



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 10, 2021

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Hurricanes have to endure one last Nashville rerun before the real season begins

By Luke DeCock

It isn't often there's a final game between opponents whose futures are entirely assured that's still overloaded with ominous postseason portents.

There's nothing on the line Monday night when the Carolina Hurricanes close out the season at the Nashville Predators other than pride, except pride happens to be a particularly prized commodity considering they'll go from playing for no actual stakes this game to the highest of stakes next weekend.

The Predators sent a message with their first win of the season against the Hurricanes on Saturday and the Hurricanes have a chance to send one back Monday before they resume hostilities in Raleigh in the first round of the playoffs, a curious state of affairs to say the least but certainly a more interesting conclusion to the season than the typical dead rubber.

So they'll go from Nashville to Raleigh and eventually back to Nashville, at some point in the not-too-distant future, since Vancouver's COVID crisis unavoidably delayed the conclusion of the Canadian division and the NHL has yet to figure out how much of a head start, if any, the other three divisions will get.

Under normal circumstances, this series would probably start Wednesday or Thursday, and while you would figure NBC would prefer the inventory, the network's ads say the playoffs start Saturday even though the NHL hasn't said anything, so both teams will likely have until Saturday or Sunday to stew over the results of this two-game series whether they like it or not.

This quirk of the schedule ensures at least one theme endures from the past two Hurricanes' playoff openers: unfinished business.

The Hurricanes had gone 0-4-0 against the New York Rangers last season before sweeping them in the

preliminary round last August; two years ago, the Hurricanes had gone 0-3-1 against the Washington Capitals before booting the defending champs on Brock McGinn's overtime winner in Game 7.

There was plenty to prove in those series, and it was amply proven, but the Hurricanes had been a comfortable 6-0-0 against the Predators before Saturday's Nashville win. That may well have been a welcome wakeup call for the Hurricanes, regardless of what happens tonight. Either way, they have some reason to be surly with Nashville that wasn't there a few days ago. Maybe more after Monday night.

There's no question, though, this was the playoff opponent the Hurricanes would have chosen if they had the option to pick.

The Predators beat out the Dallas Stars for the final playoff spot in the Central Division, and the Stars are only eight months removed from the Stanley Cup finals. By winning the division — the Hurricanes' first division title of any kind since 2006 — they avoided Tampa Bay and Florida in the first round, and will hope those two grind each other to very dull nubs in the eventuality the Hurricanes advance.

There probably isn't anything a Hurricanes win Monday would do that winning the first six meetings of the season with Nashville didn't already, and with so much time off ahead of the next one there's probably not a lot of momentum to be gained. Still, there's something to be said for showing a lack of mercy in this game that leaves the Predators asking uncomfortable questions of themselves for a few days.

Whether the Hurricanes decide to put their foot down or just try to get through it with their minds on the harder work ahead, it'll be easy to draw too many conclusions from this game, but unavoidable all the same. That's fine. The playoffs are close enough. The next time we see these teams, it'll be for real.



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With or without Presidents' Trophy, Hurricanes ready to crank it up in playoffs

By Chip Alexander

A regular season unlike any other ends Monday for the Carolina Hurricane with a game against the Nashville Predators.

The most pressing concern for the Canes is the status of defenseman Jaccob Slavin, who left Saturday's game against the Predators with a lower-body injury and did not return.

Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said after the game that he hoped the injury was not serious. He said Slavin "tweaked" something and also said it was "a bit alarming," a choice of words that was a bit alarming.

The Canes did not practice Sunday and Slavin could be held out of Monday's game. With the Stanley Cup playoffs not beginning until later in the week, Slavin also could have extra recovery time, if needed.

As Central Division champions, the Canes (36-11-8) will open the playoffs against the Predators (30-23-2), who claimed the No. 4 seed with their 3-1 victory on Saturday. The Canes also have will home-ice advantage.

The Canes, with 80 points, were tied with the Vegas Golden Knights for most points in the NHL through Saturday's games. The Golden Knights, who beat St. Louis 4-1 on Saturday, have two remaining games they vie for the NHL's Presidents' Trophy, which would ensure home-ice advantage throughout the playoffs.

Not that it's always a decisive advantage. None of the past seven winners of the Presidents' Trophy has won a Stanley Cup and only one reached the conference finals. The last team to secure the Presidents' Trophy and then win the Cup was the Chicago Blackhawks in 2012-13.

When the Canes won the Stanley Cup in 2005-06, the Detroit Red Wings claimed the Presidents' Trophy. The Canes won the Southeast Division, their last divisional title before this season, and were the No. 2 seeds in the Eastern Conference.

Then again, the Canes are 20-3-5 at PNC Arena this season, so playing at home is a factor. As division champions they're assured of the home-ice edge in at least the first two rounds of the playoffs, should they advance.

It won't be a full house at PNC Arena, with the parking lots full of tailgaters before the playoff games and loud once in the building as it was in 2019. But it could be loud enough, with the hope of possibly increasing allowed seating capacity — 7,000 would be nice in the opening round — for the playoff games.

"Of course you always want to play at home," Canes forward Jesper Fast said Saturday. "We had a really good record at home, so of course that's an advantage for us. It's a good thing."

The check list for Monday's game with the Predators should be a short one: play hard, stay healthy, win a game, go home.

"Get through the next game and then crank it up," Brind'Amour said Saturday.

Goalie Petr Mrazek could be the starter Monday and then another conversation can be cranked up: Who's the Canes' No. 1 goalie going into the playoffs?

Carolina Hurricanes vs Nashville Predators

When: Monday, 8 p.m.

Where: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville.

TV: BSSO (Bally)



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The Athletic

DGB weekend rankings: Predators clinch, Connor McDavid shines, John Tortorella exits and James Dolan Dolans

By Sean McIndoe

We're 20 weekends into the season, and here's where we're at. The regular season is over for several teams, with the Penguins, Rangers, Sabres, Coyotes, Wings, Ducks and Blue Jackets all crossing the finish line of Saturday. The Stars, Blackhawks, Devils, Flyers, Hurricanes, Predators, Islanders, Lightning and Panthers will all join them tonight. We're a couple of days away from the vast majority of the league being done. But the season still has well over a week to go, because the Canucks' schedule drags until next Wednesday. But the playoffs will start before that, except in the North Division, we think, but maybe not, and the league hasn't actually told us when the postseason will start yet, although their TV partner maybe did.

Makes sense? Sure it does.

Look, it's been a weird season and we all knew what we were signing up for. Let's focus on the positive, as the playoff picture comes into focus. The big news is that the last Central spot is settled, with Nashville taking care of business over the weekend to lock down a berth that seemed unlikely even a few weeks ago. They'll face the Hurricanes in Round 1.

We know that we're getting that Battle of Florida matchup that we were all hoping for, and the two teams served up a preview on Saturday that has some genuine nastiness on the way to a 5-1 Panthers win. They'll meet again tonight in both teams' season finales, meaning we could get nine straight Panthers/Lightning games by the time this is done.

In the East, we know it's Penguins first and Capitals second, meaning we'll have to wait for Round 2 to get the next chapter of Crosby vs. Ovechkin. We're not sure who'll play who yet, as the Bruins and Islanders have to sort out who'll finish third. The West still has the top three seeds up for grabs and will be the last division to finish its schedule.

In the North, the Leafs are locked in at No. 1 but we don't know for sure that they'll get the dream matchup with the Habs, although it's looking a little more likely thanks to Montreal dropping three straight in regulation to close the week. The Flames beat the Senators last night to stay in the race, and Vancouver is still mathematically alive, so technically the Canadiens haven't clinched. But they're a point away, so this one's all but done.

