' mid-second-round pick of Luke Evangelista was astute as well. He'd go early in the second round, No. 33 today.

Carolina's selection of Seth Jarvis at 13th was solid. He'd go No. 10 today. The Hurricanes essentially got another late-first-rounder in Vasily Ponomarev midway in the second round. He'd go No. 32 today.

Anaheim drafted Jamie Drysdale sixth overall. He'd go No. 4 today. And the Ducks' pick of Jacob Perreault late in the first round at No. 27 looks smart. He'd go at No. 23 today.

Pittsburgh didn't have a first round pick in 2020, but the Penguins stocked up on goalie prospects midway through the second and third rounds. Calle Clang and Joel Blomqvist would go early in the second round today.

In addition to Buffalo's pick of Quinn at No. 8, the Sabres feel they unearthed a gem early in the second round in J-J Peterka. He would go 20th overall in the first round if the draft was held again today.

Other first-round selections from 2020 making notable jumps up the opening round include Anton Lundell (Florida),

Connor Zary (Calgary) and Mavrik Bourque (Dallas). First-rounders slipping more than a few spots in the opening round include Marco Rossi (Minnesota), Yegor Chinakhov (Columbus) and Tyson Foerster (Philadelphia). For Rossi, his slip was understandable as he's battled the effects of COVID-19 much of the playing season.

Just three actual first-rounders from 2020 wouldn't go in the first round if it were re-done today: No. 20 Shakir Mukhamadullin, New Jersey; No. 28 Ridly Greig, Ottawa; No. 31 Ozzy Wiesblatt, San Jose. But they would go early in the second round.

And just to reiterate, this is the opinion of the Future Watch scouting panel. The teams that selected these prospects where they did, may do so again today, based on positional need or their own assessment being different.

Featured on the cover of this year's Future Watch issue are the young stars of the Ottawa Senators – Tim Stutzle, Josh Norris, Brady Tkachuk and Drake Batherson. Colorado's list of prospects and 21-and-under NHLers was graded the best in the NHL. It includes seven prospects with the game's top 100 NHL-affiliated prospects.



SB NATION
CANES COUNTRY

Canes surrender two-goal lead, lose in overtime

The Carolina Hurricanes lost to the Florida Panthers 4-3 in overtime at the BB&T Center Saturday night.

By Ryan Henkel

The Carolina Hurricanes fell to the Florida Panthers Saturday night at the BB&T Center 4-3 in overtime.

It was an intense back and forth affair, one that has been all too familiar with this Florida Panthers team this season and although the loss delayed the Hurricanes' chance to clinch a third straight playoff appearance, the extra point now just leaves them one away from securing it.

Right away, this game was set to be harder than potentially the rest of the series as the Canes entered the match down two more guys as both Jordan Martinook and Jesper Fast were out with lower-body injuries, joining the growing list of injured Hurricanes alongside Teuvo Teravainen, Brock McGinn, Brady Skjei and Petr Mrazek.

But Carolina sure does love a challenge and before the game was even five minutes old, the Canes led by one.

Dougie Hamilton registered his seventh goal of the year with a quick release from the point that took a fortuitous double bounce off of two Panthers skaters and finished bar down and in.

The Canes controlled play throughout the first period, but a rare, albeit slight, hesitation by Brett Pesce, with less than 30 seconds in the period remaining, led to Florida finding the equalizer off a MacKenzie Weegar slapshot.

However, the Canes got right back on it shortly after both teams got back out onto the ice for the second. It was Dougie Hamilton yet again scoring an early period tally and this time for his eighth of the season.

On the power play, the Canes won the initial faceoff, and went to a set play where they cycled the puck through four players around the offensive zone and finally back to Hamilton at the point for the shot.

Quick starts were the name of the game for the Canes as the team scored in the first four minutes of each period and at the start of the third it was Andrei Svechnikov getting the goal.

Or more so getting credit for the goal as all he had to do was stand there and let Brett Pesce bank it in off his skate.

But the Panthers are a fast and skilled team who don't go away and after only a few minutes following the Svechnikov goal the Panthers got back into the game on a Gustav Forsling shot that barely slipped by Alex Nedeljkovic.



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It was a lapse in defensive coverage and a game that seemed ready to start to be put away was blown back open.

And even when it seemed that Carolina was going to get some breathing room after the team was awarded a power play shortly after Forsling's score, it certainly didn't happen.

Florida took the action to the Canes despite being down a man. Nedeljkovic came up huge on an initial shorthanded flurry, but the Panthers recollected and stormed back into the offensive zone and finally broke through to tie the game at three.

After that, it seemed like Carolina was just trying to hold on as the team was outshot 13-6 in the third period but Nedeljkovic battled to keep his team in the game and at least take it to overtime.

But that's as far as it went as Aleksander Barkov put his team on his back, transitioned the puck through all three zones and took the shot sneaking the puck through Nedeljkovic and ending overtime about as fast as it started.

The Canes will continue their road trip as they head to Dallas for a two-game series with the Stars beginning Monday at 7:30 p.m.

They said it: Brind'Amour, Svechnikov, Hamilton on overtime loss in Florida

Rod Brind'Amour, Dougie Hamilton and Andrei Svechnikov spoke to the media following a 4-3 overtime loss to the Florida Panthers.

By Andrew Schnittker and Ryan Henkel

Despite two goals from Dougie Hamilton and a 3-1 third period lead Saturday night, the Hurricanes fell 4-3 in overtime to the Florida Panthers and missed on their first chance to clinch a playoff berth.

Hamilton, Andrei Svechnikov and Rod Brind'Amour spoke to the media following the loss, here's a full breakdown of everything they had to say:

Rod Brind'Amour

On the Canes being shorthanded showing in this game: It showed pretty much the whole game. When you have six guys out, this is what you're going to get. Either way, we had the game at 3-1. We were in a great spot, and that next shift can't be that. Blowing a D-Zone coverage can't happen. That's on an easy one that we've shown a million times and talked about it. So that's the frustrating part. And we give up a shorty after too, but that goal got the momentum going for them and then we didn't really recover.

On if giving up a shorthanded goal is more energizing for the team that gets one or more deflating for the team that gives it up: I think it's both. You're looking to put the game away on the power play and you give it up, that's just tough. It's a tough pill to swallow. That's exactly what happened to them. We get the shorties and it takes the game away. But we get a point out of this, so coming in here we got three out of four short staffed and everything else, I think that's a win for us in a lot of ways.

On what changed in the third period: We had it 3-1 and the game's over, should be over. But that next shift, we gave it right back on a real simple D-Zone coverage, we just took a breath. Now the momentum goes and obviously the power play, you can't give up a shorty in that situation, that's death. With 13 minutes left to go in the game, all of the sudden it's 3-3. That shouldn't happen. Neither one of those should have happened.

On if going 6-0-2 against Florida bodes well going forward: If you would have said at the start of the year that we would have done this, I would have said that's probably pretty good. Especially coming in here with the injuries we have,

we had great efforts from our top guys. They gave us everything they had. They were better than us tonight for sure, but somehow we managed to get a point out of it, and that says a lot about this group. That's what I think.

On Jesper Fast: He didn't feel right. We're in that spot where if guys don't feel right, they're not going to play. We don't have to put them in. I would have liked to have had him, obviously. He probably would have made a difference there. But guys don't have to play right now with injuries. We don't need to do that.

Andrei Svechnikov

On what changed in the third period: I don't know really. We weren't really ready in the third, but we should have been. Especially on a penalty kill and they score. It kind of cost us and we have to be more careful with that. Nothing else to say.

On if this feels almost like a destined playoff matchup: Of course. No question. It's hard when you play a team so many times. Every player, you know what they're doing and they know what we're doing. Especially in a situation like a penalty kill or power play. It's so hard because they already know what you're going to do. We tried to make it something new, but it's hard. We just need to play our game and be ready for every battle and every shift.

On if the energy level tapered off in the third period: I wouldn't say that. Our energy was there, it was just they scored on their penalty kill and it cost us. We've got to be careful with that.

Dougie Hamilton

On what changed in the third period: Most games against them have been like that honestly. I feel like most every game has been tight. We've had leads and they're always pushing, pushing, pushing in the thirds. I don't know if we got too many chances there in the third at all. We definitely have to be better at playing with the lead. Having that killer instinct. Roddy told us we needed that. Wasn't a very good third. I think we played solid and then gave up the shorthanded goal. It was tough for us. They turned it on and we didn't. That was the result.

On gaining confidence as the goals start to come: It's obviously nice when it goes in. It's like I always talked about before, it's just about getting opportunities for me. Getting in



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spots to shoot. Everything works out how it's going to work out. Sometimes you hit the post, sometimes you hit the crossbar, sometimes you make a great shot and the goalie saves it and sometimes you don't make a great shot and it goes in. It's just about the process of getting shots. I don't think too much about if it actually goes in or not. I think it's more about the process for me.

On what is the toughest aspect of the Panthers to deal with: Every game's been close. They've got a different system than other teams. They play very fast and kind of run and gun. We know that and we've beaten them... I don't even

know how many times this year. We just needed to do a better job of closing it out. They turned it on at the end. Obviously desperate. When you're down a couple of goals, that's how you have to play. I think we'd try to do the same thing and turn it on too. It's just that we sat back. We have to go at them and go at their end.

On if he anticipates seeing this Panthers team again before too long: I think probably. There's still five or six teams right now that we're probably going to see. That's our division. We know we're going to have to win our division to move on so we'll get there when we get there.



Wolves earn point in wild affair

Solow earns first pro goal and Wolves rally from 4-2 deficit to force overtime

Rookie forward Tyler Angle scored on a 2-on-0 breakaway 4:05 into overtime to give the Cleveland Monsters a 5-4 victory over the Chicago Wolves and cap a riveting contest between the American Hockey League's top two offenses Saturday afternoon at Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse.

Rookie forwards Phil Tomasino, Zach Solow and Cole Smith and defenseman Josh Healey scored for the Wolves (15-4-1-2), who rallied from a 4-2 deficit in the third period to force extra time for the third game in a row.

Chicago continues to hold an 8-point lead over Cleveland and the Grand Rapids Griffins in the AHL's Central Division with three weeks remaining in the regular season.

For the eighth game in a row, the Wolves surrendered the first goal. Angle got a step ahead of the defense and scored on a breakaway to give the Monsters (12-7-1-0) a 1-0 lead 4:54 into the game.

Tomasino waited just 52 seconds to answer on the Wolves' behalf. He led a 2-on-1 rush down the left wing and fired a shot stopped by goaltender Daniil Tarasov, but he calmly claimed the rebound and flipped it home to make it 1-1 at 5:46.

Solow, playing in his second professional game, pulled the Wolves into a 2-2 tie at 11:41 of the second when defenseman David Warsofsky sent him a stretch pass that sent Solow into the offensive zone with momentum. Solow

sized up Tarasov and placed a wrister in the top right corner for his first pro goal.

The Monsters regained a 3-2 lead with 21 ticks left in the second when Tyler Sikura accepted a pass on the odd-man rush and slid a shot past Wolves goaltender Beck Warm.

