



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 8, 2021

## THE NEWS & OBSERVER

### A Nino Niederreiter sighting. Here's when the injured Canes forward might return

By Luke DeCock

Nino Niederreiter was back on the ice Monday, perhaps getting the Carolina Hurricanes one player closer to full strength.

The forward was injured in practice last Saturday and missed the first four games of the second-round series against the Tampa Bay Lightning, but could be back in the lineup as the Hurricanes face elimination in Tuesday's Game 5, down 3-1 in the series.

Vincent Trocheck (leg) and Warren Foegele (shoulder) both skated before Monday's practice, the team said. Trocheck was injured in Game 2 and did not play in either game in Tampa; Foegele was injured in Game 3 and played but was ineffective in Game 4. Brind'Amour said both of them remained game-time decisions but he was more optimistic about Niederreiter.

"That was his first practice with us in a long time," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "But he looked good. We need him."

Niederreiter had just one goal in six first-round games but scored 20 in 56 regular-season games.

"Obviously, we miss him," Hurricanes forward Martin Necas said. "He's a big part of our team. We're missing a few guys right now, but if he's going to come back, it's a big help for us."

#### Power-play practice

While most attention has been focused on the Hurricanes' inability to stop the Lightning's electric power play — rolling along at 14-for-34 in the postseason — the Hurricanes haven't been able to muster a response of their own on the man advantage, and not necessarily because of fewer opportunities. The Hurricanes have two goals on 11 chances compared to Tampa's six on 14.

That was a focus in Monday's practice, especially adjusting to Tampa's more aggressive short-handed approach.

"We had just two chances but we need to be sharper on those two," Hurricanes defenseman Dougie Hamilton said. "They came with a lot more pressure and we have to be ready for it. It's a long series. We're going to change things and they're going to adapt. They're going to change things and we have to adapt."

The first power-play unit remained the same in practice Monday — Sebastian Aho, Jordan Staal, Teuvo Teravainen, Necas and Hamilton — but Morgan Geekie and Niederreiter both worked with the second unit, replacing Foegele and Brett Pesce.

#### Resting up

With a 6:30 p.m. start Tuesday after two days off, the Hurricanes have elected to skip their usual morning skate. They took Sunday as a travel/off day and stayed away from the rink entirely, then practiced at PNC Arena on Monday.

"The way that game went, the ebbs and flows, the way it ended up, it was nice to have a day to get away from it," Brind'Amour said.

The two-day gap between games was the first the Hurricanes have had in the middle of a series these playoffs. They had two days off between Game 6 of the Nashville series and Game 1 of the Tampa series.

"It's a little different because we've kind of been playing every other day in the playoffs," Hamilton said. "It's a good chance for us to reset, though — get away from hockey a little bit yesterday, get back into it today, have a little freshness."

#### Game 6 set

If necessary, Game 6 in Tampa on Thursday will be a 6:30 p.m. start on NBCSN, the NHL announced Monday.



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## Win or go home. Time for the Canes to 'lay it all on the line' against the Lightning.

By Chip Alexander

The Carolina Hurricanes aren't in the mood for handshakes.

The Canes aren't ready to have their Stanley Cup playoffs come to an end in Game 5 of their series with the Tampa Bay Lightning, not ready to line up, congratulate the winners and skate into the offseason. Nor are they naive or unrealistic about their situation.

The Canes trail 3-1 in the series. Game 5, which will have a 6:30 p.m. start Tuesday at PNC Arena, is an elimination game -- "elimination" always being a cruel but apt term. They're facing the 2020 Stanley Cup champions.

This isn't the Montreal Canadiens being in a 3-1 hole against the Toronto Maple Leafs but winning the series. Most would agree the Canes are facing a steeper climb, tougher task.

"All the games were really tight," forward Martin Necas said Monday. "The first two (in Raleigh) were really tight, then we won one in OT and (Game 4) wasn't smart by us. We were up 4-2 in the second (period) and we gave them some goals on the power play, which we know they are really good.

"We've got to win the next one, then focus on the next one. It's a tight series. We still believe."

It appears the Canes could have forward Nino Niederreiter in the lineup in Game 5 for the first time in the series. The forward, who gives the Canes more jam in the lineup, was injured in a practice session before the Tampa Bay series began but returned for practice Monday and appeared to be good to go.

Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said injured forwards Vincent Trocheck and Warren Foegele would "try" to play Tuesday -- neither was at practice Monday at PNC Arena.

Brind'Amour said no decision had been made on a starting goaltender, although Alex Nedeljkovic could get the nod.

Hurricanes need to keep penalties to a minimum

The Canes will want to keep it a 5-on-5 game as much as possible. The Lightning had six power plays in Game 4 and scored on the final three to fuel a 6-4 comeback win at Amalie Arena.

The Canes went into Game 4 emphasizing the need to stay out of the penalty box, then had seven penalties called -- the first on Foegele on the opening faceoff as he and Tampa Bay's Blake Coleman jostled and drew matching penalties.

In the first four games, Tampa Bay generated 21 scoring chances on the power play -- nine in Game 4 -- to the Canes' 13, according to NaturalStatTrick.com, a hockey analytics site. At even strength, the two teams are tied in overall scoring chances, although Tampa Bay has an edge in 5-on-5 chances.

"There are obviously things we need to do better but we're getting our opportunities," Brind'Amour said Monday of the 5-on-5 play. "That's clearly not been the issue in our losses."

Giving away the lead in Game 4 against the Bolts

Necas said the Canes were a "little upset" by giving up the lead and the way they lost Game 4, but that having Sunday as an off-day helped to rest and cleanse their minds. The Canes responded with a spirited practice Monday. The mood was anything but grim.

"It's a little different because we've been playing every other day so far in the playoffs," defenseman Dougie Hamilton said Monday of the off-day. "It's a good chance for us to re-set, though, get away from hockey a little bit yesterday and get back into it today and have a little freshness and get excited for tomorrow and the opportunity ahead of us.

"As I've said before, we don't quit. Our group doesn't quit."

Brind'Amour ended practice Monday by telling the players they would "lay it all on the line" in Game 5, whacking his stick on the ice for emphasis.

"There is no tomorrow," Brind'Amour said later. "Everybody says it but this is it. You've got to lay it all on the line."

Lightning at Hurricanes: Playoff series Game 5

When: 6:30 p.m., Tuesday

Where: PNC Arena, Raleigh

Watch: NBCSN



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## Facing elimination, the Hurricanes need Andrei Svechnikov to grow up — and fast

By Luke DeCock

Under different circumstances, Rod Brind'Amour probably should have benched Andrei Svechnikov in Saturday's third period. Svechnikov's two selfish penalties — he also took one earlier to deny a potential goal — helped open the floodgates as the Carolina Hurricanes saw a two-goal lead disappear in a blink.

But it's a measure of Svechnikov's irreplaceable value to the team as a goal-scorer that Brind'Amour felt he had no choice but to keep throwing the young winger out there, waiting for him to conjure the inevitable moment of brilliance.

Still waiting.

There's no time left to wait. It's time for Svechnikov to grow up — now — with the Hurricanes facing elimination on Tuesday against the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Svechnikov's first two years in the league were full of wide-eyed precocity, smiling charm and dazzling skill, but school is out and it's time for him to get out of a season-long funk and graduate being the kind of player who can rise above the postseason fray and turn the tide of a series, or even a season.

It's easy, on paper, to look at his six assists and his team-best analytics and say, what more do you want from him?

Goals. And no more dumb penalties. But especially goals.

He struggled to score through most of the regular season and has continued that into the postseason, where he has two goals, one into an empty net, the other with Alex Nedeljkovic pulled for an extra attacker.

Where it really matters, where Svechnikov has the potential to match Lightning snipers Nikita Kucherov or Steven Stamkos — and is really the only player on the Hurricanes who can — there's still an empty space.

Svechnikov has yet to score at five-on-five in 10 playoff games. He has yet to score on the power play. He has yet, in the entire postseason, to unleash the exceptional talent and scoring ability that has so often mesmerized both fans and opposing goalies in his three-year NHL career. He has scored his two goals on 17 high-danger chances; Jordan Staal has five goals on as many chances, while Martin Necas' two goals have come on only eight chances.

Throughout his career and still now, Svechnikov has been given every opportunity to succeed. He has played with

multiple centers, and continues to occupy prime real estate on a line with Sebastian Aho and Teuvo Teravainen. He remains on the second power-play unit having not scored a power-play goal in six weeks. He had six shifts with Aho and Teravainen after the Lightning made it 6-4, getting nowhere.