And finally, about the dramatic Connor McDavid chase for 100 points ... yeah, never mind. He's apparently not big into suspense, hitting the mark on Saturday with several games to spare.

Good luck to whichever contenders have to try to stop that guy in the playoffs. Oh hey, speaking of which ...

Road to the Cup

The five teams with the best chances of becoming the first team in history to win a Stanley Cup in July.

If you missed it, be sure to check out this piece on linesman Pierre Racicot, who worked his final game on Saturday, and his friendship with Stephane Provost.

5. Tampa Bay Lightning (36-16-3, +39 true goals differential*) – They won't finish first, they just got thumped by their first-round opponent and the injuries are piling up with no guarantee that everyone will be ready for the playoff opener. As unthinkable as it would have been even a few weeks ago, I was very tempted to drop the Lightning out of the top five. You could make a case for a few teams as better choices in this slot, especially a surging Penguins team that's likely to draw the slumping Islanders. The Panthers and Wild are both sporting better records than Tampa Bay too.

In the end, I just didn't have the nerve. This is the defending champs we're talking about, and the returns of Nikita Kucherov and Steven Stamkos are looming. But that path out of the Central is brutal, and just about every warning light on the dashboard is blinking right now.

4. Toronto Maple Leafs (35-13-6, +41) – They're rolling at the right time, and none of the potential first-round matchups look remotely scary right now. That may not matter, especially if they get the Habs and all the extra hype and pressure that will bring, but on paper, the Leafs have the easiest path to the final four of any team in the league, and it may not be close. The big focus this week is going to be on getting and staying healthy.

3. Carolina Hurricanes (36-10-8, +48) – The Hurricanes served up the weirdest story of the weekend when this tweet celebrating Rod Brind'Amour's three-year anniversary as coach was widely mistaken for an extension announcement. It wasn't, but that's apparently imminent, which will come as good news to Carolina fans who are sick of this being brought up.

The more important news could be Jaccob Slavin's injury. The defenseman left Saturday night's loss to the Predators with a lower-body injury, and at this point, we don't know how serious it might be. The Hurricanes are chasing a Presidents' Trophy but don't otherwise have much to play for, so here's hoping this was a precaution and nothing more as we head into a first-round where they'll be heavy favorites but facing a red-hot goalie.

2. Colorado Avalanche (36-13-4, +54) – The West is a few games behind the other American divisions, so we don't have quite as much clarity on who'll face who. That's good news for the Avs because it means they've still got a chance to steal first place and avoid the Wild. They'll need to beat



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Vegas tonight in what's probably the last really important game of the regular season.

1. Vegas Golden Knights (39-13-2, +63) – A loss to the Avs tonight isn't disastrous, as they'd still have a two-point lead and a gimme against the Sharks. But while Colorado wants to avoid Minnesota, it feels like Vegas has to. It wouldn't quite be right to claim the Wild have the Knights' number — Vegas won three of eight in the season series — but we can at least say that every meeting looked like a fair fight. If you're the Golden Knights, you do not want to have to endure seven games of that in the first round, because even if you win it's going to take something out of you.

*Goals differential without counting shootout decisions like the NHL does for some reason.

Not ranked: New York Rangers – The Rangers beat the Bruins on Saturday. Other than that, pretty quiet week.

So yeah, things got a bit hairy in New York since the last rankings. On Monday night, when everyone was melting down over the Tom Wilson thing, imagine being told that it would only be like the fourth craziest Rangers news of the week. That's pretty much where we landed, thanks to that dramatic (and expensive) team statement calling for George Parros to be fired, Wednesday's fight-filled rematch with the Caps, and oh yeah, James Dolan firing his president and GM because the rebuild wasn't going fast enough.

The fights and the fines will be memorable but ultimately won't matter much. Dolan's front office shuffle will, and it immediately makes the Rangers one of the most fascinating teams in the league heading into the offseason. Jeff Gorton had been doing a good job according to just about everyone except his owner, and John Davidson had only been on the job for just under two years. Chris Drury has paid his dues to get here — this isn't some former star player walking off the golf course and into a job they aren't qualified for — but these are tough circumstances for a rookie GM.

So now what? We're not sure, but if you're a Rangers fan, it's hard not to imagine the nightmare scenario: That Dolan has activated Knicks Mode. His reputation in NBA circles is less than great, largely because he can't seem to keep his hands off his team, but he's largely avoided that in the NHL. On the hockey side, Dolan's approach has mainly been to hire smart people and let them run the show, and that's what you want. Now we've got a 3-year-old rebuild we thought was going well, but that Dolan apparently wants to fast forward.

Drury will have to figure out how to make it happen, and find out just how much Dolan wants to be involved. If this is a case of the owner saying "Hey, let's speed this up a little" and then leaving his GM alone to do the work, that's one thing. If Dolan has decided that he needs to be more hands-on, that's another. Either way, a team with lots of money to spend, some decent cap space, and a bunch of good young players and prospects just got told to get better quickly.

Add it all up, and that seems like a recipe for a big move, and yeah, we're all thinking Jack Eichel. John isn't convinced he'll be moved, and he may be right, but you have to figure Drury will be big-game hunting one way or another.

It's going to be a wild offseason in New York. And as of Saturday night, that offseason is already here.

The bottom five

The five teams that are headed towards the best lottery odds and trying to figure out if we should call this an Owen Power Ranking.

The season-ending bottom five are always the least dramatic rankings of the year. The top five is about who'll win the Cup, meaning there's still lots of room for trying to figure out how the postseason will play out. But the bottom five is about lottery odds, meaning we're basically done. With just a few games left, it's pretty much just a case of looking at the standings. Sorry for the lack of suspense.

5. Detroit Red Wings (19-27-10, -43) – Oh, look who's back, after we made such a big deal of them leaving. Huh. Well, this is awkward.

This could be temporary, though, as the one outlier at the bottom of the standings could still mess it all up. That would be the Canucks, who still have seven games left on a schedule they're apparently going to have to play out. They're ahead of the Wings in terms of points percentage, but I don't think any of us could blame them if they flatlined down the stretch. In theory, the Canucks could still finish as low as third last, and bumping the Wings out of the bottom five seems like a solid bet.

4. Columbus Blue Jackets (18-26-12, -50) – They didn't stretch out the inevitable, with the news breaking moments after their season-ending win that John Tortorella will not return. It sounds like it was his decision as much as anyone's, and the timing is right, so doing this quickly and without any drama is the right approach for all involved. We'll see him again somewhere. The same can be said of Rick Tocchet, who we found out will be parting ways with the Coyotes. Don't be surprised if we hear about another coaching change or two as teams wrap up their seasons in the days to come.

Also, I thought this was cool.

3. New Jersey Devils (19-29-7, -42) – Several readers have asked about the Gold Plan standings, i.e. what the race for the first overall pick would look like if the NHL used a vastly superior system that incentivized winning instead of tanking. We'll do that, but with two important caveats. First, as always, half the appeal of the Gold Plan is that it would change how bad teams approached the final weeks, so we can't necessarily play "what if?" with any certainty. And this year, the short season meant more teams than usual didn't get much runway at all, so the drama isn't quite the same. All that said, here's what the race for the top five would look like:

1. Devils: 5-5-1, 11 points and one game left to play
2. Blue Jackets: 3-1-3, 9 points
3. Sabres: 4-8-0, 8 points
4. Senators: 3-1-0, 6 points and one game left
5. Ducks: 2-2-2, 6 points
6. Red Wings: 2-2-2, 6 points



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7. Flyers: 2-2-1, 5 points and one game left

So in this alternate universe where the NHL is fun and smart, the Devils have clinched the top pick, while the Senators and Flyers still have lots to play for in their finales. Instead, we'll play out the string with meaningless games and then wait for ping pong balls. Ah well.