Sikura added a power-play goal 2:34 into the third period to earn the game's first two-goal advantage, but Healey answered with a wrister from the left point that sneaked through heavy traffic to cut Chicago's deficit to 4-3 at the 9:01 mark.

Smith gave the Wolves new life when he collected a Cavan Fitzgerald pass along the side wall and snaked a wrist shot between Tarasov's skates to make the score 4-4 with 7:51 remaining in regulation.

During 3-on-3 play in overtime, both teams took turns making end-to-end dashes that ended either in sparkling saves or shots off the iron. Finally, the Monsters stopped a Wolves rush that turned into a two-man breakaway against Wolves goaltender Beck Warm. Angle and Liam Foudy exchanged passes before Angle nudged the puck into the open net.

Warm (5-2-1) and Tarasov (3-1-0) each notched 32 saves for the game.

The Wolves stay in Cleveland for another 3 p.m. clash Sunday before heading to Grand Rapids for a 6 p.m. contest Monday. Chicago's next game at the Wolves Training Facility comes 7 p.m. Friday against the Iowa Wild.



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SportScan

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

1210516

Carolina Hurricanes

The race atop the NHL Central between the Panthers and Hurricanes just got tighter

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

APRIL 24, 2021 06:42 PM,

The Carolina Hurricanes are done with the Florida Panthers.

At least for now. Check back during the Stanley Cup playoffs.

The Canes and Panthers played their eighth and final regular-season game Saturday at the BB&T Center, going to overtime before an Aleksander Barkov goal won it 4-3 for the Panthers.

Barkov carried the puck down the right wing and past the Canes' Andrei Svechnikov in overtime, getting off a shot from the right circle that got through Canes goalie Alex Nedeljkovic, who was making his third straight start.

The victory by the Panthers prevented the Canes (31-10-6) from clinching a spot in the playoffs, which if and when they do clinch will be their third consecutive trip to the postseason for the first time since the franchise relocated from Hartford.

The Canes, who played Saturday with a patchwork lineup, finished 6-0-2 in the season series against the Panthers, but officially clinching a playoff berth will have to wait. They maintained their Central Division lead over Florida (31-13-5), though, with 68 points, and have two games-in-hand on the Panthers.

"We got a point out of this, we came in and got three out of four (points)," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said, noting the 4-2 win Thursday over the Panthers. "Short-staffed and everything else, I think that's a win for us in a lot of ways."

Defenseman Dougie Hamilton scored twice for the Canes, the second on a power play, and Carolina led 3-1 in the third after defenseman Brett Pesce scored on an outside shot.

But the Panthers, who got a goal and three assists from MacKenzie Weegar, fought back to tie the score on goals from Gustav Forsling and then Alex Wennberg, who further energized his team and the crowd with a shorthanded goal.

"Most games against them have been like that," Hamilton said. "I feel like pretty much every game has been tight. We've had little leads and they've been pushing, pushing, pushing in the thirds. We definitely have to be better playing with the lead. Having that killer instinct. Roddy (Brind'Amour) told us we need that."

The third period had a fast-paced first seven minutes. Svechnikov never saw the puck but Brett Pesce's shot from the point hit off his skate in front of the crease and caromed past goalie Chris Driedger for a 3-1 lead at 3:01 of the third.

Forsling then made it 3-2 at 4:48 of the third with his fourth of season, slipping past Canes forward Morgan Geekie on the back side for an open shot. The Canes then had a power play after a hooking call against the Panthers, but Wennberg's strike tied it at 6:20.

"We had the game 3-1," Brind'Amour said. "That next shift can't be that. A blown D-zone coverage can't happen. That's the frustrating part. We give up a shortie, too, but that (Forsling) goal got the momentum going for them and we really didn't recover."

Added Hamilton, "They turned it on and we didn't."

The Canes were missing defenseman Brady Skjei (concussion) and forwards Jordan Martinook (lower-body injury) and Jesper Fast, a late scratch. Forward Teuvo Teravainen (concussion) is with the team and practicing but missed his 24th straight game, and forward Brock McGinn is not on the road trip.

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1210517

Carolina Hurricanes

Hurricanes defender Jaccob Slavin talks about hockey, faith, charity, and racism

BY CHIP ALEXANDER



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APRIL 24, 2021 03:00 PM

Editor's note: This is part of a continuing series of profiles on the Carolina Hurricanes' players and staff designed to give people a better look at the players behind the pads. We'll be asking them about hockey, of course, but also about life — hobbies, interests, special moments — to better understand what makes them tick.

Jacob Slavin of the Hurricanes had put in 27 minutes of playing time — almost 12 of it on the penalty kill — in a 4-2 win Thursday over the Florida Panthers. The defenseman had every reason to be exhausted Friday.

But Slavin, as reliable as any player Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour has in his lineup, patiently sat through an interview with the News & Observer, discussing a variety of subjects, from hockey to social injustice to the number of letters in his name.

Chip Alexander: How does a defenseman feel after playing 27 minutes in a game and spending almost 12 killing penalties?

Jacob Slavin: "Typically pretty bad. That game was kind of a weird night because of all the penalty kill time but our kill was doing really well and there was a lot of up-ice pressure, letting our forwards do the work in the O zone. Me and (Brett) Pesce were standing in the neutral zone for a little bit of that time. No, I felt fine after the game."

CA: There was a tweet recently from the NHL Players Association about you saying your pet peeve was that your wife Kylie likes to draw pictures on your face? What kind of pictures?

JS: "No, no, she doesn't draw on my face the way the NHLPA made that look. But we'll be sitting in church or at the kitchen table or wherever and she has a pen she'll try to mark on my hand or something. I don't know why it is but I've never liked marks on my hand or my arms. She knows that gets under my skin and she tries to exploit that."

CA: What's the best thing about being a father?

JS: "That's a loaded question right there but it's the joy you get out of it, the love you have for your child. Obviously in my case it's (daughter) Emersyn. It's a love only a father can really speak to. It's super fun. It's fulfilling to be able to love someone like that. Even the love you have for a wife is different from the love you have for a child. It's unbelievable. You watch them grow, you watch them learn, you watch them get hurt and come running to you, right, and needing comfort. It's just awesome. How much I love Emersyn is beyond measure and then you look at the love God has for us and it's even more so."

CA: One day when she's older she may come to you and ask you to explain all that happened in 2020, with the pandemic and social injustice issues. What will you tell her?

JS: "(smiles) I'm going to try to never remind her of it again. No, it's the world that we live in. We live in a broken world. It was a year of a lot of different stuff and a year that hopefully our world learns from eventually, and our culture and society learn from and we grow from it. But hopefully it's a year we can look back on and say that was kind of a turning point for our people."

CA: You're a man of very strong faith and the Canes had a game on Easter Sunday. Did you have a problem with that?

JS: "It came to my mind. But a hockey game, it's part of the job. But it didn't stop me from celebrating what that day meant and Jesus rising from the dead. It didn't stop me from having that celebration and enjoying it and praising God for it. Obviously I would have preferred to be able to be at home and go to church and celebrate that way, but I found a different way to celebrate. It was fine."

CA: If a young hockey player comes to you and asks how does a fourth-round draft pick from Colorado College make it to the NHL, what would you tell him?

JS: "Oh, I'm always the worst at this question. I've had a lot of people come to me and ask me for advice or what's your diet like or things like that. I'm like I'm the worst person to ask about that because my diet is not good. Obviously the work ethic you need to have needs to be there. You've got to want to get better. But the biggest thing for me is to stay humble and work hard and put the rest in God's hands."

CA: Do you have any game-day rituals or superstitions?

JS: "I would say I have my routine but not necessarily superstitions. I know what makes my body feel good and makes me prepared to play the game but if one thing goes wrong it's not like I'm a mental wreck going out for the faceoff."

CA: The "Fill the Stadium" Compassion International initiative has raised millions of dollars for underprivileged children and their families living in extreme poverty and affected by the pandemic. Why did you feel it was important to be involved?

JS: "It's important to me and Kylie also is involved with it. The resources God has given us and the platform He has given us to reach those in need is definitely one of the most important things in our life. To be able to be a part of this initiative and be able to help these children in crisis has been huge. Through COVID and 2020 they were impacted as much as we were but their basic necessities were not there anymore. To be able to have food and drinking water for them was important to Kylie and me, and it was one of those things where you want to be involved with it and glorify God at the same time and give these kids hope."

CA: On your Instagram page you wrote: "My wife and I hated that it took having a Black daughter to open our eyes to racism and injustices." What did you mean by that?

JS: "It's not like it was, 'Oh, wow, racism never existed before Emersyn came into our life.' It's like with anything else in life, and I was talking to Kylie about this the other day, if we all of a sudden had a child with Down Syndrome we would obviously know more about the ins and outs about Down Syndrome. For us, we knew that racism existed, we knew that it was there. But once we were living more in that world, more so, with Emersyn coming into our life, it was truly trying to understand her culture and where she came from, and what she was going to have to go through in life. We didn't want to go into it naive. We wanted to be prepared, we wanted to give her the best chance as a child. So once we really got into her world, then we realized all the ins and outs of racism that still exist and all the biases that exist still. The people that we talk to in our lives who are a BIPOC community, we talk to them about things. We became more educated on it and in becoming more educated I can say it truly opened our eyes to it because we weren't fully aware of what all went on."

CA: A lot of people say the tweet of Emersyn getting excited about your indoor goal celebration in front of the TV, with all of her giggles. Does she still get a big kick out of your cellys?

JS: "We have fun. She's a little bit older now and there will be times when random things make her funny. That night with that video is one of those nights where she got a big kick out of a celly. Now sometimes if we're playing and I celly in a different way she'll say, 'No, no Daddy, like this' and she'll show me how to celebrate. She can definitely light up a room."

"I think she has more practice with her celebrations in her year-and-a-half than I do over my whole career." - Jacob Slavin

CA: Did she critique your celly after your recent goal against Nashville?

JS: "She did not, actually. I told Kylie if I score this year I'm going to have to drop my stick and give it the ol' Emersyn celebration but we haven't seen too many pucks go in the back of the net for that to happen."

CA: Quick hockey question, why do you wear No. 74?

JS: "That's the number I was given when I came to the team."

CA: And what's the story about the first names in your family siblings and number of letters?



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JS: "Justin, Jordan, Jaccob, Josiah, Jeremiah. They're all J's and the first four have six letters. That's what Grandma wanted. Then she passed away and Jeremiah got more than six. But we kept the J's going."

CA: Every coach has their own coaching style. What's Rod Brind'Amour's best attribute as a coach?

JS: "One thing I like about it personally is just how much he cares about us as people. You see it in the way he treats us, the way he talks to us, the way he goes about individual relationships on the team. He truly cares about each and every one of us. When you have that care there, you have more respect for him as a coach. That's one of the things I like the most, just his care for people."

CA: You have a team that will be in the playoffs for a third straight year. What did you guys learn from the last couple of years that you can apply this year?