Svechnikov's predictability with the puck is probably the product of a lack of confidence; the perpetual parade to the penalty box simply immaturity. Those are both things Svechnikov can, and almost certainly will, grow out of with time, but 21 isn't as young as it used to be in today's NHL.

This season probably hasn't cost Svechnikov, a restricted free agent, any money; his numbers still aren't that different from Mat Barzal's. It's always been a question of how long more than how much for the restricted free agent. Young stars like Svechnikov get paid these days regardless of their leverage. And for good reason: Their skill and talent is irreplaceable.

There's a reason he was the first forward picked in his draft year, a reason his lacrosse move was added to NHL 21, enshrining him in gaming history. He can score goals others cannot. There are a lot of players in the NHL who can drive possession. There are fewer who can finish the chances generated.

But Svechnikov continues to take selfish and immature penalties against a team that the Hurricanes cannot expect to stop on the power play. He's playing without confidence, an unpredictable talent turned utterly predictable, and without any threat.

Svechnikov is far from alone — there's a long list of Hurricanes making mental errors and/or failing to finish chances — but none of them have Svechnikov's superlative ability. If the Hurricanes are going to turn this season around, they need Svechnikov to take a step closer to the player he can be, and they need him to do it now.

He's capable of so much more than this. There's still time for him to show it before it's too late.

Lightning at Hurricanes

Game 5 (TB leads 3-1)

- When: 6:30 p.m.
- Where: PNC Arena, Raleigh
- Watch: NBC Sports



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## The Athletic

### Where's the 'power kill' now? Hurricanes on the brink vs. Lightning after untimely special teams struggles

By Sara Civian

More often than not, it's prudent to look at five-on-five splits when evaluating hockey data. Those stats provides a less-fickle, more-well-rounded representation of what to expect from a team and its individual players over time — and a good indicator of whether a team or player could break through offensively without extra bounces.

So far, that data tells one story of Lightning-Hurricanes, Round 2: what could've been. It's supposed to reflect the process and game flow, so it's a perfect representation of why this matchup has been so frustrating for the Canes, who are down 3-1.

According to Natural Stat Trick, the Canes have owned a 52.25 percent Corsi-for, a 52.92 percent edge in faceoffs and a 94-86 shot advantage at five-on-five through these four games against the Lightning. They've scored six goals to cancel out the six they've allowed. Save for Tampa's edge in shot selection via a 38-27 edge in high-danger chances, the Canes have given themselves every opportunity to win when you discount special teams.

"There's obviously things we need to do better, but that's clearly not been the issue in our losses," coach Rod Brind'Amour said of the Canes' five-on-five play after Monday's practice. "We've got to go back to the drawing board and play another game like (Game 4). Obviously, we need to be better in areas, but I've liked our effort five-on-five through this whole series."

Even strength hasn't been the problem for the Canes, but not being able to capitalize on it has allowed the Lightning to survive it and capitalize on their strength: the power play. This data tells the other story of Lightning-Hurricanes, Round 2: the Lightning are good enough on the power play that if the Hurricanes leave it up to chance, they're straight up going to lose.

For the six goals they've scored at five-on-five, the Lightning have scored another six on the man advantage — three of which were a vessel for the heartbreak of Game 4. They're 6-for-14 with 2.29 expected goals on the power play, while the Canes are 2-for-11 with 1.96 on theirs. You don't want to get too caught up in such a small sample size of data, but rewatching the three latest power-play goals, you see how the Lightning are able to create so much chaos that a reliable metric like expected goals is almost irrelevant.

"I think if you just give that caliber of power play that many chances, they're bound to get some bounces," Jacob Slavin said. "There were a couple of bad bounces out there. I think the first power-play goal off the crossbar was just a funky bounce. But you give them that many chances ... you just can't give them that many chances."

They're so fast and so accurate, it's like they're in their own expected goals bracket. The bounces were funky, especially on Steven Stamkos' goal — but sometimes that makes it even more impressive.

Maybe the part that's bleakest of all is the Lightning have only seemed to increase in effectiveness and further solve the Canes' "power kill" as the series has gone on. Meanwhile, the only games featuring Hurricanes' power-play goals were the extremely close Games 1 and 3, the latter being their sole win of the series.

"I think execution (needs to improve) for sure," Dougie Hamilton said of the Canes' power play. "They changed up their PK last game. We had just two. We needed to be sharper on those two, but they came with a lot more pressure. We've got to be ready for it. It's a long series. They're going to change things, and we've got to adapt and change things and make them adapt. Hopefully, we can be ready tomorrow and execute and hopefully win that special teams battle."

"We just have to be better with the puck a little bit and move the puck quicker," Martin Necas added. "We play basically the same style we've played all year, and (we need to) try to keep doing that."

It's too late — and utterly futile — to change too much on the penalty kill to stop the Lightning. The simplest way to do this is also the most efficient: stop taking so many penalties. The Canes have taken 44 minors through 10 playoff games — second only to Tampa Bay's 45 (also through 10 games). The nature of the penalties is pretty telling, too. Take it with a grain of salt for various reasons (games played, different referees, etc.) but the Canes lead all playoff teams in hooking calls (eight), tripping calls (eight) and cross-checking (seven). They're in the middle of the pack with seven roughing calls, which is what the brunt of Vegas', Boston's, Tampa Bay's and New York's minors have been.

"Nobody is trying to take penalties," Hamilton said. "You don't go out there and say, 'I'm going to take a penalty this shift.' It happens. We definitely have to try not to take them, but the game happens pretty fast sometimes. It's hockey. We have to do our best to stay out of the box and limit their power-play chances. That will give us a better chance at winning."

Other notes heading into Tuesday's Game 5:

- If any one person's return could help the Hurricanes score goals, it's net-front specialist Nino Niederreiter. He's still a "game-time decision," as are Warren Foegele and Vincent Trocheck, but he practiced with the team Monday next to Jordan Martinook (C) and Necas (RW).
- Brind'Amour didn't reveal the Game 5 goaltender, and that'll be interesting. None of these games have really come



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down to goaltending — except maybe Game 1, with Alex Nedeljkovic's blunder. The Canes' one win came with Petr Mrazek in net, but he looked a bit lost in the chaos of Game 4 — granted, the Canes lost that game on the penalty kill. I asked Brind'Amour if he considered pulling Mrazek when the Lightning started to pull away. "We consider it all the time. He's a battler, and we know he doesn't want to come out of a game like that." It won't matter who they choose if the Canes can't stay out of the box.

• Surprising no one familiar with the coach and his competitiveness, Brind'Amour actually likes elimination games. "I actually think they are easier games to play," he said Monday. "You know there is no tomorrow. Everyone says it, but this is it. You've got to lay it all on the line. I think they are sometimes easier to play, for some reason. Obviously that's the case, and I'm sure we'll give everything we have. I have no doubt in this group."



## Canes hope Niederreiter's return is a spark as they try to stave off elimination

By Lauren Brownlow

When the puck drops at 6:30 tomorrow night at PNC Arena, it could be the last time it happens this season for the Carolina Hurricanes.

Down 3-1 and having coughed up a 4-2 second period lead in Game 4, the Canes will be playing an elimination game for the first time this season.

It's the the situation they want to be in, of course. But in some ways, head coach Rod Brind'Amour said, playing a game like this simplifies things.

"I actually think they're easier games to play because there is no tomorrow," Brind'Amour said Monday after practice. "I mean, everyone says it, but this this is it, you've got to lay it all on the line, and I think they're sometimes easier to play for some reason.

"I'm sure we'll give everything we have. I have no doubt in this group."

The Canes have seemed to do better when facing adversity this season. They were on the ropes in Game 6 in Nashville and pulled off a win to avoid even needing a Game 7. Then after losing their first two at home to Tampa, they won Game 3 and it looked like a whole new series.

Now, it is, but not in the way that they'd like it to be. Instead of being tied at 2-2, the Canes will have to win three in a row to advance.

They're not thinking about the three in a row part right now, though.

"I mean we'd rather be up 3-1 obviously. So it is what it is right now. We've just got to make sure we're taking it one game at a time," Canes defenseman Dougie Hamilton said Monday. "We don't quit, our group doesn't quit and we're going to play well tomorrow and just one day at a time right now and see where it takes us."

But losing Game 4 the way that they did, when it seemed they had all the momentum in their corner to even up the series and just couldn't stop putting Tampa on the power play, it was a lot to handle.

The Canes went into the second period down 1-0, went up 4-2 at one point and by the time it was over, less than seven minutes of game action after taking that lead, they were down 5-4, having allowed three power play goals in the period and two in that seven-minute stretch to end it.