2. Anaheim Ducks (17-30-9, -53) – No, it's fine, I'm good, just have a loose contact lens. Go on without me for a few.

1. Buffalo Sabres (15-34-7, -62) – A disaster of a season wrapped up with another loss, their sixth in their last eight games. The team has a lot of decisions to make heading into the summer, starting with whether they need a new coach, and the season wrap-ups to come this week won't be kind.

LeBrun: Hurricanes' Rod Brind'Amour is the front-runner for the Jack Adams, according to NHL GMs poll

By Pierre LeBrun

The Jack Adams Award as NHL coach of the year is voted on by the NHL Broadcasters' Association.

It's one of the few awards the Professional Hockey Writers Association doesn't get to vote on — the general managers vote for the Vezina Trophy — and I must say, as a longtime PHWA member, I've always been somewhat relieved that the Broadcasters' Association (play-by-play and analysts in the booth) vote on the coach of the year and not us writers.

Why? Because every year I find seven or eight coaches who have a strong case for the award, and I'm glad I'm not the one deciding to cut it down to three finalists.

I mean, as a factual matter, you could certainly start with 16 coaches every year with a shot at it, given that they guided their team to the playoffs.

But I think the voters over the years have normally looked at teams that have surprised or overachieved. Think Barry Trotz winning it in his first year on Long Island in 2018-19, or Gerard Gallant winning the Jack Adams with the expansion Golden Knights being a no-brainer in 2017-18. John Tortorella won it with the 2016-17 Blue Jackets. Mind you, Bruce Cassidy deservedly won last season despite coaching a Bruins team that was expected to contend.

But generally, it's been harder for a coach to win it when his team is expected to be among the top Cup contenders. For example, does it make any sense Joel Quenneville never won a Jack Adams Award during his Cup years in Chicago? But he did win one with the St. Louis Blues in 2000.

In any case, I expect Quenneville (Florida Panthers) and Dean Evason (Minnesota Wild) to get plenty of votes from the Broadcasters' Association this year given how surprising their respective teams have been.

But I decided to seek out my own perspective on it, polling the NHL's GMs on the Jack Adams Award this past weekend.

Thank you to the 28 GMs who texted me back their ballots, listing three names in a 1-2-3 order.

For now, let's leave the Sabres on a positive note: Rick Jeanneret freaking rocks.

Not ranked: Ottawa Senators – And there it is. After being on the verge of escaping the bottom five last week, the Senators put together a three-win week and make it official. The streak is over; after 68 straight appearances, this is our first top five without Ottawa since March 2018.

So where to next? It's hard to say, although there's a lot of optimism in the fan base, nearly half of which thinks this team will be in the playoff mix next year. That's a debate for another day; for now, let's say that the Senators made progress this year and finished strong, and their fans have paid enough dues in recent years to earn a little hope.

And yes, Quenneville and Evason were popular choices from the 28 GMs.

But neither was the winner.

Rod Brind'Amour got 17 first-place votes out of the 28 ballots cast and finished atop the poll, a true sign of respect for the work he's done not only this year with the Hurricanes contending for first overall in the NHL standings, but I suspect for how he's brought Carolina's program along since he took over three years ago.

Oh, and his contract is up after this season. An extension is in the works and the team hopes to have it done before the playoffs, but the deal isn't quite done yet. Part of the hold-up is also getting raises for the rest of his coaches, sources say.

Hopefully, it all works out, because it's hard to see Brind'Amour anywhere else than behind that Hurricanes bench.

His players clearly respond to his way of coaching.

"He's a guy that demands the work ethic every day," Hurricanes captain Jordan Staal said. "That's the start of it all. He's very detailed in what he does as a coaching staff. He expects everyone to show up and work hard. You start with that, then you got your talent to boot and you got the details down; it's kind of why he's so good at what he does."

"He's gotten the best out of every guy this season, and previous seasons since he's been the head coach," Staal added. "He does a great job at pushing buttons and making sure everyone is feeling like they're involved and ready to go."

"He's been an unbelievable coach so far and a guy you want to run through a wall for. ... Yeah, he's been a great coach."

Carolina general manager Don Waddell was effusive in praising Brind'Amour's work.

"Rod has done a great job to change the culture the last few years," Waddell said. "The players want to play for him and play hard every night."

Rival GMs clearly agree based on this year's work.



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Here's the result of our poll, three points for a first-place vote, two points for a second-place vote and one point for a third-place vote (GMs could not vote for their own coach):

Rod Brind'Amour	Carolina	17-7-1	66
Joel Quenneville	Florida	8-9-3	45
Dean Evason	Minnesota	1-5-16	29
Mike Sullivan	Pittsburgh	1-6-3	18
Peter DeBoer	Vegas	1-0-2	5
Sheldon Keefe	Toronto	0-0-2	2
Bruce Cassidy	Boston	0-1-0	2
Peter Laviolette	Washington	0-0-1	1
Jared Bednar	Colorado	0-0-1	1
Dave Tippett	Edmonton	0-0-1	1

So many good cases to make here. Quenneville and Evason have their teams where nobody predicted. Each is deserving of a serious look for the Jack Adams.

Many thought the Penguins might fade this year, but Mike Sullivan has his team right back in the thick of it placing first in the tough East Division.

Two guys I thought would get more votes: Sheldon Keefe and Dave Tippett; the Leafs and Oilers are the class of the North Division.

But again, so many strong cases every year for this award.

And Brind'Amour is an excellent choice for the Jack Adams, if indeed the voters from the Broadcasters' Association agree with the NHL GMs in this poll.

"The commitment, accountability and ownership that Rod has taken on in the transformation and rise of this team is unmistakable," former Hurricanes captain Justin Williams said. "The players are able to feed off his intensity and passion for the game and what being a Hurricane means to him. Easily approachable and honest to everyone are great qualities to have in a coach."

Added Williams, now an executive with the Hurricanes: "On top of running the number one PP unit in the league, helping our centermen be top three in the league in faceoffs and only having a fully healthy lineup a handful of times this year ... he's gotta be a shoo-in."

Shoo-in? That's up to the NHL Broadcasters' Association.



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Preview: Hurricanes at Predators

Canes end the regular season in Nashville

By Michael Smith

NASHVILLE - Before facing off in the first round of the 2021 Stanley Cup Playoffs, the Carolina Hurricanes and Nashville Predators square off in the regular-season finale.

The Match-Up

Carolina Hurricanes (36-11-8, 80 points) at Nashville Predators (30-23-2, 62 points)

Monday, May 10, 8 p.m.

Watch: Bally Sports South, Bally Sports app

Listen: 99.9 FM The Fan, Hurricanes.com/Listen, Hurricanes app

Numbers to Know

1: Alex Nedeljkovic stopped 27 of 29 shots in Nashville on Saturday, suffering his first regulation loss in nine starts. Nedeljkovic owns a 1.90 goals-against average and a .932

save percentage, which ranks first among all NHL goaltenders with at least 15 starts.

16: The Canes have killed each of their last 16 penalties, going seven games without allowing a power-play goal. The streak is tied for the seventh-longest in franchise history and is the longest for the Canes since March 2017.

About Saturday Night

The Canes saw their 13-game point streak end in a 3-1 loss to the Predators. Morgan Geekie scored his third goal of the season, but Luke Kunin's two tallies, plus Erik Haula's empty-net goal, put the Preds over the top to clinch their seventh consecutive postseason berth. The Canes and Preds will now meet the first round of the 2021 Stanley Cup Playoffs,

"We just know that we have to match their intensity or get them back on their heels a little bit," Lorentz said. "We're not just going to sit back and be satisfied with our accomplishments this far. ... Hockey is hockey, and at the NHL level you have to come ready to battle every single night."