JS: "Just that every game counts. Whether it's Game 1 of the series, Game 7 of the series, you can't let your foot off the gas. We have a good squad this year, have all the pieces in place. We've just got to be ready to go from the start of the playoffs and like Rod always talks about, just making sure we have that consistency there and we're ready for the task."

News Observer LOADED: 04.25.2021

1210518 Carolina Hurricanes

Should Hurricanes goalie Alex Nedeljkovic be in the Calder Trophy conversation?

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

APRIL 24, 2021 07:00 AM,

Goaltenders don't win the Calder Trophy in the NHL, do they?

OK, a few have been named the league's rookie of the year. Goalie Steve Mason won the Calder with the Columbus Blue Jackets in 2009. Andrew Raycroft won with the Boston Bruins in 2004 and Evgeni Nabokov with the San Jose Sharks in 2001.

That's the list of goalies and the Calder since 2000. A short one.

Which brings us to Alex Nedeljkovic of the Carolina Hurricanes, and his chances of being in the Calder mix for 2021.

Nedeljkovic has the numbers: a 1.87 goals-against average, .933 save percentage and three shutouts. He stepped in when goalie Petr Mrazek went out with a thumb injury in January and has been ever valuable for Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour as the Hurricanes have put together a big season.

"Alex has undoubtedly been one of the league's best rookies," NHL analyst Matt Larkin of The Hockey News told the News & Observer on Friday. "On top of the three shutouts, he leads the league in five on five save percentage and goals saved above average per 60. When he's played, he's been as good as any goalie in the league.

"What will hold him back in the Calder discussion is being 'Binningtoned,' in that the sample size might be too small to win Nedeljkovic the Calder because his role was smaller to start the season before Petr Mrazek got hurt. But it wouldn't be a surprise to see him get some votes along with Dallas' Jake Oettinger."

Jordan Binnington had a huge role as the St. Louis Blues won the 2019 Stanley Cup. The goalie was called up from the AHL in December 2018 and went 24-5-1 in the regular season with a 1.89 GAA and .927 save percentage. He then won 16 playoff games in the Blues' run to the Cup.

Binnington was second in the 2019 Calder vote, finishing behind forward Elias Pettersson of the Vancouver Canucks. Pettersson had 151 of the 171 first-place votes.

Nedeljkovic, a former second-round draft pick by Carolina, has played 18 games this season after his 32-save victory over the Florida Panthers on Thursday. He has a 12-4-2 record, teaming with goalie James Reimer while Mrazek was out.

But how does he compare to forward Kirill Kaprizov of the Minnesota Wild, generally considered the Calder favorite. He scored his 20th and 21st goals in 46 games on Friday, a franchise record for a rookie. Forwards as Josh Norris and Tim Stützle of Ottawa also have had solid rookie seasons.

"I think his body of work is not quite there yet to include him in with all those guys," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said Thursday. "Hopefully by the end of the year. We'll have to see how many more starts he gets.

"Certainly his play has warranted it. It's tough when you look at the other guys who have played all year. But that's where those awards get tough to really say, 'Hey, you should be in there when your body of work's not quite there.' But definitely by how he's played, for sure."

Canes captain Jordan Staal, asked if Nedeljkovic should be in the Calder conversation, quickly replied, "Absolutely." He's biased, of course, but made some good points about the goalie the players call "Ned."

"Every time he's started he's given us a very good chance to win," Staal said Thursday. "You ask our D, he's been amazing moving the puck, so it just takes more stress of our D zone. He does things that other goalies can't do. Obviously he's made some big saves at key times."

Nedeljkovic had to make some high-quality saves Thursday to help pull the Canes past the Panthers 4-2 in the matchup of Central Division leaders. He was the backstop on the penalty kill as the Panthers went 1-for-9 on the power play and scored only on a 5-on-3. He faced 19 shots in the third as Florida had 16 scoring chances in the period (naturalstatstattrick.com.)

With 3:20 left in regulation and the Canes leading 3-2, the Panthers' Jonathan Huberdeau had an open net during a scramble in front of the Canes net. But Nedeljkovic made a quick push to his left to get a piece of the puck with his glove.

"He's been a gamer for us," Staal said. "All our goalies have been really good this year and Ned's no different. Him being in that conversation should be a must."

OF NOTE: Brind'Amour said forward Jordan Martinook was "not great" Friday after being hip-checked into the boards in Thursday's game. Brind'Amour said the hope was it would not be a long-term injury but said Martinook would not play Saturday against the Panthers.

Forward Teuvo Teravainen (concussion symptoms) took part in the limited team practice Friday and but probably will not play Saturday, Brind'Amour said. "He looked really good today, though," he said.

CAROLINA HURRICANES VS FLORIDA PANTHERS

When: Saturday, 7 p.m.

Where: BB&T Center, Sunrise, Fla.

TV: BSSO (Bally).

News Observer LOADED: 04.25.2021

1210529 Dallas Stars

Jamie Benn nets game-winning OT goal as Stars outlast brilliance of Detroit's Jonathan Bernier



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 25, 2021

By Matthew DeFranks 9:01 PM on Apr 24, 2021 CDT

So much of this Stars season has felt undeserved to the organization.

There was the training camp coronavirus outbreak and the blackout-inducing winter storm. There were the schedule changes as a result of both of them. The injuries lingering from a Cup Final run and new ones as a consequence of the tightened slate.

The miserable overtimes have masked decent performances sometimes. Other times, it's been wretched finishing that have ruined otherwise strong showings. The question "Did we play well enough to win the game?" exited coach Rick Bowness often, quickly followed by a short "Yes."

Saturday night's 2-1 overtime win over the Detroit Red Wings nearly joined the heap of the unfortunate.

Jamie Benn scored the game-winning goal 32 seconds into overtime, beating a seemingly impenetrable Jonathan Bernier with a shot from the left circle on the rush. With the win, the Stars are two points behind fourth-place Nashville with two games in hand on the Predators.

"We've lost enough of those games throughout the course of the year where we've dominated," Bowness said. "We certainly deserved to win that game tonight, we certainly deserved to win that one. It's crazy that it even went into overtime, but give Mr. Bernier a lot of credit."

Dallas outshot the Red Wings 52-17, a beating that failed to show up on the scoreboard thanks to Bernier. He made big saves in close quarters on Stars power plays. He tipped a puck away from an open Roope Hintz that would have been a goal. He received help from three posts that denied Hintz, Jamie Oleksiak and Jason Robertson.

It took the Stars 43:52 to pierce Bernier, as Mark Pysyk pounded home a loose puck after Robertson's kick hit the post. Pysyk's goal came on the Stars' 44th shot of the night.

The Stars were dominant in the face of Bernier's brilliance. They had 21 shots in the first period. They had 20 shots in the second period. None found the back of the net.

"I think we were working hard the whole 60 minutes and little over, so that's why [we controlled the game]," Miro Heiskanen said. "I think we keep pressuring their D and they were so tired, and we just keep doing that."

Meanwhile, the Dallas defense stifled Detroit, surrendering three shots in each of the first two periods. Dennis Cholowski painted the upper corner of the goal with a shot that beat Anton Khudobin to give the Wings a lead late in the first period.

As the Stars try to make a playoff push, it would have been terribly fitting and familiar for a loss like Saturday's to wreck Dallas' postseason chances. It's been a frequent story for the Stars this season, a tiring routine: play well in all areas except around the net, walk away with a loss, either in regulation or in overtime.

An undeserved loss to make them undeserving of the final playoff spot in the Central Division? It would have been painfully suitable. Benn made sure that didn't happen.

"It was just a 2 on 1," Benn said. "They kind of took the pass away, so figured I'd shoot it."

The captain's overtime game-winner is the highlight of his best stretch of the season. He now has five goals and six assists in his last 14 games after scoring two goals in the previous 25 games. He's been a force at center and has deepened the Dallas lineup beneath the top line that Roope Hintz pilots.

In ordinary seasons, a game like Saturday would be a building block in a season, regardless of result. These games happen in a random sport like hockey, and things usually tend to even out across a full season. But in

this season and in this point in the season, a loss Saturday would have been devastating for Dallas.

The Stars collected the moral victories in February. Ones in April hold no significance.

Saturday's game was the end of a mushy stretch of the Stars schedule. They played the dregs of the division six straight times, winning the first four games against Columbus and Detroit. They finished their season series with the rebuilding Red Wings on Saturday. From here, the schedule stiffens.

The Stars host the first-place Hurricanes in their final two home games Monday and Tuesday. Their final seven games of the season are all on the road. Saturday was a golden opportunity to capitalize on their last golden chance of the season.

Thanks to Benn, they did.

"Fate's in our hands," Benn said. "We've got a big two games coming up here against a really good hockey team. Go home, get some rest and looking forward to Monday."

Klingberg out

Stars defenseman John Klingberg missed Saturday night's game with a lower-body injury, marking another game in which Dallas was without a contributing defenseman. Sami Vatanen was out Thursday in Detroit with an upper-body injury but returned Saturday. Miro Heiskanen had a one-game hiatus on Tuesday night.

After Saturday's game, Heiskanen said "of course there's lots of games, but still feeling good and try to do everything I can."

For the entire season, Dallas' top two defensive pairs have been a constant in the lineup, as the only absence was in March when Klingberg welcomed his first child. Other than that, Esa Lindell, Jamie Oleksiak, Klingberg and Heiskanen had played every game prior to this week.

Dallas Morning News LOADED: 04.25.2021

1210530

Dallas Stars

It wasn't pretty, but Stars get 2 critical points on Jamie Benn's game winner

By Saad Yousuf Apr 24, 2021

Dispatching the Detroit Red Wings wasn't supposed to be that difficult. But this is the 2021 Dallas Stars, team of 16 overtime games and eight shootout finishes this season. The tougher road seems to be the one most often traveled.

The Stars dominated the Red Wings on the ice Saturday, yet almost lost another "we did everything to win but win" game. After 40 minutes, the Stars were outshooting the Red Wings 41-6 yet trailed 1-0 on the scoreboard. A lot of those shots were from distance and aimed right at the chest of Jonathan Bernier. The Red Wings goaltender was phenomenal, not only making the saves but not allowing many rebounds either.

"That's a damn good goalie performance by Bernier there," Stars captain Jamie Benn said. "He stood on his head, made a lot of great saves. You got to tip your hat to him."

It's a lot easier to tip the hat to Bernier after collecting two points from him, a result the Stars desperately needed. Saturday concluded a six-game cupcake stretch for the Stars in which they played two games against the Columbus Blue Jackets and then four straight against the Red Wings, two teams battling in the cellar of the Central Division. At the



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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beginning of that stretch, 4-1-1 seemed like a pretty good result for the Stars' playoff hopes. Winning six straight, and especially four consecutive games against the same team, is hard to do in the NHL, no matter how bad the team is. However, going 5-1 became imperative for the Stars as things unfolded since their stinker in Detroit on Thursday.

First of all, the Stars got minimal help from the Chicago Blackhawks. Chicago and Nashville played three consecutive games against each other this week and the Predators collected five of a possible six points, bolstering their place in the standings. Dallas entered Saturday night four points behind Nashville with three games in hand.