"First two (games of the series) were really tight and then we won one in (Tampa) and then this one, it wasn't smart by us," Canes' center Martin Necas said Monday. "We were up 4-2 in the second and we gave them some goals in power play, which we know they're really good at. So we've just got to look at it and just play game by game. We've got to win the next one and then focus on the next one."

There hasn't often been much time off, either in the Playoffs or the regular season. But if there was ever a time when the time off was needed, it was after a loss like that.

Brind'Amour gave his team the day off on Sunday as a result.

"It's a little different because we've kind of been playing every other day so far in the Playoffs, so it's a good chance for us to reset," Hamilton said, "Get away from hockey a little bit yesterday and get back into it today and have a little freshness and get excited for tomorrow and the opportunity we have ahead of us."

The renewed and, the Canes hope, more intense focus will be necessary if they want the series to continue.

As much as Brind'Amour thinks elimination games can be easier to play, the Canes will have to find desperation mode and be ready to channel that on Tuesday night.

"I think especially the way that game went and kind of the ebbs and flows and just how it ended up, I think it was nice to have a day to just kind of get away from it," Brind'Amour said. "Then we get the day now to reset and get focused for obviously the biggest game of the year for us tomorrow."

Brind'Amour has insisted throughout the series that he's happy with the way his team is playing when it's 5-on-5. But it's been a weird special teams postseason for his team.



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Just three times in the regular season did the Canes' excellent penalty kill even face more than five opponent power plays in a game. This postseason, opponents have had six or more power plays in three of the 10 games. And the Canes lost two of those.

The Predators scored three power play goals in 26 tries against the Hurricanes. The Lightning scored three in less than 20 minutes on Saturday afternoon and have converted six of their 14 power plays into goals.

But the Hurricanes understand they can't commit silly penalties and have to stay out of the box. What they weren't as prepared for, Hamilton said, was the way Tampa tweaked its own penalty kill unit.

"(Tampa) changed up their PK last game. We needed to be sharper on those two (power plays), but they came with a lot more pressure and we've got to be ready for it. It's a long series. They're going to change things, we've got to adapt and we've got to change things and make them adapt," Hamilton said. "Hopefully we can be ready tomorrow and execute and hopefully win that that special teams battle."

The Canes' power play was as elite as its PK during the regular season, but it hasn't really been that during the Playoffs. They were 4-of-19 on the power play against Nashville and 2-of-5 in the final two games of the series (both wins). But they're 2-of-11 so far in the Lightning series. Not horrible normally, but against a team that is playing as well as it is on the power play and against a goalie as good as Andrei Vasilevskiy is, you have to take advantage of any opportunity you can.

There are two factors that impact Playoff hockey more than almost any other, and both could look different Tuesday night: health and goalie play.

When you put a team on the power play six times, it's difficult to blame goalie play. But as good as Petr Mrazek looked in

his first Playoff game in Tampa was as shaky as he looked at times in Game 4.

One game does not a series or goalie make, but it remains to be seen whether or not Brind'Amour will go back to rookie Alex Nedeljkovic. He said Monday he has not decided yet.

Injury-wise, the Canes could really use a goal-scorer back in the lineup. And it was a boost to the team to unexpectedly have Nino Niederreiter, who was thought to be out for the series, back on the ice at practice on Monday.

"I mean, obviously we miss him. He's a big part of our our team," Necas said. "We miss guys right now but, if he's going to come back — it seems like he will — then it's a big help for us and we're excited to play with him."

Vincent Trocheck and Warren Foegele have dealt with injuries off and on all series (Foegele hasn't missed a game while Trocheck has missed two), and both are valuable parts of what the Canes do. Brind'Amour said both would at least try to give it a go in Game 5.

But even if Niederreiter is the only one who can play, it can only help. He has just one postseason goal but was second in the regular season with 20 goals.

And as much scrutiny has been placed on goalkeeping, the Canes have needed to do a better job of cashing in on scoring opportunities.

"I think obviously a boost for for us missing a couple guys. I think it's a big boost and he should be fresh and and ready to go," Brind'Amour said of Niederreiter's return. "Obviously you've got some goal scoring ability when you had him in there for sure. We're hopeful that we'll play and we'll find out tomorrow. That was his first practice with us in a long time, but it was a good sign.

"He looked good and we obviously need him."



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## Canes Clear Heads, Refocus for Biggest Game of the Year

Brind'Amour: 'This is it. You've got to lay it all on the line'

By Michael Smith

"Nothing has come easy for this group, ever," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said after a tight 2-1 loss to the Tampa Bay Lightning in Game 1 of the Second Round.

On the eve of Game 5, the same remains true - and it's not going to get any easier from here.

Game 5 marks the first of three consecutive must-win games for the Canes should the Central Division champions look to advance to the Stanley Cup Semifinals. In order to do so, they'll have to overcome a 3-1 series deficit for the first time in franchise history (0-4) against a team that has never surrendered a 3-1 series lead in franchise history (11-0) - and they're the Stanley Cup champions, too.

But, why not? Why not the Canes? It's a team that's proven its resilience shift after shift, period after period, game after game. It's a team that relishes in being counted out. It's a team that faces adversity head on and works as a group to overcome.

"Everything they've gotten they've earned," Brind'Amour said after Game 1. "We're in the playoffs. We're going to have to go earn every inch of ice we get and every goal."

After dropping the first two games of the Second Round at home, the Canes bounced back with a 4-3 overtime win in Game 3 in Tampa. A wild Game 4, which featured eight combined goals in the second period alone, slipped away from the Canes in a 6-4 final.

The Canes can't win three games in Game 5 alone, which feeds right into their mind space: One day at a time, one game at a time. Go 1-0, and win the day.

"We'd rather be up 3-1, obviously. It is what it is right now. We've just got to make sure we take it one game at a time," Dougie Hamilton said on Monday. "Our group doesn't quit. We're going to play well tomorrow."

Until now, the Canes' First and Second Round schedules had been played at an every-other-day cadence, but maybe the two-day gap in between Games 4 and 5 was the ideal

reprieve for the Canes. Sunday was a day off, a mental and physical reset away from the rink.

"Especially with how that game went, the ebbs and flows and just how it ended up, it was nice to have a day to kind of get away from it," Brind'Amour said after practice on Monday.

It was back to work on Monday, as the Canes tidied up on some of the finer details of their game, both at 5-on-5 and on specialty teams, before Tuesday's 6:30 p.m. puck drop, the "biggest game of the year," as Brind'Amour called it.

"We just tried to learn from our mistakes in that game and not think about it anymore," Martin Necas said on Monday. "Keep improving, have a good practice today and be ready for tomorrow."

The Canes' lineup might get an injection of skill and goal-scoring ability. Nino Niederreiter, who has missed the first four games of this series with an upper-body injury, returned to practice on Monday and skated on a line with Necas and Jordan Martinook.

The Canes are "hopeful" that Niederreiter will be able to play in Game 5, Brind'Amour said, a status dependent on how the winger felt after his first skate with the team in more than a week.

"We miss him, you know? He's a big part of our team," Necas said. "I'm excited to play with him."

Neither Vincent Trocheck, who has missed the last two games with a lower-body injury, nor Warren Foegele, who played in Game 4 after suffering an upper-body injury two nights prior, practiced with the Canes on Monday, but both skated with the extras earlier in the morning. Both remain game-time decisions heading into Game 5.

Nothing has ever come easy for this group, indeed, and now is the time to earn it - and prove it.

It ain't over 'til it's over, and it's certainly not over yet, despite what the odds might say. It begins with going 1-0 on Tuesday.

"You know there is no tomorrow. This is it. You've got to lay it all on the line," Brind'Amour said. "I'm sure we'll give it everything we've got. I've got no doubt in this group."



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## Game 5 Preview: Lightning vs. Hurricanes

Canes aim to stave off elimination

By Michael Smith

With their backs against the wall, the Carolina Hurricanes fight to see another day in the 2021 Stanley Cup Playoffs when they host the Tampa Bay Lightning in Game 5 of the Second Round.

Game 5

(3) Tampa Bay Lightning vs. (1) Carolina Hurricanes

Tampa Bay leads series 3-1

Tuesday, June 8, 6:30 p.m.

Watch: NBCSN

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

About Game 4

The Canes tallied four times in a wild second period, during which eight total goals were scored, but the Lightning stormed back to score four unanswered goals in a 6-4 final. Tampa Bay finished 3-for-6 on the power play, which played a critical part in their comeback, to take a 3-1 series lead. Ten different Canes skaters found the scoresheet, while Jaccob Slavin (1g, 1a) and Andrei Svechnikov (2a) finished with multi-point evenings.