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Calder Trophy favorites include Kaprizov, Robertson

Nedeljkovic, Shesterkin among NHL.com writers' choices for rookie of year

Who was the best rookie in the NHL during the 2020-21 regular season? That will be officially decided when the Calder Trophy, voted on by the Professional Hockey Writers Association, is revealed during the Stanley Cup Playoffs. Though the regular season isn't scheduled to end until May 19, NHL.com staff writers already have their candidates for the award.

KIRILL KAPRIZOV, MINNESOTA WILD

Kaprizov's impact on the Wild should make him a slam dunk for the Calder Trophy and put him on the periphery of the Hart Trophy conversation as NHL most valuable player. He's been the best rookie from the drop of the puck, scoring 51 points (27 goals, 24 assists) in 54 games. He scored three points (one goal, two assists) in Minnesota's season opener against the Los Angeles Kings, his NHL debut, and hasn't slowed. Kaprizov has gone without a point in back-to-back games five times and never more than three games in a row. His skill makes him a must-watch player and his production has helped the Wild become one of the top 10 teams in the NHL. When pushed by Dallas Stars forward Jason Robertson in the Calder race, Kaprizov took his game and production to another level. He has changed the narrative around the Wild. They haven't had a dynamic playmaking star that could turn nothing into something in the blink of an eye since forward Marian Gaborik joined them two decades ago. Kaprizov does that and he's made the Wild one of the best and most entertaining teams in the NHL. -- Dan Rosen, staff writer

ALEX NEDELJKOVIC, CAROLINA HURRICANES

How's this for proficient, which is the ultimate criteria for the Calder? Nedeljkovic has played 23 games (15-5-3) and earned 37 of a possible 44 points (80 percent) for the Discover Central Division champions. Andrei Vasilevskiy, the favorite for the Vezina Trophy as the best goalie in the NHL and among those being considered for the Hart Trophy, is responsible for 76 percent of the Tampa Bay Lightning's points. Among all goalies to play at least 20 games this season, none can top Nedeljkovic's .932 save percentage or his 1.90 goals-against average. The 25-year-old was brought

in during the season as injury cover but could be an option in the first round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs because his consistency has been remarkable. In 18 starts since March 1, Nedeljkovic has allowed two goals or less 14 times. He is 7-2-2 against the Florida Panthers, Lightning and Nashville Predators, the three other teams to qualify from the Central Division. -- Shawn P. Roarke, senior director of editorial

JASON ROBERTSON, DALLAS STARS

The Calder is not a one-horse race, at least not to me. There's no doubt Kaprizov has been outstanding this season, but so has Robertson, who's scored 43 points (16 goals, 27 assists) in 50 games. He's tied for second in scoring on the Stars with Roope Hintz behind Joe Pavelski (50). The 21-year-old, who the Stars selected in the second round (No. 39) of the 2017 NHL Draft, has gotten time on the power play, where he's scored six points (one goal, five assists). And the Stars have needed Robertson's production. Forward Tyler Seguin, their leading scorer last season with 50 points, returned May 3 from offseason hip surgery. Forward Alexander Radulov played in 11 games before having season-ending core muscle surgery. Robertson has done more than fill a hole on the roster. He's contributed, learned and earned Calder consideration. -- Tracey Myers, staff writer

IGOR SHESTERKIN, NEW YORK RANGERS

There's an easy answer to this question: Kaprizov. But we're not interested in easy answers around here, so let's try on another name for size. That would be Shesterkin, who took over for a Rangers legend, Henrik Lundqvist, and amidst the tremendous pressure that comes from it has been one of the best goalies in the MassMutual East Division. Shesterkin has started 31 games, going 16-14-3 with a 2.62 GAA and .916 save percentage (tied for 12th among goalies with at least 20 games played) behind a defense that isn't exactly long in the tooth. He nearly helped the Rangers clinch a playoff berth and has cemented himself in net for a team on the rise. It's not always easy to compare skaters and goalies, but though Kaprizov and Robertson have had stellar seasons, I'm going under the radar with Shesterkin. -- Amalie Benjamin, staff writer



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Jack Adams Award favorites include Brind'Amour, Sullivan, Quenneville

Cassidy, Cooper, Tippett also selected by NHL.com writers as top coach

Who was the best coach in the NHL during the 2020-21 regular season? That will be known when the Jack Adams Award, voted on by the National Hockey League Broadcasters Association, is revealed during the Stanley Cup Playoffs. Though the regular season isn't scheduled to end until May 19, NHL.com staff writers already have their candidates for the award.

ROD BRIND'AMOUR, CAROLINA HURRICANES

Carolina is tied atop the NHL standings with the Vegas Golden Knights with 80 points (36-11-8) and second to Vegas in points percentage (.741 to .727) but has no superstars. Dougie Hamilton is tied for seventh among defensemen with 42 points (10 goals, 32 assists) in 54 games, but the Hurricanes have one player in the top 40 NHL scorers, forward Sebastian Aho, who is tied for 14th with 57 points (24 goals 33 assists) in 55 games. The Hurricanes have many hallmarks of good coaching. They are tied with the New York Islanders for fourth in the NHL with an .804 points percentage (20-3-5) at home, when they have the last change and can choose favorable matchups. Their power play ranks second (26.3 percent) and their penalty kill is third (85.5 percent). Good goaltending makes coaches look good and Carolina has the best 5-on-5 save percentage in the NHL (.935). The Hurricanes also are one of the best possession teams, ranking fourth in 5-on-5 shot-attempts percentage (SAT%) at 53.8 percent. -- Nicholas J. Cotsonika, columnist

BRUCE CASSIDY, BOSTON BRUINS

When defensemen Zdeno Chara and Torey Krug left the Bruins as unrestricted free agents, it wouldn't have been out of line to be concerned about the depth at the position to start the season. Outside of Charlie McAvoy, there were questions everywhere, and then Brandon Carlo and Matt Grzelcyk each sustained injuries during the season. That wouldn't seem to line up with a berth in the Stanley Cup Playoffs. But Cassidy, who won the Jack Adams Award last season, has been his usual steady presence, mixing and matching with aplomb within his structured system. The Bruins have allowed the fourth-fewest goals per game (2.41) in the NHL despite goalie Tuukka Rask missing for 17 of 18 games between March 7 and April 15 because of an injury. Cassidy also seamlessly integrated forwards Taylor Hall and Curtis Lazar and defenseman Mike Reilly into the lineup after they were acquired before the 2021 NHL Trade Deadline on April 12. Cassidy has the Bruins peaking at the right time. -- Amalie Benjamin, staff writer

JON COOPER, TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING

A good team takes on the best characteristics of its coach. Cooper never looks pressured or frazzled, so his players never do either. The Lightning have handled every adversity, from the pressure of being Stanley Cup champion to new opponents in the Discover Central Division to the absence of forward Nikita Kucherov (hip) throughout the regular season. Cooper again has pushed all the right buttons, merging a

versatile offensive attack with outstanding defensive play and special teams that rank in the top six in the NHL on the power play (sixth, 23.5 percent) and penalty kill (sixth, 83.8 percent). Cooper's leadership is why the Lightning are among the elite teams in the NHL and a good bet to win the Cup again this season. -- Adam Kimelman, deputy managing editor

JOEL QUENNEVILLE, FLORIDA PANTHERS

All due and well-earned respect to Brind'Amour, who guided the Hurricanes to Central Division title, but my vote goes to Quenneville. The Panthers made some great moves during the offseason and ahead of the NHL Trade Deadline, but it takes the right coach to know where to put the players, which personalities blend well together and who is best in which role. Quenneville has pushed all the right buttons again and has the Panthers heading to the playoffs for the sixth time in 27 seasons. And they've been succeeding for more than a month without top defenseman Aaron Ekblad, who fractured his left leg March 28. In 'Q' they trust. -- Tracey Myers, staff writer