Second, it would be one thing if the Stars were completely flat Saturday night and were getting dominated on the ice by the Red Wings. In that situation, salvaging one point by taking the game to overtime and finishing with the aforementioned 4-1-1 record over this stretch would be more acceptable, though not at all encouraging. But given the Stars were not just better but dominating on Saturday against an inferior opponent, anything less than a victory was going to leave a sour taste.

"We've lost enough of those games throughout the course of the year where we dominated," head coach Rick Bowness said. "We certainly deserved to win that game tonight. ... It's crazy that it even went into overtime, but give Mr. Bernier a lot of credit, he was fantastic in the net. ... We certainly needed those two points."

The Stars sit two points behind the Predators in the standings, with two games in hand. A big showdown in Nashville looms in less than a week. Wilder things have happened, so to say that a loss on Saturday would have ended the Stars' season would be hyperbole, but not by much. There are just nine games left in the regular season. The next two are at home, a back-to-back against the Carolina Hurricanes, the current top team in the division. After that, it's seven consecutive road games, none in Detroit or Columbus. Style points are irrelevant at this point. The only points that matter are the ones in the far-left column of the standings, and the Stars added two there on Saturday.

Observations

- Bernier was really strong for the Red Wings. The shots-on-goal disparity is the easy thing to point to because at 52-17 it is so jarring, but it goes beyond that. As mentioned, a good chunk of the Stars' shots did end up right in Bernier's chest, but there were also plenty of remarkable saves involved as well. In high-danger scoring chances, according to Natural Stat Trick, the Stars had an 11-1 advantage in the first period, an 8-2 advantage in the second period and a 6-2 edge in the third. Add in the one from overtime and the Stars had a 26-5 advantage in high-danger scoring chances but won the game by one goal. That included a scoreless Stars power play in four opportunities. Bernier also got some luck from the post, which kept out quality attempts from Roope Hintz, Jamie Oleksiak and Jason Robertson, but it was undoubtedly a standout performance from the veteran goaltender.

If you're curious how the shot distribution panned out, I'll have the number of shots each player took in the lineup at the bottom. The only skater who didn't register an official shot on goal was Denis Gurianov.

- Benn delivered the goods for the Stars with a goal 32 seconds into overtime, first stealing the puck and then showing his veteran savvy by perfectly playing the two-on-one with patience and skill.

The Stars captain has been delivering quite a bit lately, not just playing his best hockey of the season but arguably his best hockey over an extended period of time in the last few regular seasons. Since snapping a five-game pointless drought on March 27, Benn has 12 points in his past 17 games. Coaches and players have often remarked that the team goes how Benn goes and these games have been a good example of that. Benn failed to register a point in eight of the last 17 games. The Stars are 2-4-2. In the nine games Benn has tallied at least a point, the Stars are 7-0-2.

- Another reason why a loss on Saturday would have been particularly painful is that the Stars iced a nearly full lineup. They were without John

Klingberg, but Hintz played, as did Miro Heiskanen and Sami Vatanen, all three of whom missed game action during the week. Of course, with a nearly full lineup and everybody taking shots, it was ... Mark Pysyk who broke the scoring drought for the Stars.

"You've got to remember, he played forward all last year in Florida and scored nine goals," Bowness said. "That's the luxury of having him in our lineup. If we lose a defenseman during the course of the game, he can play defense. He's really helped that fourth line. He's strong on the boards, strong on the forecheck."

The top two lines rightfully get a lot of attention for their production, as does the FCC line for its consistency, but the fourth line of Tanner Kero, Justin Dowling and Pysyk played well Saturday after being a bright spot on Thursday.

- Anton Khudobin didn't have a busy night, especially in contrast to his counterpart, but he allowed only one goal on 17 shots. Still, it was an important game for Khudobin after the drubbing he took on Thursday, getting pulled after 20 minutes. Rebounding strongly, no matter how busy an evening, was crucial and he did it.

- Asking an NHL hockey team to play four games in six nights remains as absurd today as it did eight weeks ago, but the Stars deserve a lot of credit. They are basically in Week 8 of playing four games in six nights, with a small reprieve last week, but they still summon the energy to come out with the intensity they did on Saturday. I'm sure that comment would've been received a bit differently had they lost, but it wouldn't be any less true. This team has dealt with the combination of an unreasonable schedule and key injuries that affect production and depth and have rarely laid an egg. The lack of scoring has been a constant source of frustration, as has been the inability to finish plays and games, but this group pretty consistently plays competitive hockey. They deserve credit for that and deserve to be in the playoff race down the stretch.

- Winning breeds good vibes. After Saturday's win, "BB30" was the final person to ask the tight-lipped Benn a question in the postgame news conference. Here's how the exchange went:

BB30: "Hi, yes, Jamie, this is Ben from the Preston Hollow Express. Just wondering why you didn't break your stick after the overtime winner?"

Benn: "It wasn't the right time. Thanks for the question though, Mr. Brookshire."

BB30 was Ben Bishop.

Personnel

Klingberg missed Saturday's game with a lower-body injury, Bowness saying afterward that Klingberg is day to day. That elevated Vatanen to the top pairing to keep Heiskanen and Oleksiak together. Here is what the lineup looked like (shots on goal for each player are in parentheses):

Jason Robertson (4) — Roope Hintz (4) — Joe Pavelski (3)

Jason Dickinson (2) — Jamie Benn (5) — Denis Gurianov (0)

Andrew Cogliano (3) — Radek Faksa (4) — Blake Comeau (2)

Tanner Kero (3) — Justin Dowling (2) — Mark Pysyk (4)

Esa Lindell (4) — Sami Vatanen (2)

Jamie Oleksiak (3) — Miro Heiskanen (3)

Joel Hanley (1) — Andrej Sekera (3)

The Athletic LOADED: 04.25.2021

1210531

Detroit Red Wings



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Detroit Red Wings' Jonathan Bernier makes 50(!) saves, but Dallas Stars win in OT, 2-1

Helene St. James

The Detroit Red Wings' fourth game of the week against the Dallas Stars was a memorable one.

Goaltender Jonathan Bernier faced a mountain of shots compared to the molehill the Wings directed on net at the other end of the ice Saturday at Little Caesars Arena. The Stars ended up winning, 2-1 in overtime, on their 52nd shot on net.

"It's tough to come out and have a performance like this and not win," Bernier said.

Jamie Benn scored 32 seconds into the extra period after Filip Hronek turned over the puck.

"You get into overtime and it's always bitter when you lose, especially when you give up a needless chance like that," coach Jeff Blashill said. "We have to execute better in those situations."

Bernier and the penalty killers starred in the first period, with Bernier turning away 21 shots, five of them during two Stars power plays. Bernier was the only change from the lineup that routed Dallas, 7-3, Thursday, as the Wings forged ahead after Dylan Larkin joined Bobby Ryan and Tyler Bertuzzi in being lost for the season.

Defenseman Dennis Cholowski scored during a first period that saw the Wings register just three shots on net. Bernier and the penalty killers were back at it in the second, with the Stars tallying 20 shots on net. One of the Wings' three shots on net came during the penalty to Evgeny Svechnikov, when Michael Rasmussen skating the puck to the net and firing a backhand.

"Two different periods for me," Blashill said. "I thought the first period it wasn't as indicative. We passed up a few shots and had a few real chances. The first period was fine. The second period they were in our end the whole time. We couldn't get the puck into their end. We just kept defending over and over and over again."

Bernier's shutout bid ended at 3:52 of the third period, when Mark Pysyk scored on Dallas' 44th shot. The Wings gave up a season-high 51 shots in regulation, registering just 17 of their own.

The Wings (17-25-8) have six games left, and next play Tuesday at Columbus.

Czech Mates

Jakub Vrana and Filip Zadina, who demonstrated such chemistry in Thursday in pairing up on two goals, started on a line with Valteri Filppula in the middle. About five minutes into the first period, Filppula had the puck inside Dallas' zone. He found Zadina, who rushed up the left flank, with Vrana coming up the right side. Zadina threaded the puck to Vrana, but he just missed getting his stick on it before he passed the net. It was a solid scoring chance, one that showed how well the two Czechs feed off one another.

Cholowski scores

Cholowski, a first-round pick from 2016, scored his first goal of the season, in what was his 10th game. Evgeny Svechnikov (a first-round pick from 2015) took a pass from Richard Panik and found Cholowski as they strode through the neutral zone. Cholowski unleashed a shot just inside the left circle that Anton Khudobin saw coming the whole way but wasn't able to stop from going bar down, at 16:17.

Comical disparity

The discrepancy in shots took on farcical proportions as the second period wore on. Bernier made three saves during the Stars' third power

play. Halfway through the game, shots were 34-3, with the Wings' last shot dating to Cholowski's goal. It wasn't until 12 minutes into the second period the Wings finally registered a shot on net, with Filppula targeted a wrist shot at Khudobin. Shots after 40 minutes were 41-6 to the Stars.

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 04.25.2021

1210532 Detroit Red Wings

Detroit Red Wings lose to Dallas Stars, 2-1 in overtime: Game thread replay

Tyler J. Davis

Detroit Red Wings (17-25-7) vs. Dallas Stars (19-15-12)

When: 7 p.m. Saturday.

Where: Little Caesars Arena.

TV: Bally Sports Detroit.

Radio: 97.1 FM (Red Wings radio affiliates).

How to bet: Place legal, online bets at BetMGM Sportsbook.

• Box score

Game notes: The Wings beat the Stars, 7-3, on Thursday night and learned the next day that captain Dylan Larkin will be out for the rest of the season. After finishing the two-game set with Dallas, Detroit is off for a few days before playing the Columbus Blue Jackets and Carolina Hurricanes. ... The Stars could really use a win as the dash toward the postseason continues. Once leaving Detroit, Dallas hosts Carolina for a pair of game Monday and Tuesday.

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 04.25.2021

1210533 Detroit Red Wings

'Over and over and over again': Bernier gets bombarded, Red Wings fall to Stars 2-1 in OT

By Matt Schoch

Detroit — Thanks to the best efforts of Jonathan Bernier, the Red Wings' playoff hopes will survive another day.

Thanks to Jamie Benn's goal 32 seconds into overtime, the Dallas Stars got two much-needed points on Saturday night.

Dallas topped Detroit 2-1 despite Bernier's 50 saves, tied for the most in the NHL this season.

The goaltender stopped the first 42 shots before he cracked, eventually surrendering a goal on his 43rd shot.

"That's my job is to stop pucks, and it's tough to come out and have a performance like this and not win," Bernier said. "For me, it's finding a way to win. I wasn't able to tonight."

The Stars (20-15-12) set a season high with 46 shots on goal in Thursday's 7-3 loss in Detroit. They smashed that record Saturday, also forcing Detroit to surrender the most shots it had all year.

BOX SCORE: Stars 2, Red Wings 1 (OT)



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The last one came when Benn beat Bernier short-side on a 2-on-1 for the game-winner off the crossbar and in.