"We took some bad penalties tonight. If you give that caliber of power play that many chances, it's not a recipe for success," Slavin said. "We've just got to stay more disciplined. Play hard, but play smart, as well."

Tracking the Storylines

**Needing Niederreiter:** Nino Niederreiter practiced with the Canes on Monday and is "hopeful" to play in Game 5, according to head coach Rod Brind'Amour. Niederreiter, who had not skated with the team in more than a week, has missed the first four games of this series with an upper-body injury. Niederreiter tallied 20 goals, including four on the power play, in the regular season.

**More Injury Notes:** Vincent Trocheck and Warren Foegele skated with the extras but did not practice with the Canes on Monday. Both remain game-time decisions for Game 5. Trocheck has missed the last two games with a lower-body injury, while Foegele aggravated an upper-body injury in Game 3 but was able to play in Game 4.

**Make History:** The challenge ahead of the Canes is not an easy one, but when has it ever been so for this team? The Canes are going to have to rattle off three straight wins against the defending Stanley Cup champions, a team that is 10-0 in playoff games following a loss since 2020. Two of those three games are on home ice, though, so the Canes will have to steal just one more game on the road. First thing's first, though: Game 5, and the Canes are 2-2 in such scenarios. The Lightning have never lost a series they've led 3-1 (11-0), and the Canes have never erased such a series deficit (0-4). If they do, though, they'd become the 31st team in NHL history and the second this very postseason to do so.

"You know there is no tomorrow. This is it. You've got to lay it all on the line," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said on Monday. "I'm sure we'll give it everything we've got. I've got no doubt in this group."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 8, 2021



## Niederreiter could play for Hurricanes in Game 5 against Lightning

Forward practiced for first time since sustaining upper-body injury before series

By Tracey Myers

Nino Niederreiter could return for the Carolina Hurricanes in Game 5 of the Stanley Cup Second Round against the Tampa Bay Lightning on Tuesday (6:30 p.m. ET; NBCSN, SN, TVAS).

The forward practiced Monday for the first time since sustaining an upper-body injury at practice May 29 that kept him out of the first four games of the series. He was at left wing on the third line with center Jordan Martinook and Martin Necas.

The Hurricanes trail 3-1 in the best-of-7 series.

"We're hopeful that he'll play," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said Monday. "We'll find out tomorrow. That was his first practice with us in a long time, but it was a good sign. He looked good and we obviously need him. We've got some goal-scoring ability when you add him in there for sure."

Niederreiter scored 20 goals in 56 games during the regular season, second on the Hurricanes behind forward Sebastian Aho (24 in 56 games). He's scored one goal in six games during the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

"Obviously we miss him," Necas said. "He's a big part of our team. We miss a few guys right now, but if he's going to come in, and it seems like he will, then it's a big help for us and I'm excited to play with him."

Forwards Warren Foegele and Vincent Trocheck did not practice Monday, and Brind'Amour said each will be a game-time decision Tuesday.

Foegele, who played in Game 4 on Saturday, sustained an upper-body injury when he was hit by Lightning defenseman Erik Cernak with 2:20 remaining in the second period of the Hurricanes' 3-2 overtime win in Game 3 on Thursday.

Trocheck has missed the past two games with a lower-body injury sustained when he collided with Foegele late in the second period of a 2-1 loss in Game 2 on Tuesday. He returned for the third period of that game but played one 16-second shift before leaving.

Trocheck scored 43 points (17 goals, 26 assists) in 47 regular-season games, second on the Hurricanes to Aho (57 points), and has scored three points (two goals, one assist) in eight playoff games.

Foegele scored 20 points (10 goals, 10 assists) in 53 regular-season games and has scored two points (one goal, one assist) in 10 playoff games.

Brind'Amour said he hasn't decided who will start in goal for Game 5. Petr Mrazek played the past two games and was 1-1 with a 3.90 goals-against average and an .873 save percentage. He allowed six goals on 26 shots in a 6-4 loss in Game 4.

Alex Nedeljkovic started the first two games of the series and was 0-2 with a 2.04 GAA and .911 save percentage. He started Carolina's first eight playoff games and is 4-4 with a 2.18 GAA, a .920 save percentage and one shutout.

The Hurricanes are trying to avoid elimination with the series returning to PNC Arena; Carolina was 20-3-5 at home during the regular season and is 3-2 there during the playoffs.

"We have to make sure we're taking one game at a time, and like I've said before, our group doesn't quit," defenseman Dougie Hamilton said. "We're going to play well tomorrow and go just one day at a time right now and see where it takes us."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 8, 2021



## Resilient Lightning showing they can win in variety of ways

By Fred Goodall

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — The Tampa Bay Lightning prioritized defense over scoring on the way to winning their second Stanley Cup title last season.

The reigning champions still feel that's the recipe for success in the playoffs, however that doesn't mean one of the NHL's most skilled offensive teams won't instinctively change gears and revert to old ways when needed.

"There was a time we were kind of the greatest show on ice a few years ago, and many times those ended up in disappointing playoff outs," coach Jon Cooper said.

"Probably why we've had success the last couple of years is because we've had the ability to win different ways. If you want to get into a shootout, we have a group that can do it that way," he said. "But that's not ideal. We really have this belief that it's what you keep out of your net, not how much you put in the other net. We try and live by that."

The Lightning and Carolina Hurricanes each scored four times during the second period of Game 4 in their second-round matchup Saturday. Tampa Bay wound up with a 6-4 win and took a 3-1 series lead.

The Hurricanes scored four times to build a two-goal lead before unraveling. Nikita Kucherov, Tyler Johnson and Steven Stamkos countered for Tampa Bay in the closing minutes of the second period to put the Lightning up for good.

Tampa Bay had the firepower to adjust when Vezina Trophy finalist Andrei Vasilevskiy, one of the league's best goaltenders, was under siege.

Game 5 is Tuesday night at Carolina, where Tampa Bay won the first two games of the best-of-seven matchup.

"Does it always go as planned? No," Cooper said of the approach that's served his team well in winning a franchise-best five consecutive playoff series. "But if you want to go far, it's just the mentality you have to have."

Kucherov and Stamkos each had two goals and an assist in the Game 4 win.

"We've been in multiple situations throughout the runs that this core has been through. We've seen it all. Nothing's going to really surprise this group," Stamkos said. "At that point, you have to realize why you're down and change some things on the fly."

The Hurricanes will have to win three straight to come back and win the series, a daunting task considering Tampa Bay is 10-0 in games following a playoff loss since beginning its 2020 Stanley Cup run.

"We've got to be way more disciplined. ... We made it a little too hard on ourselves by taking too many penalties," Carolina forward Jesper Fast said. "I really believe if we play our way and stay out of the box, we're going to turn this series around."

Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour agrees that to have a chance to rebound, his team will need to limit Tampa Bay's power-play opportunities moving forward. The Lightning has five man-advantage goals in the past two games.

"You can't give them too many cracks at it. ... They've got guys that can finish, that's what they do," Brind'Amour said.

Brind'Amour said Monday that he hadn't decided if Petr Mrazek and Alex Nedeljkovic will start at goaltender in Game 5.

Nedeljkovic started the first six games of the playoffs, but the Hurricanes turned to Mrazek after losing the first two games of this series at home. Mrazek won Game 3, stopping 35 of 37 shots in a 3-2 overtime win, but wasn't nearly as effective last Saturday.

Meanwhile, forward Nino Niederreiter practiced after sitting out the past four games with an upper-body injury. The Hurricanes could use his scoring, however Brind'Amour said it was too early to predict if he'll play Tuesday night.

Either way, Brind'Amour is confident Carolina will respond to the pressure of an elimination game.

"I actually think they are easier to play because you know there is no tomorrow," the Hurricanes coach said.

"Everyone says it, but this is it," Brind'Amour added. "You've got to lay it all on the line. ... I'm sure we'll give everything we have."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 8, 2021



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

## They Said It: Brind'Amour, Hamilton, Necas following Monday practice

The Carolina Hurricanes practiced at home Monday morning, facing elimination Tuesday night.

By Alec\_Sawyer

Down 3-1 in a second-round series against the Tampa Bay Lightning, the Carolina Hurricanes will return home to PNC Arena Tuesday night looking to stay alive.

On Monday, the Hurricanes practiced at PNC Arena after a day off on Sunday. Following practice, head coach Rod Brind'Amour, defenseman Dougie Hamilton and forward Martin Necas spoke with reporters via Zoom.

Here is what they had to say:

Rod Brind'Amour

On Nino Niederreiter being back in practice, if he expects him to play and on what he brings back to the team: You get some goal-scoring ability when you add him in there, for sure. We're hopeful that he'll play, but we'll find out tomorrow. That was his first practice with us in a long time. But it was a good sign. He looked good, and we obviously need him.