MIKE SULLIVAN, PITTSBURGH PENGUINS

Sullivan was coach of the Penguins' Stanley Cup championship teams in 2016 and 2017 but this season may be his best coaching job. Being able to guide the Penguins to the MassMutual East Division title during such a roller-coaster season is a testament to the outstanding job he's done. He had to deal with the resignation of general manager Jim Rutherford seven games into the season; Rutherford hired Sullivan as coach in 2015. He had to become educated in the ways of a new GM, Ron Hextall, and a new president of hockey operations, Brian Burke. Tristan Jarry, starting a season as a No. 1 NHL goalie for the first time, was 2-4-1 in his first seven starts. Captain Sidney Crosby was among several players who missed games due to NHL COVID-19 protocol. Center Evgeni Malkin returned May 3 after missing 23 games with a lower-body injury. Yet the Penguins won the division. The common stabilizing thread through it all? Sullivan. -- Mike Zeisberger, staff writer

DAVE TIPPETT, EDMONTON OILERS

Why Tippett remains under the radar when it comes to consideration for the Adams is a mystery, given the candidates for the award almost always are gauged against expectations for their team. Though they were lightly regarded entering the season, Tippett has brought the Oilers to legitimate contender status; they have clinched second place in the Scotia North Division. The Oilers haven't won just by sending out forwards Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl, but by getting them to lead the way into playing with better structure. Edmonton has scored more this season (3.28 goals per game, up from 3.14 last season), and more importantly has trimmed its goals-against significantly (2.72 per game this season vs. 3.03 last season). Tippett, who is in his second season with Edmonton, has been building things gradually and now has the Oilers primed to be a serious postseason threat. -- Tim Campbell, staff writer



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 10, 2021



Nashville hosts Carolina after Kunin's 2-goal game

Carolina Hurricanes (36-11-8, first in the Central Division) vs. Nashville Predators (30-23-2, fourth in the Central Division)

Nashville, Tennessee; Monday, 8 p.m. EDT

FANDUEL SPORTSBOOK LINE: Predators +108, Hurricanes -131

BOTTOM LINE: The Carolina Hurricanes visit Nashville after Luke Kunin scored two goals in the Predators' 3-1 victory against the Hurricanes.

The Predators are 30-23-2 against division opponents. Nashville averages 9.0 penalty minutes per game, the 10th-most in the NHL. Mathieu Olivier leads the team serving 68 total minutes.

The Hurricanes are 36-11-8 against opponents in the Central Division. Carolina is eighth in the NHL recording 8.8 points per game, averaging 3.2 goals and 5.6 assists.

The teams square off for the second straight game.

TOP PERFORMERS: Calle Jarnkrok leads the Predators with 13 goals, adding 15 assists and totaling 28 points. Kunin has six goals and one assist over the last 10 games for Nashville.

Martin Necas leads the Hurricanes with a plus-27 in 52 games this season. Sebastian Aho has six goals over the last 10 games for Carolina.

LAST 10 GAMES: Predators: 6-3-1, averaging 3.1 goals, 4.8 assists, three penalties and seven penalty minutes while giving up 2.4 goals per game with a .930 save percentage.

Hurricanes: 6-1-3, averaging 3.3 goals, 5.7 assists, 3.4 penalties and 7.1 penalty minutes while allowing 2.2 goals per game with a .922 save percentage.

INJURIES: Predators: Dante Fabbro: day to day (upper body), Mathieu Olivier: out (lower body), Viktor Arvidsson: day to day (upper body), Colton Sissons: day to day (upper body).

Hurricanes: Jordan Martinook: day to day (lower body).



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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SB NATION
CANES COUNTRY

Carolina Hurricanes at Nashville Predators: Game Preview and Storm Advisory

The Carolina Hurricanes look to close out the regular season with a win over the Nashville Predators to keep their President's Trophy bid alive.

By Zeke Lukow

The Carolina Hurricanes enter tonight's game tied for first place in the league. With the Vegas Golden Knights holding the regulation wins and ROW tiebreakers, the Canes have to win tonight's game to keep their chances alive to win the President's Trophy. While the President's Trophy is the world's worst consolation prize, it means more this season than any other with seeding in the final four.

The Canes will also face the Nashville Predators in the first round of the playoffs, so it would benefit them to have some momentum heading into the best-of-seven series. They are also looking to avoid their first consecutive losses since Feb. 25. Jaccob Slavin left Saturday night's game due to injury, and we'll hear more on his status from Rod Brind'Amour after today's 12:30 Eastern morning skate.

Vital Statistics

Category	Hurricanes	Predators
Record	36-11-8	30-23-2
Goals/Game	3.18	2.65
Goals Against/Game	2.35	2.80
Shots/Game	32.07	30.04
Face Off Win %	54.0%	51.6%
Power Play % (Rank)	26.2% (2nd)	17.4% (25th)
Penalty Kill % (Rank)	85.5% (3rd)	74.8% (29th)
ES Corsi For %	53.79%	49.91%
ES PDO	101.07	101.22
PIM/Game	07:13	09:02

Goaltender #1

Category	Petr Mrazek	Kasimir Kaskisuo
Record	6-1-3	0-0-0
Save %	.934	.000
GAA	1.77	0.00

Goaltender #2

Category	Alex Nedeljkovic	Juuse Saros
Record	15-5-3	21-11-1
Save %	0.932	.927
GAA	1.9	2.28

Goaltender #3

Category	James Reimer	Pekka Rinne
Record	15-5-2	9-12-1
Save %	.906	.902
GAA	2.66	2.97

Game Notes:

- With a regulation loss on Saturday, the Canes' point streak ended at 13, which tied a franchise record. They went 9-0-4 in that time span. The Hurricanes have gone 6-1-0 in their previous seven matchups against the Preds.
- With a start tonight, Warren Foegele will have played his 200th NHL game.
- Petr Mrazek has a 10-1-0 record against Nashville in his career with a .931 save percentage. James Reimer hasn't fared much worse with a 7-1-0 record and a .928 save percentage.



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- Saturday also marked the fourth time in 18 games that Sebastian Aho was held without a point. The Canes' lone goal was scored by Morgan Geekie. It

was Geekie's sixth career goal and the third on the season.

TODAY'S LINKS

<https://www.newsobserver.com/sports/spt-columns-blogs/luke-decock/article251274404.html>

<https://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/article251272814.html>

<https://theathletic.com/2576553/2021/05/10/dqb-weekend-rankings-predators-clinch-connor-mcdavid-shines-john-tortorella-exits-and-james-dolan-dolans/>

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SportScan

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

1212300

Nashville Predators

Anything is possible for Nashville Predators in NHL playoffs. They've proven that | Estes

Gentry Estes

In their minds, they were going to Carolina.

Soon as the Nashville Predators began to sense it, they took to delivering hits. The bone-rattling kind, in rapid succession across the ice. They could be heard in the rafters at Bridgestone Arena, intended to send a celebratory message to the Carolina Hurricanes: Their first-round playoff series had just started.

However, in this melee, a Hurricanes player got loose. He did what no one had Saturday night, slipping a puck past Juuse Saros to pull his team within a goal.

Uh, oh. Look at the clock: 10:53 to play. An eternity.

The longest 10:53 of the Preds' season, filled with scoring chances against this team with a bad habit of blowing late leads. You've scarcely felt an arena so tense as the minutes ticked away.

At 2:01, the Hurricanes pulled their goalie. On brand. The visitors had made it quite clear they weren't there to just hold the door open for a playoff berth.

Up until Erik Haula mercifully scored an empty-net goal, securing a 3-1 victory and finally allowing Bridgestone to exhale, anything had seemed possible.