"He looked pass the whole way," Bernier said. "At the last second he shot, he made a nice shot. I felt it hit my blocker so I wasn't sure it went in."

Meanwhile, Detroit (17-25-8) finished with just 17 shots.

On the Red Wings' third shot of the game, Dennis Cholowski beat Anton Khudobin glove side for his first point of the season and a 1-0 lead. At the time, Dallas had 17 shots.

"I thought the last two games were his best two," Red Wings coach Jeff Blashill said of Cholowski's 10 games. "I thought he really, really had command of the puck. He was probably our best breakout guy, was probably our best neutral-zone transition guy. So I thought he did a real good job."

After Cholowski's goal, the Red Wings went 15 minutes, 35 seconds of game action without a shot on goal, as Bernier stopped 19 straight Dallas shots.

"I thought the first period was fine, but the second period they were in our end the whole period," Blashill said. "We just kept defending over and over and over and over again."

"You can't get leaned on that long."

Dallas had 21 shots in the first period, a season-high for a period, then 20 in the second. Detroit had three in each of the first two periods.

Dallas defenseman Mark Pysyk finally cracked Bernier early in the third period, tying the score by banging home his second of the season from the doorstep.

The Red Wings were without Dylan Larkin, Tyler Bertuzzi and Frans Nielsen, who are out for the season, along with forward Robby Fabbri.

Jakub Vrana, who scored four goals on Thursday, was held to one shot. The other player acquired from Washington last week for Anthony Mantha, Richard Panik, had an assist on Cholowski's goal, along with Evgeny Svechnikov.

Dallas took the season series 6-2 against Detroit, including three out of four this week.

The Red Wings play Tuesday at Columbus in a game that's crucial for NHL Draft lottery position.

The Blue Jackets trail the Red Wings by three points, sitting in last in the Central Division. Detroit has six games remaining with three against Columbus, including the final two games of the season.

The Red Wings will still almost certainly miss the playoffs for the fifth straight season after making it 25 consecutive times, but they avoided becoming the fourth NHL team to be mathematically eliminated for one more game.

One point for Nashville in Monday's game against Florida would seal Detroit's fate there.

Detroit News LOADED: 04.25.2021

1210534 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings eye spoilers role on Hockey Fights Cancer Night at LCA

Updated Apr 24, 2021; Posted Apr 24, 2021

By Ansar Khan

The Detroit Red Wings could be officially eliminated from the playoffs tonight, not that there was any suspense.

They have been relegated to a spoilers role for several weeks and will look to do more damage to the Dallas Stars' playoff hopes when the teams wrap up their four-game series at Little Caesars Arena (7 p.m., Bally Sports Detroit).

The Stars (19-15-12) are four points behind Nashville for the fourth and final playoff spot in the Central Division. Dallas has three games in hand, but time is running out on this 56-game season.

The Red Wings (17-25-7) have equaled last season's victory total and surpassed their 2019-20 points output in 22 fewer games. But they will be eliminated from the postseason if they lose in regulation tonight.

Jakub Vrana is coming off a four-goal game in Thursday's 7-3 victory over the Stars and has five goals and one assist in four games since being acquired from Washington on April 12 for Anthony Mantha.

The Red Wings will be without Robby Fabbri, in addition to several lost for the season, including captain Dylan Larkin.

Coach Jeff Blashill said everyone who played Thursday is available tonight.

There is no indication of who will start in goal. If it's Thomas Greiss, he will look to continue his strong play of late. Greiss is 4-0-2 in his past six starts, with a 1.91 goals-against average and .938 save percentage.

Tonight is Hockey Fights Cancer Night at LCA. The Detroit Red Wings Foundation will auction off warmup jerseys and lavender-taped sticks used by Red Wings players in the pregame warmups.

A limited number of Hockey Fights Cancer-branded pucks used during warmups also will be available for purchase, with proceeds from the auction and sale benefiting the American Cancer Society and the Detroit Red Wings Foundation.

Michigan Live LOADED: 04.25.2021

1210535 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings' Dylan Larkin out for remainder of season

Updated Apr 23, 1:40 PM; Posted Apr 23, 1:13 PM

By Ansar Khan

DETROIT – A difficult season for Dylan Larkin has come to a frustrating end.

It began with much promise, after he was named captain of the Detroit Red Wings. It officially ended Friday, with seven games remaining, due to an upper-body injury suffered late in Tuesday's 5-2 loss at Dallas.

"He will miss remainder of the season," coach Jeff Blashill said. "He will be re-evaluated in a couple weeks and probably ongoing from there."

Larkin, 24, finishes with nine goals and 14 assists in 44 games. His 23 points is still tied for the lead on a team that struggles to score, Thursday's 7-3 victory over Dallas notwithstanding.

Larkin averaged .52 points per game this season, his lowest output since his second year (32 points in 80 games, .40).

"I don't think you replace guys like that, certainly not by one individual," Blashill said. "Dylan is a huge piece of our team. He's our captain, he drives our engine with his work ethic every day, in practices and in games."



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"But as you saw (Thursday), guys understand that just means collectively our competition level has to be elite every night, our work ethic has to be elite every night. We have to be a real good defensive team. Obviously, there's other guys on this team that can score and that was illustrated last night. It gives lots of opportunity to different people."

Larkin joins Tyler Bertuzzi, Bobby Ryan and Frans Nielsen as players who have been lost for the season. Robby Fabbri will miss his 11th game in a row Saturday against Dallas at Little Caesars Arena (7 p.m., Bally Sports Detroit) and remains day-to-day.

Ryan had surgery for a torn triceps muscle. Blashill declined to reveal Larkin and Bertuzzi's injuries and said it hasn't been determined if either will require surgery.

Larkin was injured with 2:09 to play in the third period when he was tangled up with Jamie Benn during a face-off. Larkin went down in pain and skated to the bench, where he stayed with his head down for the remainder of the game.

Blashill said some players are dealing with "bumps and bruises," so the injured list could grow on Saturday.

"It's been a hard run lately," Blashill said. "It happens some years. Unfortunately for two years in a row we've been hit. The significance of the injuries and where those players fit within your team definitely have a big impact. A year ago we missed (Danny DeKeyser) basically for the whole season and that was a huge loss. This year we missed Bert for a lot of the year and then you start getting into guys like Fabs and Larks and Bobby Ryan and Nielsen and it becomes a lot.

"It also gives a chance for the group that's getting an opportunity to play to show what they're all about. One thing that's allowed our team to have success this year is when we've been that elite group of work ethic and competitiveness. I think it's a calling card for our team and guys have bought into it and I think it showed last night."

When, where will Veleno play?

Center Joe Veleno was on the ice again Friday during an extremely limited optional practice but has not been cleared to play and is not available for Saturday's game.

Blashill said he believes Veleno will get an opportunity to make his NHL debut at some point in these remaining games, but that hasn't been determined for sure.

"It's still a conversation that Steve (general manager Yzerman) and I are taking day by day," Blashill said. "A number of factors will play in that that, including the Griffins' schedule and our schedule and where he best fits when he's ready to play. Do I think that he'll have an opportunity to play for us? I do, but I don't know that 100 percent, so I'm not going to commit to that."

Michigan Live LOADED: 04.25.2021

1210636 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / 'Phenomenal' Sandin making case for Maple Leafs' playoff lineup

Luke Fox@lukefoxjukebox

April 25, 2021, 12:33 AM

Blake Wheeler underestimated Rasmus Sandin.

The savvy 6-foot-5, 225-pound Winnipeg Jets captain barrelled in on a 31-game rookie retrieving a dumped puck from his own corner. Wheeler spotted a 21-year-old defenceman six inches and 40 pounds smaller and reached for a forecheck, figuring either (a) Sandin would move his feet

and try to skirt contact or (b) if the two men were to collide, the bigger one in full stride wouldn't be harmed.

Bam.

Surprise.

Sandin held his ice and delivered a clean, hard reverse hit, sending Wheeler reeling and immediately facing retaliation from Kyle Connor, who rushed to his dazed teammate's defence.

Combine that sturdy shoulder with a smooth 4-on-4 breakout pass that ignited a William Nylander-to-John Tavares rush goal, plus a little peek on the top power-play unit, and the Toronto Maple Leafs' most prized defence prospect is making his presence felt. Loud.

"I feel stronger overall," Sandin said. "I have a little bit more pop overall in my legs during the whole game. I don't feel that I get tired as quick as I did before. Down in the corners, I think I can battle and handle guys a lot better than I could last year."

What a time to come alive.

Following the Maple Leafs' 4-1 victory in Winnipeg Saturday, the club has a scant eight games remaining before its opening night playoff roster needs submission.

Sandin — appearing in just his fourth NHL game in the past 410 days — may be late to the party, but he looks every inch a crasher.

"Sandy's phenomenal," Tavares said. "He's got a little bite to his game. He's able to hold his own. When you've got a lot of guys forechecking on you as a D-man, that's important to have. Even for a guy who's not the biggest, his ability to hold the zone, take the pressure, absorb it and give it back a little bit is fantastic."

Mitch Marner is taken by how seamlessly Sandin has filled the void.

"He played his first game in a crazy amount of days, and he was perfectly in sync. I think he fits our system very well and plays responsibly and plays smart with the puck," Marner said. "He makes a lot of great decisions coming up the ice with the puck and makes it hard on forwards to put their finger on where he's going."

On an evening in which the Maple Leafs dressed five left-shot defencemen, the eager Swede shone with a plus-2 showing, an assist, and the (legal) hit of the night.

It feels like a forgone conclusion that the Maple Leafs, now eight points up on the rest of the country, will claim the top seed in Canada. Yet the bottom of the club's playoff roster is very much in flux, and Zach Bogosian's shoulder injury has opened the gates of opportunity.

Partner Travis Dermott will get some run on his unnatural right side and the penalty kill, while Sandin makes his case by pitching in on the power play.

Eyebrows raised Saturday when he was given a shift in Morgan Rielly's usual spot, quarterbacking the Leafs' loaded top unit 5-on-4.

"The power play is a big part of his game. He's got great confidence there. I've seen him from a very young age at the American League level take over a power play," head coach Sheldon Keefe said. "We knew when we had him in the lineup we wanted to introduce him to the power play and give him an opportunity.

"The way he moves the puck with his confidence that he has at 5-on-5 really helps us. He doesn't get rattled by much at all. He's a competitive guy. He's getting better and better every game, and that's really what you want to see with a young player."

Waiting in the wings is deadline acquisition Ben Hutton, who has cleared quarantine but has yet to suit up for his new club.

"Sandin is more of a priority for us right now, to get him up and going," Keefe said this week.



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At the very least, we are seeing a preview of the Leafs' future, as entry-level contributors like Sandin are integral to success in a flat-cap world.

But the 2018 first-rounder speaks and acts like a player ready to win the job yesterday.

Sandin was already patient watching Toronto try out KHL import Mikko Lehtonen early in the season. Then he endured weeks of rehab after suffering a broken foot during a Marlies stint. He's twiddled his thumbs on the taxi squad.