On if he's still happy with the 5-on-5 play: Yeah. That's been not an issue. There's obviously things we need to do better, but that's clearly not been the issue in our losses. We've got to go back to the drawing board and play another game like that. Obviously we need to be better in areas, but I've liked our effort 5-on-5 through this whole series.

On Morgan Geekie practicing with the power play and on what they need to do to adjust to Tampa's penalty kill: We only had two power plays the other night, so there wasn't a ton of adjustment time. Usually you run one and then you can get another one and then you can make your adjustments. We definitely have to be sharper, for sure. [Geekie] was on the power play last game. Like I said, we didn't have very much, so it was hard to assess there. We are definitely waiting to see on a couple guys, not sure who is gonna play or not. I'm not sure if he'll fill in or not on the power play.

On if the day off Sunday was good for the team: For sure. I think especially the way that game went and the ebbs and flows of how it ended up, it was nice to have a day to just kind of get away from it. And now a day to reset and get focused for obviously the biggest game of the year for us.

On playing in an elimination game: Yeah, I actually think they are easier games to play. You know there is no tomorrow. Everyone says it, but this is it. You've got to lay it all on the line. I think they are sometimes easier to play, for some reason. Obviously that's the case, and I'm sure we'll give everything we have. I have no doubt in this group.

On how Warren Foegele and Vincent Trocheck are doing and on if he has decided on a goalie for Tuesday: I have not on the goalie yet. Vincent, I think he's gonna try tomorrow. I hope so, obviously, but I'm not sure. Same thing with [Foegele]. They're both kind of game time, I guess is the way I would put it.

Dougie Hamilton

On if having an extra day off here is a good thing: I don't know, really. It's a little different because we've kind of been playing every other day so far in the playoffs. It's a good chance for us to reset though and get away from hockey for a little bit yesterday. Get back into it today and have a little freshness and get excited for tomorrow and the opportunity we have ahead of us. I think it's fine.

On if adversity is good for this team and they welcome it a little bit: We'd rather be up 3-1, obviously. It is what it is right now. We've just got to make sure we're taking it one game at a time. Like I've said before, we don't quit. Our group doesn't quit. We're gonna play well tomorrow. It's just one day at a time right now, and we'll see where it takes us.

On if there was anything on the power play that specifically needed to be tweaked in practice: I think execution for sure. They changed up their PK last game. We had just two. We needed to be sharper on those two, but they came with a lot more pressure. We've got to be ready for it. It's a long series. They're going to change things, and we've got to adapt and change things and make them adapt. Hopefully we can be ready tomorrow and execute and hopefully win that special teams battle.

On how nice it was to see Nino Niederreiter back on the ice in practice: Yeah, for sure. It's obviously a boost for us. We're missing a couple guys. I think it's a big boost. He should be fresh and ready to go. I don't know how he felt or whatever, but it was great to have him there. Hopefully he can play tomorrow and play well for us.

On if they've had internal conversations about all the penalties: I think everyone knows, for sure. We know how good their power play is. Nobody is trying to take penalties. You don't go out there and say 'I'm going to take a penalty this shift.' It happens. We definitely have to try not to take them, but the game happens pretty fast sometimes. It's hockey. We have to do our best to stay out of the box and limit their power play chances. That will give us a better chance at winning.

Martin Necas

On how good it was to have Nino Niederreiter back on the ice and on how much he adds to their line: Obviously we miss him. He's a big part of our team. We're missing a few



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 8, 2021

guys right now. But if he comes back, it's a big help for us and I'm excited to play with him again.

On if they've found anything that can help them have more success on the power play: Yeah, for sure. We looked at it. They changed it a little bit. I don't really think we have to change much on our part. We just have to be better with the puck a little bit and move the puck quicker. We play basically the same style we've played all year, and try to keep doing that.

On what it will take to beat Tampa three straight times: All the games are really tight. The first two were really tight and then we won one in OT. This one wasn't smart by us. We were up 4-2 in the second and we gave them some goals and the power play, which we know they have a really good

one. We've just got to look at it and play game by game. We've got to win the next one and then focus on the next.

On if they still feel like they don't need to change their game: Yeah, you always have got some little mistakes. We try to look at it on the video in the meetings. Especially in the first few games I felt like we played really good 5-on-5, then we made some mistakes. It's a really tight series. We still believe. We want to win the game tomorrow and then focus on the next one.

On the mood of the team and the confidence level: For sure we were really upset after the game, but yesterday we had the day off and today was a completely different day. We tried to learn from our mistakes that game and that day, and just don't think about it anymore. Keep improving. We had a good practice today, and be ready for tomorrow.

### Carolina Hurricanes vs. Tampa Bay Lightning: Game Five Preview

The Canes return home hoping to stave off elimination in a win or go home game five of the second round series against the Bolts.

By Johnathan Kirkland

Carolina Hurricanes (5-5) at Tampa Bay Lightning (7-3)

2021 Stanley Cup Playoffs Second Round — Game Five

Tuesday, June 8, 2021 - 6:30 p.m. ET

PNC Arena — Raleigh, NC

Watch: NBCSN, Bally Sports South

Listen: 99.9 The Fan

SBN Opposition: Raw Charge

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The Carolina Hurricanes return to PNC Arena tonight for game five of their second-round series against the Tampa Bay Lightning in what they hope will not be their last game at home this season. Coming off of a wild 6-4 loss in Tampa on Sunday afternoon, the Canes look to rebound in a must-win game.

Game four was a roller coaster of emotions as the second period featured four goals by each team, and the Canes at one point holding a two-goal advantage. But penalties once again reared their ugly head, and the Lightning scored three power-play goals in the second period.

The Canes have no room for error now, and they must win the next three games in a row to move on to the semifinals.

#### Vital Statistics

Category Hurricanes Lightning

Category	Hurricanes	Lightning
Record	5-5-0	7-3-0
Goals/Game	3.10	3.60
Goals Against/Game	2.80	2.60
Shots/Game	37.6	29.5
Face Off Win %	52.7%	47.6%
Power Play % (Rank)	20.0% (8th)	41.2% (1st)
Penalty Kill % (Rank)	77.5% (9th)	75.8% (10th)
ES Corsi For %	55.1%	46.4%
ES PDO	99.1	101.5
PIM/Game	10:24	12:12

#### Goaltender #1

Category	Alex Nedeljkovic	Andrei Vasilevskiy
Record	4-4-0	7-3-0
Save %	.920	.928
GAA	2.18	2.46



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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## Goaltender #2

Category	Petr Mrazek	Curtis McElhinney
Record	1-1-0	0-0-0
Save %	.873	.000
GAA	3.90	0.00

## Game Notes

- Andrei Svechnikov now has points in his last four playoff games, marking the longest streak among Hurricanes this postseason. His two assists in game four gave him four multi-point games in his NHL playoff career.

- Jacob Slavin's two points in game four gave him 19 career playoff points. He ranks first in franchise history in assists and is one point shy of tying for the franchise lead in points.
- The four goals in the second period by the Hurricanes was the seventh time in franchise history and the third since relocation that the team scored four goals in a playoff period. It was also the first time since 2010 that two teams scored eight goals in a period.
- The Hurricanes trail 3-1 in a playoff series for the fifth time in franchise history and third since relocation. They are 2-2 in such games. The Canes are hoping to be the 31st team all-time and second this postseason (Montreal) to overcome a 3-1 series deficit.

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# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 8, 2021

## SportScan

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

1215360 Carolina Hurricanes

Win or go home. Time for the Canes to 'lay it all on the line' against the Lightning.

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

The Carolina Hurricanes aren't in the mood for handshakes.

The Canes aren't ready to have their Stanley Cup playoffs come to an end in Game 5 of their series with the Tampa Bay Lightning, not ready to line up, congratulate the winners and skate into the offseason. Nor are they naive or unrealistic about their situation.

The Canes trail 3-1 in the series. Game 5, which will have a 6:30 p.m. start Tuesday at PNC Arena, is an elimination game -- "elimination" always being a cruel but apt term. They're facing the 2020 Stanley Cup champions.

This isn't the Montreal Canadiens being in a 3-1 hole against the Toronto Maple Leafs but winning the series. Most would agree the Canes are facing a steeper climb, tougher task.

"All the games were really tight," forward Martin Necas said Monday. "The first two (in Raleigh) were really tight, then we won one in OT and (Game 4) wasn't smart by us. We were up 4-2 in the second (period) and we gave them some goals on the power play, which we know they are really good.