Because anything has happened with this team.

(GENTRY ESTES: This weird Preds season is becoming just what our city needs)

The Preds' victory Saturday night – clinching a playoff series against those top-seeded Hurricanes – was the final chapter in a stunning, thrilling, wildly unpredictable regular-season turnaround that defied all odds and realistic hope. They won 19 of their past 27 games. Of those 19, eight were by one goal. Six were in overtime.

Saturday's win was neither, but it was close enough. It was also the Preds' first win over the Canes in seven tries this season.

"It's hard to get in the playoffs," coach John Hynes said. "I'm just really proud of the guys. We won our way into the playoffs. We didn't count on someone else to lose or get in that way. We had to win a hockey game against a really good hockey team."

In doing so, the Preds thumbed their nose at their many skeptics – people like me who regrettably wrote this bunch off long ago. But, I mean, I'd do it again. That's how miserable they looked earlier in the season. I wouldn't have bet a nickel on them making the playoffs as recently as two months ago.

But then they did.

And as I look back, I'm still not entirely sure how. Ultimately, what was it?



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A team that was never as bad as it appeared finally playing well enough and hard enough? A rash of injuries allowing young, hungry players to step in and provide that needed dose of energy? An inconsistent goaltender in Saros suddenly realizing his elite potential?

An embattled coach like Hynes masterfully never losing his team, his sermons about commitment and effort finally landing in the locker room? A patient general manager in David Poile who easily could have cut bait on this group and never did, choosing to roll the dice and stand behind his players?

Yes. To all of it.

All of the above can claim victory after this far-fetched scramble to the postseason. It's undeniably special – in a who-would-have-thought-it-kind of way.

Long-time fans probably won't tell grandkids they were there the night Luke Kunin scored twice to help the Preds into the playoffs for the seventh consecutive time. But for the veterans – the nine current players who were on the 2017 Stanley Cup Finals team and this season flirted with the indignity of their golden generation being broken apart and traded – this year's run might have been the best yet.

"This one has a little bit more meaning for the guys in the room, for management, for the coaches. ... Everyone, we still believed," defenseman Ryan Ellis said.

"The way we got in, the start we had," captain Roman Josi said. "I'm really proud of the guys. We definitely earned it the hard way."

The Preds put themselves under the unceasing pressure they've been dealing with for the past weeks and months, but Saturday night, that eased up.

In Smashville, simply making the playoffs hasn't usually been enough. This year, though, it might be. They'll be playing with house money now.

Now that the Preds are in the postseason, they won't be expected to do much. The Hurricanes, on paper, are a better team. They've been spanking the Preds all season, so much that you suspect Carolina deep down isn't too unhappy about how this worked out. They'll avoid a first-round series with a talented Dallas Stars team that nearly won the Stanley Cup a season ago.

But hey, who knows with this team and this season? Anything has happened. Anything still could happen.

As well as I believe I know these Preds by now, I've accepted that I still don't know them at all. What might they be capable of in these playoffs? No idea. Even as I still suspect there are limitations, they've managed to exceed them.

In this strangest of NHL seasons, it just might be the team you least see coming.

These Preds, if nothing else, are definitely that.

Tennessean LOADED: 05.10.2021

1212343 Websites

The Athletic / A mother, a daughter and the longest road trip in hockey history

By Eric Duhatschek

May 9, 2021

On a fall day in 1973, just before Detroit Red Wings' training camp opened, Rick McCann came home from work and told his wife, Nancy, that their lives were about to change in a meaningful and unusual way.

McCann's boss, Red Wings' owner Bruce Norris, had hatched a plan to divide the organization's farm team in two for the upcoming season. One team would play in Virginia Beach. The other would be based in London, England.

Norris's ultimate goal was to launch a European professional league; the Red Wings' farmhands would be a de facto trial balloon to see how the North American brand of hockey would be received overseas. The team would be called the London Lions and would be populated mostly by younger, single players coming through the Red Wings' pipeline.

One exception was McCann, a minor-league veteran in the Red Wings' system. He was also one of three players who were joined in London by their wives and children — at home and on the road. Rick and Nancy McCann had a two-year-old daughter, Mical, nicknamed Mickey.

Just how would a toddler adapt to life on the road with a professional hockey team composed of mostly single young men? We chronicled the original history of the Lions here, a six-month saga that included a record 41-game road trip across Europe. It was essentially "Slap Shot Goes to Europe" — with the added wrinkle of having families along for the ride. Rick McCann passed away in 2013 at 69, but he is survived by his daughter and his ex-wife.

According to Nancy McCann, not every player in the Red Wings' organization was bullish on the experiment in the beginning because their goal was to play in the NHL and London seemed a long way away from the NHL. But the McCanns were fully on board, right from the start.

"Rick never really had a goal of being an NHL player," said Nancy McCann. "He wanted to get an education out of hockey and he spent a year at Michigan Tech before going to the Canadian national team because that was the only place in Canada where you could get your university paid for.

"I was ecstatic when I heard I'd get to go to Europe for a year. Rick was very positive about the year — unlike some of the guys, who were asking, 'oh my god, what's happening to my career? I'm getting sent to the boonies.'"

For Nancy, it was the adventure of a lifetime — but there was a tricky line to navigate because she was both a wife and a mother. Mical was out of diapers by then, which greatly enhanced the chances of it working. The original plan was that she and Mical would start the season with the team, and if it wasn't working out they would return home and await Rick's return at the end of the season.

That never happened.

There were two other wives who also made the trip — Lotte Holmqvist, the wife of goaltender Leif Holmqvist, and Janice Wing, the wife of defenceman Murray Wing. Lotte's son, Erik, was even younger than Mical so while they made some of the trips, especially on the continent, the Holmqvists occasionally went home to Sweden for a break.

The McCanns, by contrast, were there for the duration.

"When we left for England, I wasn't sure how it was going to go, but I thought, if it wasn't working out, I would come home with her," said Nancy. "But Mical was marvellous. I couldn't believe how good she was. As things turned out, she really thrived there, which made it much easier for me. It was harder for the guys who had to adjust to all the different levels of hockey they had to play against."

Even though she didn't have the support of her actual nuclear family, Nancy said the players on the team became a de facto second family and frequently volunteered to babysit for Mical whenever she and Rick wanted to see something on the town.

Home for the London portion of the trip was the Esso Motor Hotel, just a stone's throw from Wembley Stadium. Because she had a toddler in tow,



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Nancy McCann realized early on that she wanted to serve breakfast cereal to her daughter, mornings in their hotel room, whenever possible. Only problem: No refrigerators. So, for a time, she would leave a milk bottle on the window ledge to keep it cold. Eventually, management informed the McCanns they couldn't do that: Wind gusts were launching the milk bottles off the ledges.

"I'm sure when we arrived, the people at the hotel must have thought The Beverly Hillbillies had taken over," said Nancy, with a laugh. "I've thought about that a lot — how the hotel must have wondered what they'd gotten into when they let us stay there."

The Esso Hotel offered a babysitting service, enabling Nancy McCann to attend all the home games. When they travelled to the continent, she and Mical would attend afternoon games but rarely went to the games scheduled in the evening.

"When we went to, say, Helsinki or any of these places where we'd stay in a country for a couple of weeks, the guys would use that city as a central hub and go out on these day trips to play games," she said. "Whenever that happened, I usually stayed at the central hotel."

Because she didn't want her presence to be disruptive, Nancy McCann said she made a point of being ready to go, whenever the team moved on to its next stop. Doug Barkley coached the team, future NHL general manager Al Coates was the trainer and essentially organized the travel for the entire season.

McCann says Coates' good-humored approach made life easier for her and Mical.