"I'm a guy that wants everything quick. I want it now," Sandin said, reflecting on his road back to the show. "You know, it's been a long time since I've played a game. The last couple games overall have been really fun getting back into it."

Jeff Marek and Elliotte Friedman talk to a lot of people around the hockey world, and then they tell listeners all about what they've heard and what they think about it.

Joe Thornton talks about how well-liked Sandin — a called-up kid surrounded by established stars — is by his teammates, how well he skates, and how much he likes Sandin's edge.

"The boys love him, and he's playing real well," Thornton said.

"He's only going to get better."

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Sportsnet.ca / Canadiens' roster management continues to burden team in key games

Eric Engels@EricEngels

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Considering the circumstances, Cayden Primeau did his best.

He hadn't played a game in 22 days, none in the NHL since December of 2019, and he was being dropped into the fire against a Calgary Flames team that was 5-2-0 against his Montreal Canadiens. A Flames team staring down a golden opportunity to pull within four points of the Canadiens for that fourth and final playoff spot in the North Division.

Primeau managed 29 saves and couldn't be faulted on three of the four goals he allowed before Rasmus Andersson scored on an empty net to seal the 5-2 win for Calgary. Still, he said he'd have liked to have stopped all of them.

Noble? Indeed.

We're certain Primeau would have not given up this chance for anything. The 21-year-old, who was selected 199th overall by the Canadiens in 2017, had earned it with a great first season in Laval and an even better sophomore one. Primeau had won 11 of 14 starts with the Rocket this year — his last seven in a row and two of the final three by shutout — before joining the Canadiens in the vacancy created by Carey Price's concussion, and he had waited more than a year to play his third game for the big club.

"I was excited to get in," Primeau said. "You've got to be ready for whenever your name is called on, so I was preparing every day in case it was going to happen. To be able to go in today was good. I felt good going into the game. Maybe a little bit sloppy off the start, but settled in and overall felt good."

It would've been hard for Canadiens coach Dominique Ducharme or general manager Marc Bergevin to yank it away from him after telling him on Friday it belonged to him, but you have to think they'd have done it had they felt he wouldn't give them the best chance to win the game.

But this was anything but an easy choice. That Ducharme and Bergevin were left with such a difficult one was part of an ongoing problem. It's been the problem since Victor Mete was claimed off waivers and Erik Gustafsson was added at the trade deadline, maxing out their cap and forcing them to use three of four non-emergency recalls to play later that day against the Toronto Maple Leafs.

They won that game, but the lack of roster flexibility at a time the Canadiens have needed it most — with injuries piling up, cap dollars spent and the schedule so unrelenting — was once again at the heart of another loss on this day, and the threat it would turn out this way was there well before they stepped on the ice at the Saddledome.

So, pointing to it as an issue in hindsight now is impossible to avoid. Especially since it was revealed after the game that the team knew forward Tomas Tatar was attempting to play through an injury.

He was unsuccessful, leaving after two shifts in the third period and leaving the Canadiens with 10 forwards to close out a game they were chasing from behind. A game that was their second game in as many nights, their third in four days and their fourth of the week.

They knew they were going to have to start it without Jonathan Drouin (sick with a non-COVID-19-related illness) and Paul Byron (lower-body injury) and possibly finish it without Tatar, and they still opted to play Primeau instead of turning to Jake Allen or Charlie Lindgren.

Ducharme and Bergevin inserted forward Jake Evans as an emergency recall (he or Michael Frolik were the only forwards from their taxi squad who would fit under the cap) and they once again dressed seven defencemen.

"It's not the ideal situation," said Ducharme.

But they went with it anyways.

"When we understood that we would be missing Paulie and Jo, talking with Marc, we would've liked... we tried to be having 12 forwards," Ducharme said. "But the only way we could do it today was the way we've done it."

Maybe he and Bergevin saw it that way because Allen had already made three appearances this week, played in 10 of 13 games this month, and they had deemed he absolutely needed a rest. It stands to reason the last thing they wanted to do was burn him out knowing Price had returned to Montreal earlier this week to receive more treatment for his injury, with his recovery not really progressing to the point that he'd be imminently returning to the ice.

And they clearly felt dressing Allen behind Lindgren, who had won only two of his six starts in the NHL a season ago, wasn't an option either. Sure, he had won two of his three starts in the AHL and played slightly more recently than Primeau, but he had last appeared in a game on April 9 and it was only his first since playing two in February.

But in making the decision as they did, Ducharme and Bergevin once again deprived themselves of Cole Caufield's services in a situation they desperately could've used them. He's never played a game at this level, but he's been a superstar scorer at every other one, and it was worth testing him out after the team scored just twice in Friday's loss—Goals 17 and 18 in 10 games since Brendan Gallagher was lost for the remainder of the regular season with a fractured right thumb.

But they thought the biggest decision they had to make was who to start in their net. For that, they take a bigger share of the loss than Primeau. And the rest of the Canadiens, who couldn't manage two periods to match a really-well played first, take the rest of it.

Now the same tough decisions loom ahead of Monday's game — the last one between the Canadiens and Flames, which plays huge in both



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team's playoff fates. Even if Drouin, Tatar and Byron are all available for it, using the last non-emergency recall on Caufield would mean putting Evans (or someone else) on the taxi squad until injuries occur and enable the team to once again use emergency recall. It's a Groundhog Day scenario.

But so is not being able to score enough and losing. Maybe the decision isn't that hard after all.

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Sportsnet.ca / Canucks keep pressure on in playoff race as Holtby finds his game

Iain MacIntyre@imacSportsnet

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VANCOUVER – A trend has been detected. And we may be crazy, but this seems important.

In the three games the Vancouver Canucks have won since their COVID-19 crisis, they've had the better goaltending. The game they lost, the other team had the better goalie.

On Saturday, Braden Holtby outplayed the Ottawa Senators' two-man goaltending entry of Matt Murray and Marcus Hogberg, and the Canucks won 4-2 to keep the pressure on the teams they're chasing in the National Hockey League playoff race.

This trend, of course, has been around as long as water has been frozen for hockey.

But what's new about the Canucks' trend is that they now have two goalies contributing: Holtby and starter Thatcher Demko, who lost to the Senators 3-0 on Thursday through no fault of his own and rested Saturday.

Demko has been excellent most of this season. Holtby has been largely excellent for most of the last decade – but not so much this season until the Canucks went more than three weeks without playing due to a schedule break and an outbreak.

In three games since, Holtby has stopped 98 of 105 shots and gone 3-0.

"I don't want to speak for him, but ... he just looks freer to me," coach Travis Green said. "I'm not a goalie expert by any means, but he definitely looks confident, he looks freer, things look easier for him."

After leaving the Washington Capitals for the Canucks before this season, Holtby has been trying to incorporate some technical changes under new goaltending coach Ian Clark. The transition was made more difficult by the loss of the starting job this season to Demko.

Saturday marked the first time since January that Holtby played three times in a week. His last win before the COVID-19 crisis was Feb. 17.

"It's not the reason for success or failure," Holtby insisted of his workload. "You've just got to show up every day and be ready to play, try and win games as best you can. Obviously, this stretch here has been a little difficult to us. We've had some success by grinding it out. We've got through the nice part of our schedule so it's even more (important) that we come together and get that rhythm as a team to get everyone on board to play games.

"Rest is going to be key ... not just to play our best, but to just stay healthy and not have any long-term effects. I think it's going to take

everyone to manage that. Thatch and I know that — that for us to make the playoffs, we're both going to have to find ways to win games."

Holtby was at his best Saturday in the middle period when a tight-checking game opened up.

The Canucks generated as many scoring chances in the first four minutes of the second period as they did in the opening 20 minutes. None of them turned into goals, but one was still significant.

When Jake Virtanen steered a rebound wide and tried to chase the puck behind the net, Murray, the Senators' starter who had blanked the Canucks on Thursday, got his stick between the Canuck's legs and tripped him. The play caused Murray to twist sideways on his knees, and when he was penalized, he skated straight to the Ottawa bench and left the game.

Marcus Hogberg, rushed into the lineup when Ottawa backup Anton Forsberg was injured in the warmup, went in cold at 4:27 and exactly nine seconds later robbed Bo Horvat on a redirect from the slot.

He wasn't as successful on the next shot he faced because at 4:36 Brock Boeser broke a 1-1 tie by lasering a wrist shot in the short-side top corner that Hogberg couldn't see through Tanner Pearson's screen.

In danger of taking advantage of a goalie who had one start in the previous two months, the Canucks levelled the playing field by taking more penalties. Quinn Hughes took a tripping penalty at 7:36 after giving away the puck, and at 11:27 Virtanen took a double-minor for high-sticking Ottawa rookie Tim Stützle.

Vancouver's best penalty killer was Holtby, who made several strong saves. But his biggest one came at 15:51 when Alex Formenton was awarded a penalty shot when he was slashed on the shoulder by Tyler Myers after an up-ice giveaway by Nils Hoglander.

Holtby stopped Formenton's deke on the initial breakaway, then rejected the Senator's penalty shot with a blocker save.

The Canucks could have extended their lead during a two-minute 5-on-3 power play that began at 8:11 of the third period, but Hughes, Boeser and J.T. Miller were fixated on trying to set up a one-timer for Miller, and Hogberg had to make only one actual save.

Less than three minutes after the dismal two-man advantage, Ottawa tied it 2-2 at 11:52 when Evgenii Dadonov's knuckling shot from the left-wing boards handcuffed Holtby.

But Pearson saved the Canucks by scoring with a wrist shot on a 3-on-2 at 13:45, before Miller scuffed a shot into an empty net from Tyler Motte's feed.

The last Canuck regular to return from COVID, Motte's 16:59 of ice time included 7:15 of penalty killing as Ottawa's power play finished 0-for-6.

"We did a lot of good things tonight," Green said. "Our game was solid in a lot of areas. I just thought we almost shot ourselves in the foot a little bit tonight. We have to play a little bit smarter at certain times. We can't take that many penalties. And then we kill off a penalty and we turn over a puck (Hoglander's giveaway that led to Formenton's breakaway) that you just can't do. That's a little bit of youth sometimes in our group. Not only do you get the penalty shot save (from Holtby), but you get the save on the breakaway."

The teams travel Sunday to Ottawa for games Monday and Wednesday, the start of a stretch that will see the Canucks play their final 15 games over 22 days. It will be good to have two goalies.

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Sportsnet.ca / Quick Shifts: Bad blood brewing between Maple Leafs and Jets

Luke Fox@lukefoxjukebox

April 24, 2021, 8:48 AM

A quick mix of the things we gleaned from the week of hockey, serious and less so, and rolling four lines deep. Peace and Humptiness forever.

1. For those of us who have watched the Toronto Maple Leafs turn the other cheek for half a decade, for those of us who looked at the NHL's most penalized and hardest-hitting teams and routinely see the Leafs way down among the league's gentle giants (they currently rank 27th in PIM per game), the notion of these Leafs as a dirty team is almost laughable.

If anything, the swirling criticism around this fleet and high-scoring bunch is that they haven't been dirty enough. Gritty enough. Mean enough.