"We've got to win the next one, then focus on the next one. It's a tight series. We still believe."

It appears the Canes could have forward Nino Niederreiter in the lineup in Game 5 for the first time in the series. The forward, who gives the Canes more jam in the lineup, was injured in a practice session before the Tampa Bay series began but returned for practice Monday and appeared to be good to go.

Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said injured forwards Vincent Trocheck and Warren Foegele would "try" to play Tuesday -- neither was at practice Monday at PNC Arena.

Brind'Amour said no decision had been made on a starting goaltender, although Alex Nedeljkovic could get the nod.

HURRICANES NEED TO KEEP PENALTIES TO A MINIMUM

The Canes will want to keep it a 5-on-5 game as much as possible. The Lightning had six power plays in Game 4 and scored on the final three to fuel a 6-4 comeback win at Amalie Arena.

The Canes went into Game 4 emphasizing the need to stay out of the penalty box, then had seven penalties called -- the first on Foegele on the opening faceoff as he and Tampa Bay's Blake Coleman jostled and drew matching penalties.

In the first four games, Tampa Bay generated 21 scoring chances on the power play -- nine in Game 4 -- to the Canes' 13, according to NaturalStatTrick.com, a hockey analytics site. At even strength, the two

teams are tied in overall scoring chances, although Tampa Bay has an edge in 5-on-5 chances.

"There are obviously things we need to do better but we're getting our opportunities," Brind'Amour said Monday of the 5-on-5 play. "That's clearly not been the issue in our losses."

GIVING AWAY THE LEAD IN GAME 4 AGAINST THE BOLTS

Necas said the Canes were a "little upset" by giving up the lead and the way they lost Game 4, but that having Sunday as an off-day helped to rest and cleanse their minds. The Canes responded with a spirited practice Monday. The mood was anything but grim.

"It's a little different because we've been playing every other day so far in the playoffs," defenseman Dougie Hamilton said Monday of the off-day. "It's a good chance for us to re-set, though, get away from hockey a little bit yesterday and get back into it today and have a little freshness and get excited for tomorrow and the opportunity ahead of us.

"As I've said before, we don't quit. Our group doesn't quit."

Brind'Amour ended practice Monday by telling the players they would "lay it all on the line" in Game 5, whacking his stick on the ice for emphasis.

"There is no tomorrow," Brind'Amour said later. "Everybody says it but this is it. You've got to lay it all on the line."

LIGHTNING AT HURRICANES: PLAYOFF SERIES GAME 5

When: 6:30 p.m., Tuesday

Where: PNC Arena, Raleigh

WATCH: NBCSN

News Observer LOADED: 06.08.2021

1215361 Carolina Hurricanes

Facing elimination, the Hurricanes need Andrei Svechnikov to grow up — and fast

BY LUKE DECOCK

RALEIGH—Under different circumstances, Rod Brind'Amour probably should have benched Andrei Svechnikov in Saturday's third period. Svechnikov's two selfish penalties — he also took one earlier to deny a potential goal — helped open the floodgates as the Carolina Hurricanes saw a two-goal lead disappear in a blink.

But it's a measure of Svechnikov's irreplaceable value to the team as a goal-scorer that Brind'Amour felt he had no choice but to keep throwing the young winger out there, waiting for him to conjure the inevitable moment of brilliance.

Still waiting.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2021

There's no time left to wait. It's time for Svechnikov to grow up — now — with the Hurricanes facing elimination on Tuesday against the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Svechnikov's first two years in the league were full of wide-eyed precocity, smiling charm and dazzling skill, but school is out and it's time for him to get out of a season-long funk and graduate being the kind of player who can rise above the postseason fray and turn the tide of a series, or even a season.

It's easy, on paper, to look at his six assists and his team-best analytics and say, what more do you want from him?

Goals. And no more dumb penalties. But especially goals.

He struggled to score through most of the regular season and has continued that into the postseason, where he has two goals, one into an empty net, the other with Alex Nedeljkovic pulled for an extra attacker.

Where it really matters, where Svechnikov has the potential to match Lightning snipers Nikita Kucherov or Steven Stamkos — and is really the only player on the Hurricanes who can — there's still an empty space.

Svechnikov has yet to score at five-on-five in 10 playoff games. He has yet to score on the power play. He has yet, in the entire postseason, to unleash the exceptional talent and scoring ability that has so often mesmerized both fans and opposing goalies in his three-year NHL career. He has scored his two goals on 17 high-danger chances; Jordan Staal has five goals on as many chances, while Martin Necas' two goals have come on only eight chances.

Throughout his career and still now, Svechnikov has been given every opportunity to succeed. He has played with multiple centers, and continues to occupy prime real estate on a line with Sebastian Aho and Teuvo Teravainen. He remains on the second power-play unit having not scored a power-play goal in six weeks. He had six shifts with Aho and Teravainen after the Lightning made it 6-4, getting nowhere.

Svechnikov's predictability with the puck is probably the product of a lack of confidence; the perpetual parade to the penalty box simply immaturity. Those are both things Svechnikov can, and almost certainly will, grow out of with time, but 21 isn't as young as it used to be in today's NHL.

This season probably hasn't cost Svechnikov, a restricted free agent, any money; his numbers still aren't that different from Mat Barzal's. It's always been a question of how long more than how much for the restricted free agent. Young stars like Svechnikov get paid these days regardless of their leverage. And for good reason: Their skill and talent is irreplaceable.

There's a reason he was the first forward picked in his draft year, a reason his lacrosse move was added to NHL 21, enshrining him in gaming history. He can score goals others cannot. There are a lot of players in the NHL who can drive possession. There are fewer who can finish the chances generated.

But Svechnikov continues to take selfish and immature penalties against a team that the Hurricanes cannot expect to stop on the power play. He's playing without confidence, an unpredictable talent turned utterly predictable, and without any threat.

Svechnikov is far from alone — there's a long list of Hurricanes making mental errors and/or failing to finish chances — but none of them have Svechnikov's superlative ability. If the Hurricanes are going to turn this season around, they need Svechnikov to take a step closer to the player he can be, and they need him to do it now.

He's capable of so much more than this. There's still time for him to show it before it's too late.

## LIGHTNING AT HURRICANES

Game 5 (TB leads 3-1)

• When: 6:30 p.m.

• Where: PNC Arena, Raleigh

• WATCH: NBC Sports

News Observer LOADED: 06.08.2021

1215362 Carolina Hurricanes

A Nino Niederreiter sighting. Here's when the injured Canes forward might return

BY LUKE DECOCK

RALEIGH—Nino Niederreiter was back on the ice Monday, perhaps getting the Carolina Hurricanes one player closer to full strength.

The forward was injured in practice last Saturday and missed the first four games of the second-round series against the Tampa Bay Lightning, but could be back in the lineup as the Hurricanes face elimination in Tuesday's Game 5, down 3-1 in the series.

Vincent Trocheck (leg) and Warren Foegele (shoulder) both skated before Monday's practice, the team said. Trocheck was injured in Game 2 and did not play in either game in Tampa; Foegele was injured in Game 3 and played but was ineffective in Game 4. Brind'Amour said both of them remained game-time decisions but he was more optimistic about Niederreiter.

"That was his first practice with us in a long time," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "But he looked good. We need him."

Niederreiter had just one goal in six first-round games but scored 20 in 56 regular-season games.

"Obviously, we miss him," Hurricanes forward Martin Necas said. "He's a big part of our team. We're missing a few guys right now, but if he's going to come back, it's a big help for us."

## POWER-PLAY PRACTICE

While most attention has been focused on the Hurricanes' inability to stop the Lightning's electric power play — rolling along at 14-for-34 in the postseason — the Hurricanes haven't been able to muster a response of their own on the man advantage, and not necessarily because of fewer opportunities. The Hurricanes have two goals on 11 chances compared to Tampa's six on 14.

That was a focus in Monday's practice, especially adjusting to Tampa's more aggressive short-handed approach.

"We had just two chances but we need to be sharper on those two," Hurricanes defenseman Dougie Hamilton said. "They came with a lot more pressure and we have to be ready for it. It's a long series. We're going to change things and they're going to adapt. They're going to change things and we have to adapt."

The first power-play unit remained the same in practice Monday — Sebastian Aho, Jordan Staal, Teuvo Teravainen, Necas and Hamilton — but Morgan Geekie and Niederreiter both worked with the second unit, replacing Foegele and Brett Pesce.

## RESTING UP

With a 6:30 p.m. start Tuesday after two days off, the Hurricanes have elected to skip their usual morning skate. They took Sunday as a travel/off day and stayed away from the rink entirely, then practiced at PNC Arena on Monday.