"It was fun and they were very good to us," Nancy said. "The team made two trips to Scotland ... We made the first trip, but not the second one. Joe Besch, who was looking after Bruce Norris's interests in London at the time, sent a limousine to our hotel from the Dorchester to pick up Lotte (Holmqvist) and I. It took us out to Windsor to do a day tour and set us up for a beautiful dinner at a lovely spot up there. Another time, he set us all up for lunch at the Dorchester, and we were sitting at a table right next to Sean Connery."

There were other celebrity sightings along the way as well. Olga Korbut and Ludmilla Tourischeva were the two stars of the Soviet Union women's gymnastics team and stayed at the Esso Hotel early in the season when the European gymnastics finals were held in London.

Players lined up for pictures with the pig-tailed Korbut at breakfast, McCann remembered.

"It seemed that everybody who came to that venue stayed at the Esso Hotel — athletes, musicians — it was a very nice hotel and they would often mingle with the players. All of that was a fabulous experience. I came off a dairy farm in southwestern Ontario, so I was on a big learning curve when I got into the hockey life."

Almost immediately, Mical became a favorite of the players, charming them.

We have a picture of Mical, in a stroller, with a toy in her lap — a stuffed octopus that she slept with," Nancy McCann said. "One day, when we were on the road, as the bus was pulling out, I couldn't find it. The guys hollered to the bus driver to stop the bus until we could do a quick search and find it — and only then did we go on our way."

Mical turned three in the midst of the trip and recently celebrated her 50th birthday. Even though she has no distinct memories of that trip, she's seen the pictures and heard the stories about the trip all her life.

"They're mostly about me being a terrible flirt and begging for treats, telling the boys how much I loved them, and then in the next sentence, asking for gum," said Mical, with a laugh. "And I called them all, 'my guys.' It's funny because when you think back about guys that age, and that opportunity, probably the last thing they would have wanted was to have a three-year-old floating around but it seemed to work."

"She knew how to play her cards right," added Nancy, with a laugh. "We were on the bus one day and she leaned over the seat to where Dennis Johnson was sitting and she wrapped her arms around his neck and she said, 'Oh Denny Johnson, I love you. You got gum?' And the guys all cracked up, laughing.

"She was really little, so they all seemed to get a bit of a laugh out of her. I was concerned she would get fussy on the bus, but I don't recall her crying all year. It worked out far better than I thought it might."

Chemistry is what brings hockey teams together. According to defenseman Charlie Shaw, the presence of the families aboard helped turn the London Lions into a family of sorts themselves and contributed to the chemistry of a team that won far more games than it lost and overcame a lot of logistical challenges along the way.

According to Mical, the trip also contributed to shaping her long-term outlook on life.

"I don't shy away from new places, or new situations, or people. I'm super flexible. I've joked to friends, that's probably the result of being toled around on a bus for a year through Europe. You learn to go with the flow. I've always felt that trip kind of set the stage for how I turned out. Most kids that age have such a set schedule; that was non-existent for me."

Players, for the most part, were on their best behavior.

"I'm no prude and I've certainly been around bad language, but I don't recall any profanity and a normal hockey bus is going to have more than its share of that," said Nancy. "I never remember hearing anything like that, and I imagine it was because they had women and children travelling with them. Everybody just seemed to go along with things."

Over time, the players and families who made up the London Lions' family drifted apart and eventually lost touch with one another. But recently, thanks to Shaw's efforts, the surviving members of the team have started to reconnect with one another. Shaw managed to piece together a contact list and has been in touch with the three Swedish-born members of the team — Holmqvist, Ulf Sterner and Tord Lundstrom.

There is hope of a 50th-anniversary reunion sometime in 2023, perhaps in Detroit.

Once the season ended, Nancy McCann returned to London, Ont., with the goal of becoming a school teacher, but ultimately got her real estate license and spent the next 44 years selling real estate for a living. She is mostly retired now but still handles the occasional sale on behalf of an old client.

Mical, meanwhile, spent 22 years living in San Diego, but moved back in the past few years, to be closer to her mother and step-brothers. Both McCanns remain fans of the Red Wings.

"There is no other team for me," said Mical. "It's a little sad now, but we have hope. Steve Yzerman has been my lifelong crush. Steve always just stood out to me as the epitome of what an athlete should be."

Mical also believes that trip changed her mother and set a foundation for what was to come.

"After carting a toddler around Europe with a hockey team, she realized could do almost anything," Mical said. "She was always interested in the business side of hockey, she didn't have a business background herself, but she went on to own her own business and be president of a real estate board.

"The trip with the London Lions was her first big challenge and once you get through something that, you realize, 'Oh, OK, I can do that.' I think she realized she can handle more than she thought she could — and don't be afraid of the unknown, or ask yourself, 'how am I going to make this work?' You learn you can make it work."



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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1212344 Websites

Flames forced to cheer for Oilers as playoff hopes hang in balance

Eric Francis

May 10, 2021, 12:23 AM

It's all still pretty obvious how this is going to end for the Calgary Flames.

One loss in their final four games or a single point accrued by the Canadiens over Edmonton seals the deal.

However, following a 6-1 win by the Flames over Ottawa Sunday, southern Albertans now find themselves in a rather uncomfortable predicament: they're hoping for a pair of Oilers wins.

In regulation, of course.

Yes, the fate of the Flames now rests in the hands of Edmonton's two-game wrap-up against Montreal on Monday and Wednesday.

Home of the Flames

An Oilers sweep would set an intriguing stage for the Flames' final four meetings with the Vancouver Canucks.

The odds of a Flames playoff position are longer than Zdeno Chara's wingspan, but if the players and their remaining faithful are indeed taking these final, awkward stages of the season one game at a time, the next two sure are interesting aren't they?

"Never thought we'd root for Edmonton but we need them to win these," said Matthew Tkachuk with a sentence that couldn't have been easy for him to utter. "I doubt I'll watch it, but just hope they'll win."

Added Johnny Gaudreau, "I hope Connor can do his thing."

Are the Senators going to be the team that costs Flames playoffs?

Who knew it was possible for McDavid to become even more popular than he was after his dramatic four-point night Saturday to reach the century mark?

"If we lost we were going home, so it was an actual must-win," added Tkachuk, who had a goal and three points, just like his linemate Gaudreau. "We put ourselves in a terrible position, to be honest. We just have to win and pray. That's all we can do tomorrow."

Neither Flames star would commit to watching the two Oilers games, preferring instead to check their phone for updates as the contests roll along.

They'll both be hoping the Oilers don't opt to sit any of their big guns for what amounts to two meaningless games for the North's second-place finisher.

One wonders if McDavid's milestone moment on the weekend might make it easier for coach Dave Tippett to give this year's Hart Trophy winner a rest at some point.

You can bet the notion of aiding his team's most hated rival in any way won't be on his list of priorities when it comes to designing his next few rosters.

"I think there's lots of people who cheer for Connor McDavid – I do too," said Flames coach Darryl Sutter of the unique scenario facing his club.

Unlike six of their previous eight meetings in which the NHL's youngest team ate Calgary's lunch, the Flames got off to a good start Sunday and were rewarded for it with a first period breakaway conversion by Gaudreau.

Remaining Time -0:52

Gaudreau gets sent in on breakaway, scores while falling down

Mikael Backlund, Tkachuk and Michael Stone all scored before the midway point of the middle frame to chase Anton Forsberg and help snap a four-game losing skid against an Ottawa team that played the biggest role in hampering the Flames' playoff chances.

Mark Giordano and Dillon Dube rounded out the scoring in the third for a team that sat Juuso Valimaki for Oliver Kyllington and gave Glenn Gawdin a fourth line centre role he used to record his first NHL point.

Despite winning just two of their first 15 games of the season, the upstart Senators are tied with the Flames for fifth in the division, having won six of the nine meetings against Calgary.