They've openly pined for a killer instinct. Leafs' scrums almost always involve logo'd microphones and TV cameras and cliches.

So, it was quite the ear-opener to hear Winnipeg Jets coach Paul Maurice respond to the question: Are the Maple Leafs dirty?

"I don't think so. I don't feel that," Maurice responded Friday. Then the coach's tongue glided into his cheek.

"The league has said that they're not, so we will abide by the league's rulings. But they are a poorer team, right? They've had some fines. Probably they'll be looking at some part-time jobs now. That's going to hurt."

The sound you hear is me popping corn in preparation for Saturday night, the ninth of 10 Leafs-Jets matches and a possible precursor to the 2021 Canadian division final.

More Maurice: "Guys get banged up. We'll bang their guys up; they'll bang our guys up. The game doesn't turn on that, where they're not running us out of our building. The league can handle that stuff. We would never get involved in circling a name."

Within a week, Zach Hyman was fined for his retaliatory two-handed slash to Jets defenceman Neal Pionk and icon Joe Thornton got dinged for a high hit on Mathieu Perreault. Cushion change for multimillionaires, but gold for fan bases starved for a sense of animosity as Canada's teams play out the string.

"The fact we're playing nine times, or 10 times, that will add to it, for sure," Perreault said Friday, acknowledging the growing bitterness. "They're the No. 1 team in our division right now, and we're pushing to try to catch them. So that's kind of where that's going to get created, for sure."

The most harmful blow went unpunished, however.

Alex Galchenyuk took out shutdown centre Adam Lowry Thursday for an indefinite amount of time, and Lowry's absence greatly alters line matchups.

"If you circle a guy's name on the board, you get sued," Maurice said postgame, when asked about the possibility for retaliation.

New Jet Pierre-Luc Dubois — an enemy of Leafs Nation since he put Jake Muzzin on a stretcher during the 2020 Columbus series — was in the thick of it Thursday, making contact with former Jackets mate Nick Foligno and getting up in goalie Jack Campbell's kitchen.

"On the ice, you don't really have friends. Everybody just becomes another player on another team, whether it's him or anybody else," Dubois said of his former captain. "They're a talented team, but they

compete hard. They play physical when they have to. You mentioned a few plays, and I remember a few other plays in my head.

"We also have that physical game. It's a card that you can play, and I've always said, in the playoffs, the teams that win are the teams that don't just have one identity. They can play multiple kinds of games."

The Maple Leafs used to have just one identity, and on Friday coach Sheldon Keefe urged for even more physicality from his group. Not post-whistle nonsense but in puck battles and earning and defending space.

In what Keefe described as Wayne Simmonds' best game in a long time, the rugged winger wasted no time going after Dubois once he felt Jack Campbell was in danger. Call it two minutes well served — and message for the next crease crasher.

"I'm sick of guys jumping on our goalie and being allowed to spear our goalie, and the refs not calling it," Simmonds said Friday, game face still attached.

"Every time we've played them, they've tried to come and run us out of the building to start games. So, we come back and we're physical and now we're a dirty team? I don't buy that. I just think we're defending ourselves."

About time.

2. Adam Brooks has played all of four games and never skated more than 9:01 in any one of them. He starts most of his shifts in the D-zone and has fired all of three shots on net.

Yet the taxi-squad call-up has scored twice and impressed his coach so much that Keefe spoke glowingly about the Winnipeg native before the game Thursday, after the game Thursday and again after Friday's practice.

Keefe got to thinking about winning the 2018 Calder Cup with the Marlies and how he had full confidence rolling out an AHL fourth line centred by Brooks, with Trevor Moore (now an L.A. King) and Mason Marchment (now a Florida Panther) on the wings. How they're all making a name for themselves in the NHL through hard work and persistence.

Keefe called Thursday's effort Brooks' best NHL game yet.

"Brooks's a very smart player, very reliable. Can play many positions, can contribute on both penalty kill and on the power play. Very versatile guy. He's very useful and while we're dealing with some injuries and stuff here right now, we like having him in and he's played well," Keefe said.

"He's skating well. When he has the puck, he makes a play, yet he's responsible defensively. He's been competitive. I've liked a lot of things about his game, and I think his teammates are recognizing that as well. It's been nice to have him, and we want to give them a little bit more of an opportunity here."

Brooks spoke thoughtfully Friday about what it means to play pivot between Joe Thornton and Jason Spezza, a kid bookended by 41 years of NHL experience.

The biggest benefit, more than Spezza's faceoff tips or Thornton's puck protection, Brooks says is their attitude. They're constantly talking — on the bench, on the ice, in the room — and have gone out of their way to lessen what should be a high-stress situation.

Brooks is fighting to stick in the big leagues.

Jeff Marek and Elliotte Friedman talk to a lot of people around the hockey world, and then they tell listeners all about what they've heard and what they think about it.

3. New guy Sam Bennett skated 21:12 in Florida's 4-2 loss to Carolina Thursday. Do you know the last NHL game Bennett logged that much ice?

Trick question. In his six-and-a-half seasons in Calgary, Bennett was never used so much.



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A minus player his whole career, the deadline pickup has produced three goals, five points and 19 penalty minutes through just four games as a Panther. He's a plus-6.

Yes, winger Jonathan Huberdeau has something to do with that, but playoff-bound Bennett is making quite the statement here. He's playing 2C, dropping the gloves, and endearing himself to fans.

"We got a really good team here," Bennett said.

4. David Pastrnak came clean on the impetus for this out-of-left-field Tom Wilson tweet he fired off early in the 2020 playoffs:

It stemmed from an experience at Toronto's Hotel X, the players' most coveted bubble headquarters and the stomping grounds for the Metropolitan Division. With a bye into the final 16 and only a few warm-up games to play, members of the Boston Bruins and Washington Capitals intermingled during downtime.

A wager was made ahead of the Caps-Bruins round-robin tilt.

"I obviously lost a bet, which I was really confident going into. The bet was, if I lose, I'm going to make this tweet. And if I win," Pastrnak revealed on Spittin' Chiclets this week, "we would drop gloves, I would throw a punch and knock the s--- out of Tommy."

A clown tweet versus a beatdown? Wilson had much more on the line and was determined to win the contest.

"I'm not going to get into what the bet was, but he beat me by a mile," Pastrnak smiled. (Later, on the topic of beer-chugging, Pasta said of Wilson: "He's pretty good.")

The Bruins sniper says his online proclamation still gets mentioned to this day whenever Wilson scores a goal.

5. Time and again, Kendall Coyne Schofield steps up and delivers. What a fierce and fearless ambassador for women's hockey.

6. Sunbelt attendance is on the rise.

Arizona upped its seating to 7,900 per home date, from 25 to roughly 50 per cent of Gila River Arena's capacity. And with the Coyotes clinging to fourth seed in the West, one wonders if the possibility of playoff gate revenue partially informed the club's decision to stand pat at the trade deadline and not rent useful players on expiring deals.

Following suit, the Florida Panthers are raising seating capacity at the BB&T Center from 25 to 47 per cent for Round 1 of the playoffs. That figure could reportedly reach as high as 100 per cent in the later rounds if Florida advances.

(chart via hockeydb.com)

7. Let's pile on the Nick Foligno fanfare, shall we?

The Maple Leafs rank 28th overall in hits per 60 minutes (17.21). Individually, Wayne Simmonds leads all Leafs regulars in the category (8.97).

In Foligno's debut, he threw a game-high three bodychecks for a rate of 11.11 per 60 on the night. He's thrown 112 hits on the year for a rate of 8.63 per 60.

A couple comparables: Noted checkers Tom Wilson (8.42) and Kyle Clifford (8.15) are throwing their bodies around with less frequency than Foligno.

Increased physicality should serve the Leafs well come May, and it doesn't come at the expense of their identity as a skill-first squad.

"It was the best move of the whole trade deadline," Bruce Boudreau asserted on Sportsnet 590 The Fan.

8. Seeing the impact that Netflix's hit docuseries, F1: Drive to Survive, has had on the sport's popularity has to embolden the NHL's test drive

with Amazon Prime Video with the forthcoming All or Nothing: Toronto Maple Leafs.

Red Bull Racing's team principal Christian Horner was quoted saying, "My 14-year-old daughter and her friends didn't have much interest in F1 before the Netflix series.... Now they know who all the drivers are."

According to Huddle Up, F1 is the fastest-growing sports league across YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Chinese social media platforms. U.S. viewership of F1 races has climbed to its highest level since 1995.

The Premier League access drew Leafs GM Kyle Dubas into Amazon's All or Nothing. He watched the Manchester City series with a special interest.

"I have friends who were with the Philadelphia Eagles as they went through it, so I had a bit of an idea. Steve Mayer from the NHL approached us last year about it and we declined to do it, and then came back again after the summer about wanting to do it," Dubas said.

"The way that we view it, it's us being a good partner in the league to get Amazon involved. Then individually, as a team, I think the media and the fans, it's a good opportunity to see the way that things actually operate behind the scenes here day-to-day and a good look into what we're really truly about — more than just the three hours that you see us at game time."

One can only hope unfiltered access into the personalities and behind-the-curtain drama can have a similar effect on hockey as it has with F1. Drive to Survive wins because it doesn't feel like a sanitized infomercial.

9. The Arizona Coyotes added nine-year-old superfan Leighton Accardo to their Ring of Honor last Saturday.

Leighton had been an inspiration to the players since 2019 and had even delivered a pre-game pep talk when serving as Arizona's Hockey Fights Cancer ambassador. She lost her battle with cancer on Nov. 24.

The Coyotes trailed the Blues 2-0 after the first period when captain Oliver Ekman-Larsson stepped into his intermission interview and delivered a guarantee.

"She means a lot to this organization and to the guys in that room," Ekman-Larsson said. "We're going to turn this around and get a big win for her and her family."

They did.

"I was pretty emotional," Coyotes goalie Darcy Kuemper said after the 3-2 comeback. "I was fighting back tears. Obviously, Leighton inspired us in so many ways and continues to do so. It was hard to watch [the ceremony] emotionally, but [we were] very, very happy just to have the chance to celebrate her life and be able to go play."

"She inspired us in so many ways. We didn't really have to talk about it because everybody knew who we were playing for."

10. After new Maple Leaf David Rittich lost his third straight Tuesday and surrendered a couple squeakers, Keefe was as critical of a single culprit as I can recall in his tenure.

"Yeah, I'm concerned about our goaltending. Obviously, we've got to get that sorted out. But I'm not concerned about our team," Keefe said.

"Sometimes the puck goes in the net more than it should. And, for anyone that's ever played, it's a difficult thing to overcome when you're trying to get going and you're trying get moving."

Yikes.

(Anyone else endure a Mike Babcock-Jhonas Enroth flashback during that post-game presser?)

Typically, Keefe uses kid gloves when critiquing the position, careful not to toss extra pressure on Frederik Andersen, Jack Campbell or Michael Hutchinson.



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The Maple Leafs have one back-to-back remaining on their schedule, Wednesday at Montreal and Thursday hosting Vancouver.