"The way that game went, the ebbs and flows, the way it ended up, it was nice to have a day to get away from it," Brind'Amour said.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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The two-day gap between games was the first the Hurricanes have had in the middle of a series these playoffs. They had two days off between Game 6 of the Nashville series and Game 1 of the Tampa series.

"It's a little different because we've kind of been playing every other day in the playoffs," Hamilton said. "It's a good chance for us to reset, though — get away from hockey a little bit yesterday, get back into it today, have a little freshness."

## GAME 6 SET

If necessary, Game 6 in Tampa on Thursday will be a 6:30 p.m. start on NBCSN, the NHL announced Monday.

News Observer LOADED: 06.08.2021

1215363 Carolina Hurricanes

Where's the 'power kill' now? Hurricanes on the brink vs. Lightning after untimely special teams struggles

By Sara Civian Jun 7, 2021

More often than not, it's prudent to look at five-on-five splits when evaluating hockey data. Those stats provides a less-fickle, more-well-rounded representation of what to expect from a team and its individual players over time — and a good indicator of whether a team or player could break through offensively without extra bounces.

So far, that data tells one story of Lightning-Hurricanes, Round 2: what could've been. It's supposed to reflect the process and game flow, so it's a perfect representation of why this matchup has been so frustrating for the Canes, who are down 3-1.

According to Natural Stat Trick, the Canes have owned a 52.25 percent Corsi-for, a 52.92 percent edge in faceoffs and a 94-86 shot advantage at five-on-five through these four games against the Lightning. They've scored six goals to cancel out the six they've allowed. Save for Tampa's edge in shot selection via a 38-27 edge in high-danger chances, the Canes have given themselves every opportunity to win when you discount special teams.

"There's obviously things we need to do better, but that's clearly not been the issue in our losses," coach Rod Brind'Amour said of the Canes' five-on-five play after Monday's practice. "We've got to go back to the drawing board and play another game like (Game 4). Obviously, we need to be better in areas, but I've liked our effort five-on-five through this whole series."

Even strength hasn't been the problem for the Canes, but not being able to capitalize on it has allowed the Lightning to survive it and capitalize on their strength: the power play. This data tells the other story of Lightning-Hurricanes, Round 2: the Lightning are good enough on the power play that if the Hurricanes leave it up to chance, they're straight up going to lose.

For the six goals they've scored at five-on-five, the Lightning have scored another six on the man advantage — three of which were a vessel for the heartbreak of Game 4. They're 6-for-14 with 2.29 expected goals on the power play, while the Canes are 2-for-11 with 1.96 on theirs. You don't want to get too caught up in such a small sample size of data, but rewatching the three latest power-play goals, you see how the Lightning are able to create so much chaos that a reliable metric like expected goals is almost irrelevant.

"I think if you just give that caliber of power play that many chances, they're bound to get some bounces," Jaccob Slavin said. "There were a couple of bad bounces out there. I think the first power-play goal off the crossbar was just a funky bounce. But you give them that many chances ... you just can't give them that many chances."

They're so fast and so accurate, it's like they're in their own expected goals bracket. The bounces were funky, especially on Steven Stamkos' goal — but sometimes that makes it even more impressive.

Maybe the part that's bleakest of all is the Lightning have only seemed to increase in effectiveness and further solve the Canes' "power kill" as the series has gone on. Meanwhile, the only games featuring Hurricanes' power-play goals were the extremely close Games 1 and 3, the latter being their sole win of the series.

"I think execution (needs to improve) for sure," Dougie Hamilton said of the Canes' power play. "They changed up their PK last game. We had just two. We needed to be sharper on those two, but they came with a lot more pressure. We've got to be ready for it. It's a long series. They're going to change things, and we've got to adapt and change things and make them adapt. Hopefully, we can be ready tomorrow and execute and hopefully win that special teams battle."

"We just have to be better with the puck a little bit and move the puck quicker," Martin Necas added. "We play basically the same style we've played all year, and (we need to) try to keep doing that."

It's too late — and utterly futile — to change too much on the penalty kill to stop the Lightning. The simplest way to do this is also the most efficient: stop taking so many penalties. The Canes have taken 44 minors through 10 playoff games — second only to Tampa Bay's 45 (also through 10 games). The nature of the penalties is pretty telling, too. Take it with a grain of salt for various reasons (games played, different referees, etc.) but the Canes lead all playoff teams in hooking calls (eight), tripping calls (eight) and cross-checking (seven). They're in the middle of the pack with seven roughing calls, which is what the brunt of Vegas', Boston's, Tampa Bay's and New York's minors have been.

"Nobody is trying to take penalties," Hamilton said. "You don't go out there and say, 'I'm going to take a penalty this shift.' It happens. We definitely have to try not to take them, but the game happens pretty fast sometimes. It's hockey. We have to do our best to stay out of the box and limit their power-play chances. That will give us a better chance at winning."

Other notes heading into Tuesday's Game 5:

- If any one person's return could help the Hurricanes score goals, it's net-front specialist Nino Niederreiter. He's still a "game-time decision," as are Warren Foegele and Vincent Trocheck, but he practiced with the team Monday next to Jordan Martinook (C) and Necas (RW).

- Brind'Amour didn't reveal the Game 5 goaltender, and that'll be interesting. None of these games have really come down to goaltending — except maybe Game 1, with Alex Nedeljkovic's blunder. The Canes' one win came with Petr Mrazek in net, but he looked a bit lost in the chaos of Game 4 — granted, the Canes lost that game on the penalty kill. I asked Brind'Amour if he considered pulling Mrazek when the Lightning started to pull away. "We consider it all the time. He's a battler, and we know he doesn't want to come out of a game like that." It won't matter who they choose if the Canes can't stay out of the box.

- Surprising no one familiar with the coach and his competitiveness, Brind'Amour actually likes elimination games. "I actually think they are easier games to play," he said Monday. "You know there is no tomorrow. Everyone says it, but this is it. You've got to lay it all on the line. I think they are sometimes easier to play, for some reason. Obviously that's the case, and I'm sure we'll give everything we have. I have no doubt in this group."

The Athletic LOADED: 06.08.2021

1215441

Tampa Bay Lightning

When a hockey stick breaks, everyone has to lend a helping hand



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2021

By Eduardo A. Encina

Published 1 minute ago

RALEIGH, N.C. — During the most critical moments of the Lightning's second-round series opener against Carolina, defenseman Ryan McDonagh found himself in a tough situation.

In the final seconds of Tampa Bay's 2-1 win at PNC Arena, the Hurricanes were pressuring the Lightning net with an extra attacker and McDonagh swung his stick in an attempt to clear the puck from in front of the crease.

In the middle of traffic, McDonagh's stick broke, the blade snapping off and leaving him holding a useless shaft as the puck spun away. Then forward Barclay Goodrow, who was positioning in front of McDonagh in the slot, swung his right arm behind him and gave his teammate his left-shot stick.

Time ticked away as Goodrow could only use his body to screen the Hurricanes from getting an open look. With Carolina having the extra attacker, the game was ending in the Lightning zone, so Goodrow had no chance to sneak back to the bench to get a new stick.

The Lightning locked down the net late to seal the Game 1 win, but not without some nervous moments.

"When it happens to your opposition, you try to take advantage of it," McDonagh said. "When it happens to you, your opponent's going to try and take advantage of it, so it's a part of the game. You play the percentages there as far as passing the stick down to a defenseman or whatnot, or a forward breaks and tries to get off the ice or get a new one. You've just got to handle the adversity in the right way."

If it seems like more broken sticks have littered the ice during the postseason, it's because they have. Lightning equipment manager Ray Thill, who has been with the team for 22 years, said the postseason brings a lot more intensity.

"It is hacking and whacking," Thill said. "Guys are desperate, and it always happens in the playoffs. ... Guys are going down, they're blocking shots. It's the playoff mode."

On the bench, sticks are lined up on a rack in numerical order. But Thill and his staff can recognize each player's stick by the knob or the tape job as well, so when Steven Stamkos is in the faceoff circle, Thill has a spare at the ready.

"Power play, the same thing," Thill said. "Guys on the power play, we have all their sticks ready in our hands. And penalty kill, the same thing, because the sticks, if they just get the tiniest nick, they'll end up breaking. ... During the game, it's usually the guys screaming at me sometimes if I can't see the play like if it's down in the corner. They'll scream, 'Stick for 86,' and I'm there for that."

Players are particular about their sticks and their lifespans. Some will switch after a few games. Others, like center Brayden Point, will use the stick until it breaks. When they do snap, Thill will go into the dressing room to get an extra to add to the rack.