Flames' still in playoff race, will be scoreboard watching

The Flames' next game is Thursday, at home against a wilting Canucks club saddled with having to play the most gruelling of schedules following the club's COVID-19 decimation.

If the Oilers can do the Flames a favour the Flames would suddenly control their own fate, albeit with the monumental task of having to win their remaining four games in a seven-day stretch.

During that time, the rest of the NHL's playoff teams will have started their post-season battles.

Stay tuned to see if McDavid and his merry men will keep any of the Flames' dreams alive or be content to put them out of their misery.

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Amid offensive woes, Jets limp toward playoffs facing identity crisis

Sean Reynolds and Ken Wiebe

WINNIPEG - The question was rather innocuous, though the answer from Blake Wheeler was quite revealing.

After the Winnipeg Jets lost for the eighth time in the past nine games — this one a 4-2 defeat that included the first career NHL hat trick for Ottawa Senators rookie Tim Stutzle — the captain of the reeling club was asked what it was going to take for his team to get the struggling offence back on track.

"That's a dangerous conversation, because when you start talking about offence or the things that we've built in our game, there are some simple things, the typical hockey clichés — we need to get more guys in front of their goalie and create some dirty pucks around the crease and bang in a couple dirty goals. That would be a good place to start," said Wheeler. "I think as well, when you're going through a tough stretch and you're scoring one or two goals a game, you've got a hockey team full of guys squeezing the stick pretty tight as well. We've got three games to hopefully build some confidence going into the playoffs."

Wheeler's answer was crystal clear.

The Jets are more concerned about buckling down defensively, while creating more offence is on the back burner, at least for the time being.

It can be dangerous drawing concrete conclusions about a team with the Stanley Cup Playoffs just around the corner. But as it stands right now, the Jets look like a team in the midst of an identity crisis.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 10, 2021

They won't be confused with a defensive juggernaut and don't have enough runway left in the regular season to suddenly morph into one. That's simply not the way this roster has been constructed.

They need to be committed to that process as a five-man unit and connected when it comes to execution. Even on the days those two things are clicking, the Jets still lean heavily on above-average to world class goaltending.

The Jets' strength is in their offensive weaponry, as right-winger Mason Appleton became the eighth forward on the roster to hit double digits in goals on Saturday night, snapping a 17-game drought.

Right now, though, goals have been tough to come by — especially since dynamic winger Nikolaj Ehlers left the lineup with a suspected shoulder injury six games ago.

Kyle Connor, who leads the Jets with 22 goals, hasn't scored in seven games and he's only recorded eight shots on goal during that block of time.

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Jets' are prepared for playoff hockey despite regular season fatigue

Even with Wednesday's four-goal outburst against the Calgary Flames, the Jets have been limited to 16 goals during the past nine games and that average of 1.78 goals per game is well below the 3.02 goals per game they've averaged through 53 games (which is good for 12th in the NHL).

When a team that's supposed to be a high-octane bunch is struggling to find the back of the net, the pressure mounts.

Instead of leaning on those offensive instincts, second-guessing can creep in and, rather than looking to shoot when an opportunity presents itself, the search for the perfect play can yield unflattering results.

Since goals are tougher to come by when the stakes get higher, the true test for a team revolves around whether they can find a way to generate enough offence to win without it coming at the expense of cheating on the defensive side.

Right now, that balancing act has proven to be challenging for the Jets.

Morrissey and Jets using end of regular season to polish game

Yes, the Jets have found a way to remain committed to not allowing a high number of scoring chances off the rush since a lopsided 6-1 loss to the Edmonton Oilers on April 26.

Yet the puck management and defensive-zone coverage issues that have plagued them during this skid remain and until those self-inflicted wounds become less frequent, the margin for error is going to remain razor thin.

The message being delivered is that the Jets can't expect to get into a track meet in the playoffs and try to win a bunch of games 5-4 or 6-5 — even if a Smythe Division reunion could be looming.

The Jets need to fully embrace the mindset of playing the type of games that can result in 2-1 or 3-2 victories.

That's the only way they have any chance to gain any momentum at this stage of the proceedings.

"Well, we've got to get that defensive game right. We have absolutely no chance of beating the two teams that we will face (without that)," said head coach Paul Maurice. "We're working hard on not giving things up off the rush. We've made a real good improvement in that. I'm not expecting our offensive game to light up and explode. It's a function of what we've got here.

"We've got world-class goaltending and guys who can skate up front and get pucks to the net. We've got to make sure we eliminate what we hand to the other team."

Can Heinola create enough of an impression to make Jets' playoff lineup?

The playoffs are indeed a new season but this recent rough patch has come at an inopportune time for the Jets.

Instead of getting on a serious roll, the Jets are limping toward the finish line.

Sure, they've done a good job of putting on a brave face publicly, but must now cram for a post-season exam against either the Oilers or Toronto Maple Leafs in the opening round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

"It's trying to get all aspects of our game as polished as possible in preparation for the playoffs. Either of the teams that it looks like we'll be playing here have really elite offensive abilities and some really amazing, talented offensive players," said Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey. "Getting our defensive structure in order (is a top priority). Just trying to get everything in order and firing on all cylinders."

Neither matchup looks like a favourable one for the Jets right now, with the Oilers winning six consecutive head-to-head matchups and taking the season series 7-2.

Although the Jets did manage to go 3-4-2 against the Maple Leafs with one more game to come in the regular season finale on May 14, Toronto recently swept Winnipeg in convincing fashion to create some serious separation in the standings.

So where does that leave the Jets?

The only way out of this hole is to dig in and do the hard work that is required. It won't be easy and there's no guarantee that's going to be enough to get the job done.

The Jets have something to prove when the post-season arrives and they're tired of the growing narrative that this group doesn't have what it takes to avoid another early exit.

The only way to eliminate those growing concerns is to deliver results. Otherwise, bigger-picture questions about the direction the organization should be taking moving forward are quickly going to dominate the discussion.

"We've got to find a way to end the season on a good note and roll into the playoffs," said Appleton. "We're a pretty unwavering group. We played hockey for, what, two or so months without losing back-to-back games. And then we lose seven in a row. That puts you down a little bit but, like I said, we're a confident bunch.

"We're in a playoff spot. We don't love our game right now. We loved how we played in Calgary — obviously we didn't give them anything and we scored goals... I would say we're in a fine spot, obviously, but there's better hockey to be played in front of us."

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Alex Ovechkin buying stake in NWSL's Washington Spirit: 'I support everybody in this town'

Steve Gardner

Washington Capitals star Alex Ovechkin is branching out into another sport by becoming an investor in the Washington Spirit of the National Women's Soccer League.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Drawing inspiration from his mother Tatyana, who won two Olympic gold medals playing basketball for Russia, Ovechkin told ESPN he felt it was important to support women and women's sports, especially in the D.C. community.

"I support everybody in this town," Ovechkin said. "Me and my wife love to go watch a soccer game, watch football, and baseball. We all win. If I have this opportunity, I think it's very important for me to do it, because it also shows we care."

Ovechkin becomes the latest in the Spirit's recent wave of celebrity investors, joining former first daughters Chelsea Clinton and Jenna Bush and Olympic gold-medal-winning gymnast Dominique Dawes.

Elsewhere around the league, actress Natalie Portman, skier Lindsey Vonn and tennis stars Naomi Osaka, Serena Williams and Billie Jean King have also invested in NWSL franchises.

Ovechkin said he hopes his schedule will allow him time to meet the players and go to some games. He even hinted he might show off his soccer skills at one of the Spirit's practices.

"I have some friends who play for the national team in Russia," he said. "I love to play soccer in the summer with my friends. I think I'm good, but probably I'm not good."

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