Will Andersen, now practising and Rollerblading, be ready in time for that set? Or does Rittich get a fourth and final regular-season start to try and earn some measure of trust?

Remaining Time -1:14

Rittich on loss to Canucks: 'I'm taking full responsibility for the game'

In the wake of Rittich's rough night, Nick Kypreos reported on his Real Kyper at Noon show that the former Flame was not Toronto's first choice as rental insurance. Rittich cost the Leafs a third-round pick.

Kypreos said a source informed him that Devan Dubnyk was Dubas's first choice, but that Dubnyk declined a move to Ontario due to family reasons.

Dubnyk, 34, was dealt from San Jose to Colorado for a fifth-round pick plus defenceman Greg Pateryn.

He has promptly gone 2-0-0 with the Avalanche.

11. As much fun as Jack Campbell had building his record-setting 11-game win streak, the pressure to keep it going and live up to an impossible standard mounted.

So, when pucks started squeaking through and three losses followed, the goalie pounded himself with blame and publicly broadcasted that he was "embarrassed" by his effort.

Campbell has never been gifted with an opportunity to seize a No. 1 job in the NHL like this one. Heck, he's never appeared in a playoff game beyond the AHL. This is as high stakes as it's ever been for the 29-year-old.

But living and dying by each mistake is not the mental recipe for stable post-season goaltending run.

"Personally, I was putting a little too much pressure on myself to be a little too perfect and cute out there," Campbell said after delivering in the critical moments of Thursday's hairy 4-3 win in Winnipeg. "Over the last couple of weeks, I've learned being a little bit too hard on myself isn't necessarily always the best thing. Just kind of let it go."

Easier said than done, of course.

"He holds himself to such a high standard," Auston Matthews said. "But we tell him, 'We win as a team and we lose as a team.'"

The self-critical Campbell has leaned on a network of friends and family, inside and outside the Leafs organization, to return to the proper headspace.

"Ultimately, everybody's point was the same: Just have some fun and don't be too hard on yourself. It's a good lesson, something I'll try my best not to go through again. But we're all human."

Two things are true. Campbell's record is a sparkling 12-2-1 in 2021. He has also allowed three or more goals in five consecutive starts.

"I know I've got better for this team, this city," he vowed after snuffing his skid.

Whomever Toronto starts in Game 1 of the post-season will trigger some fierce debate.

12. Congratulations to Patrick Marleau.

While fully acknowledging that Marleau has never been a top-five player in any of his 23(!) seasons — the highest he finished in Hart voting was ninth, during his 83-point 2009-10 campaign — the man who has participated in the most NHL games deserves swift entry into the Hockey Hall of Fame.

That accomplishment alone — to say nothing of his ironman streaks, 195 playoff appearances and four gold medals (2010 and 2014 Olympics, 2003 worlds, 2004 World Cup) — gets him in the door.

Perhaps this NSFW video tribute, executed by Marleau's pals in Toronto, trumps a HHoF ring.

"That was probably Joe's doing," Marleau told NHL Network. "The first time I saw it, I couldn't hear what Mitchy was saying because everyone was laughing so hard in the dressing room. I wouldn't expect anything else from those guys. That was pretty special that they sent it to me. And now it's gone viral."

"Being his roommate for a number of years, I had a front-row seat to that for a while."

Marleau, of course, takes his craft as seriously as a cold tub. But Thornton lights up when discussing his friend's sense of humour and knack for dropping quotes from comedy flicks.

"His laugh is just so fun," Thornton says. "And when he's excited, he's like a little kid."

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TSN.CA / Charismatic and confident, Foligno makes immediate impact on Leafs

By Mark Masters

The Maple Leafs held an optional skate at Bell MTS Place on Saturday.

For a guy who only joined the Leafs on Wednesday night, Nick Foligno has made a big impression.

"He's just a competitor and fits in perfectly already," said goalie Jack Campbell. "It feels like he's been in the room for a while."

Foligno gave a speech to his new teammates before Thursday's game expressing how excited he was to wear the Maple Leaf.

"It really helps shorten that transition period when you've got a guy with that level of character and confidence, personality," observed coach Sheldon Keefe. "All those things were really evident even in our meal room when we got here to Winnipeg. Just seeing how comfortable he was right away is excellent."

The 33-year-old former Blue Jackets captain is comfortable in his own skin. And despite being fresh out of quarantine, Foligno made an impact on Thursday's game by throwing his weight around and helping the Leafs defend a lead in the third period.

"You can just see the presence he brings," noted centre John Tavares. "His experience and value in key situations...just got a good sense of himself and his game and has [fit in] tremendously even just a couple days in and feeling himself out in the locker room."

Charismatic Foligno makes instant impact

Sheldon Keefe and the Maple Leafs have been very impressed with how Nick Foligno has integrated with their team and his play on the ice. T.J. Brodie admits he's one of those guys you love to have on your team but hate to play against.

Foligno is only the latest veteran addition made by the Leafs. Joe Thornton, Wayne Simmonds and Zach Bogosian were signed in the off-season.



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"It probably didn't get talked about enough last season just how young our team was," Keefe pointed out. "That puts even more onus on players like John, but giving him more help this season is great."

Creating a team of leaders – Thornton wore the 'C' in San Jose while Bogosian is fresh off a Stanley Cup win with Tampa Bay – has helped insulate Tavares, who is more reserved and often leads by example.

"It's been tremendous," said Tavares. "The more the better."

Thornton, Simmonds and Bogosian have all been lauded for using their voices on the bench and in the room. Former Senators captain Jason Spezza is also helping in that regard.

"When you add guys that have been captains and have seen a lot and been through a lot and are really talented players and know how difficult it is to win, it's a great opportunity for me to learn," said Tavares, "and also rely on these guys and their leadership abilities and the way they can inspire the group and help me."

It seems to have taken some pressure off Tavares. Early in the season, the 30-year-old struggled to produce offence consistently in five-on-five play. Keefe heaped praise on Tavares for his defensive improvements, which helped set the tone for a team that was looking to do a better job overall in that regard.

Tavares is plus-11 this year after finishing minus-seven last season. And now the offence is starting to come. Tavares has 15 points in the last 10 games, including a nice assist on a Simmonds goal Thursday night.

"He makes some incredible plays out there," said defenceman T.J. Brodie, another veteran addition to the Leafs this season. "He's so skilled and his vision, it's a treat to watch."

Tavares insists he and linemate William Nylander are not doing anything differently these days as the points start flowing.

"We're just continuing to play and stick with it," he said. "Obviously, we've had some stretches [where] we haven't got the results, but our commitment away from the puck [has remained]."

Surging Tavares benefits from Leafs' vets

From Joe Thornton and Wayne Simmonds in the offseason to Nick Foligno at the trade deadline, John Tavares admits the addition of these valued veterans has really brought their room together. Sheldon Keefe echo's how young their team was last year and the impact the veterans have made this season.

Campbell will look to stay perfect in Winnipeg tonight as he starts again for the Leafs. He is 3-0-0 with a .948 save percentage in the Manitoba capital this season.

Thursday's performance was important as it snapped a personal three-game winless skid for Campbell, who admitted afterwards he's learning to not be so hard on himself. Campbell is still adjusting to the heavier workload. During his time with the Kings, the 29-year-old always knew Jonathan Quick was the No. 1 guy.

"If you saw this guy after practice, it looked like he just got back from a war," recalled Jets defenceman Derek Forbort, who played with Campbell in Los Angeles. "He's just nuts like that. He's just a great team guy and he'll stay in and take a million shots after practice. That's just kind of the weird goalie in him."

But now the games are coming fast and furious for Campbell, who has less practice time and less time in general to regroup between games.

The Leafs will look to make his life a bit easier tonight after a couple defensive breakdowns contributed to goals on Thursday.

"Being cleaner on the break outs," said Brodie of the top priority in tonight's rematch. "That will help us a lot. We played so well in the other areas. I think if we do that, that will give us a chance to play in the offensive zone more."

Leafs Ice Chips: Better break outs key as Campbell starts again

Jack Campbell will look to string back-to-back wins together after losing three straight when the Maple Leafs take on the Jets again. Mark Masters has more on the Maple Leafs goaltending and why the defence is focused on better break outs tonight.

Adam Brooks will play in a third straight game for the Leafs tonight.

"He has been incredible," Keefe gushed. "He has played well in every game that he has played in the NHL going back to last season. I thought [Thursday] was his best. He made plays on offence when he had the puck. He skated with confidence. He competed defensively. He was in really good spots. I trusted him and his line to really play against anybody because of how they were playing. Against a team like Winnipeg, to have that faith is significant."

Keefe applauded the 24-year-old centre, who played a critical role in the Marlies' Calder Cup win in 2018, for staying patient. Tonight will be his fifth game with the Leafs this season and 12th overall in the NHL.

Brooks believes he's benefited from playing on a line with Thornton and Spezza.

"I'm confident in my smarts and my ability to read the game and just be in the right position," the Winnipeg native said. "It's real easy to play with Spezz and Joe. I know if I go out there and work and try to be on the right side of pucks things are going to go well for our line."

"Playing with those guys, I think they give you a lot of confidence," Keefe agreed. "Both Thornton and Spezza talk constantly — on the ice, on the bench, in the dressing room. That helps young players with their confidence. But we can't take anything away from Adam here with his own development and his own maturity."

Brooks has scored two goals in four games this season.

Leafs Ice Chips: Better break outs key as Campbell starts again

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Ilya Mikheyev is listed as a game-time decision tonight. The winger has missed the last two games with an undisclosed injury.

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USA TODAY / Tampa Bay Lightning's Stanley Cup rings: 557 diamonds and 81 blue sapphires

Mike Brehm

USA TODAY

The Tampa Bay Lightning won their second Stanley Cup in a bubble environment last fall in Canada and delayed their banner ceremony until fans could return to Amalie Arena.

Friday night, the team received the final commemoration of its championship run with the presentation of its Stanley Cup rings.

The rings, made by Josten, feature approximately 557 diamonds and 81 blue sapphires. There are 25 carats total of gemstones.

Among the details:



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The Lightning logo consists of diamonds and sapphires and an image of the Stanley Cup is made up of diamonds. There are an additional 27 sapphires on the top of the ring to represent the number of the years the franchise had been in existence before last year's win.

The Cup and logo lift up to reveal the word Stockholm, where the Lightning swept the Buffalo Sabres in the NHL Global Series during the regular season.

Among the diamonds is a black one to represent a hockey puck.

Inside the ring is the number 216:14: That's the record amount of overtime that the Lightning played in the playoffs, including a five-overtime victory against the Columbus Blue Jackets in Game 1 of the first round.

Also inside are the results of four playoff series against the Blue Jackets, Boston Bruins, New York Islanders and Dallas Stars.

The ring also features the words Distant Thunder, the Lightning's motto for the 2020 playoffs, and "Gravy Train," their locker room celebration song.

The Lightning, who also won the Stanley Cup in 2004, were in third place in the Central Division on Saturday morning.

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