And sometimes players will just get a bad batch of sticks. Thill remembers one time several years ago when former coach John Tortorella fumed on the bench after watching defenseman Dan Boyle's Easton two-piece stick break four times in a game.

"I remember Torts just absolutely yelling at me for the sticks," Thill said. "I'm like, 'I don't know what you want me to do. I'm not making them.' I think he even called the stick rep after the game."

But players can't always get to the bench and will have to rely on teammates.

In Game 2 of the Lightning's series with Carolina, a contest in which five Tampa Bay sticks broke, defenseman Mikhail Sergachev's snapped on

the penalty kill after a puck battle against the boards behind the net. Forwards typically give up their sticks to defensemen, especially on the penalty kill if they shoot from the same side. Anthony Cirelli, left-handed like Sergachev, offered up his, then clogged shooting lanes higher up in the zone empty-handed.

"In that situation, we'd rather be having Sergy with a stick, playing down low in front of the net," Cirelli said. "I think everyone's kind of aware and we see it and just try to recognize which guys are more important with the sticks than without. In that situation there on the PK, Sergy definitely needs a stick and you can just try to take away the shooting lane by staying up top."

Lightning coach Jon Cooper said players are coached up on how to think quickly when they can give their stick to a like-shot teammate who suddenly needs one.

"There's a sense in players that they can really identify those situations when they happen," Cooper said. "But I'll tell you, if you're the coach on the bench when that stick's broken, it isn't a great feeling when you're sitting in the D zone. But it's something that is a skill, it's coached, it's preached as to what happens in these situations and who goes where."

"But it's never a comfortable feeling, that's for sure."

Tampa Bay Times LOADED: 06.08.2021

1215442

Tampa Bay Lightning

Defenseman David Savard remains a 'steady presence' in return to Lightning lineup

By Mari Faiello

Published Yesterday

Updated Yesterday

TAMPA — The Lightning know exactly what they're going to get when they put a guy like David Savard on the ice.

The defenseman, who joined the team after a mid-April trade from Columbus, is a "steady presence" on the blue line, according to coach Jon Cooper, and adds depth to the team's defense in a third pairing with Mikhail Sergachev.

And after missing the first three games of the second-round playoff series against the Hurricanes with an upper-body injury, it was nice for Tampa Bay to have him back in the lineup Saturday.

Trailing 4-2 in the second period, Savard saw the team's playoff experience at work as Tampa Bay erased Carolina's two-goal lead and scored four straight for the 6-4 win.

"I think we lost ourselves for a few minutes there," Savard said of the team's mentality when trailing by two. "There was no panic. We kind of just settled down and got back to our game and obviously the power-play was huge there, and they're just so calm and we get the first one there and we saw the team playing really well at the end of the game. It's fun to be a part of it and to see how the team reacted in that situation."

Savard knew the kind of environment he was jumping into this spring when he got wind of the trade from the Blue Jackets to "one of the best teams in the league." In Columbus, where Savard played for a decade, the team never advanced past the second round in his five years of playoff experience.

Now, with the Lightning taking a 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven series, Savard has a chance to make it to the league semifinals for the first time



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with a team that knows how to go the distance, having won the Stanley Cup in some of the most difficult circumstances last season.

"It's awesome (to be in this situation)," Savard said. "I think as soon as I heard about the trade coming here, I knew how good of a team they were. And I think it's something special they can accomplish by going back-to-back and it's fun for me to be a part of it."

In his Game 4 return, Savard skated for 13:32, logging two penalties and taking one shot on goal (which was the Lightning's second of the game) along with two hits. It wasn't a perfect night, but Cooper was pleased with his production after the layoff.

"It's tough when you play a team like Carolina and the game's going at warp speed," Cooper said. "And for him to come in and contribute the way he did (was good)."

Added Savard: "It's not easy to sit out in the playoffs. It's never fun, and I just try to keep it simple, trying to be physical, kind of the same thing I was doing the last few games against Florida (in the opening round)."

Veteran defenseman Victor Hedman said these kind of games against Carolina make it clear why the Lightning went after Savard before the trade deadline. His physicality and "shot blocking machine" kind of play make him a good addition to Tampa Bay's blueline.

"He's not afraid to get up in the play as well," Hedman added. "Always a good passer. It's been fun to see since he got into the team... He's fit in very well and he and (Sergachev) have done a great job together."

Since joining the team April 10, Savard has played in 21 games, including 14 during the regular season. It's given him time to adjust to new systems and learn to play off his gut.

"It took me a few games (to settle in)," he said, "but now I'm feeling more comfortable on the ice and I feel good through all of the systems and play."

Savard's stat line this postseason doesn't scream productivity at first glance. In seven games, he is scoreless with only three shots on net. But he has blocked five shots and dished out 25 hits, fourth most on the team (eight behind team leader Anthony Cirelli) and second most among Lightning defensemen behind Erik Cernak (31).

And Cooper expects that as the series continues, Savard's play will only get better. For now, the defenseman has "been everything as advertised" with the Lightning.

"In (penalty kills), he finishes plays down low, he blocks shots and we didn't necessarily bring him in here to score goals," Cooper said. "We brought him in here to help prevent them, and that's what he does."

Looking ahead

If the Lightning-Hurricanes series needs a Game 6 on Thursday at Amalie Arena, the time is set for 6:30 p.m. and the game will be televised on NBCSN.

Tampa Bay Times LOADED: 06.08.2021

1215458 Websites

The Athletic / LeBrun: Gerard Gallant led Canada to an unlikely gold medal at the World Championship, so how long until he returns to the NHL?

By Pierre LeBrun Jun 7, 2021

It should probably not surprise anyone that the man who coached an expansion team to the Stanley Cup Final could deliver a gold medal with a less-than-heralded roster at the IIHF World Championship.

After starting 0-3 in the tournament, no less.

Gerard Gallant shook off the coaching rust after 16 months away from the game, leading Team Canada to a rather unlikely gold in Riga, Latvia, capped by Sunday's 3-2 overtime win over defending world champion Finland.

"It was pretty special," Gallant said over the phone from Riga, a few hours after hearing O Canada and getting a gold medal around his neck. "We started 0-3, the start was real tough. But the team came together. We took the long and hard way to get there."

"A lot of character and hard work in this group. It was a lot of fun."

Here is what my TSN colleague James Duthie tweeted:

MINI-MIRACLE ON ICE.

— JAMES DUTHIE (@TSNJAMESDUTHIE) JUNE 6, 2021

A roster led by the likes of Adam Henrique, Connor Brown, Troy Stecher, Maxime Comtois, tournament MVP Andrew Mangiapane and golden goal hero Nick Paul didn't put the fear in God into anyone before this event began. A roster that began the tournament with three consecutive losses, prompting Gallant to have a chat with the group.

"We talked one day after practice," Gallant said. "We said, 'We know we're better than this.' We basically had to run the table and a lot of things had to happen and they did."

"We got better every game."

Canada won six of its last seven games, got a lot of help from other team results to qualify for the quarterfinals, and then never looked back.

Nothing short of improbable.

"When they posted our roster, I remember the comments," Comtois told Andrew Podnieks of IIHF.com. "People weren't giving us a chance. People were unhappy with the decision Hockey Canada made with the roster. And we proved everybody wrong. We had some adversity throughout the tournament. We really played good hockey down the stretch when it counted, and at the end of the day we have a gold medal."

Team Canada became the first team in the history of the IIHF event to win gold after posting four losses, knocking off Russia, the U.S. and Finland in the medal round to win it all.

"It was a special group," said Gallant. "Character guys that came together. A lot of guys didn't want to come this year with COVID and everything, and we understood this. But the guys that came really came together and made a name for themselves. They really became a team."

And they played for their coach.

"One of the best coaches at getting the guys to buy in and play hard for him," Team Canada GM Roberto Luongo said via text message from Latvia on Sunday night.

"Great players' coach. Very easy going."

In the department of "timing is everything," Gallant's world championship gold medal comes at a time when he's an NHL free-agent coach.

As previously reported, he's already interviewed with the New York Rangers — Gallant met with GM Chris Drury last month before flying overseas for the World Championships and word is the Rangers came away impressed with his interview — and Columbus Blue Jackets and so we'll see what comes next as he returns home.

"Obviously, it's been 16 months. I'm waiting for the next opportunity and I hope it comes soon," said Gallant. "Not sure what's it going to be. I'm having conversations with some teams and hopefully something happens."



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He thanked Hockey Canada for the opportunity to do what he loves. He missed it.

"It was just great for me personally to get behind the bench again and to be able to win a gold medal with Team Canada makes it that much more special," said Gallant. "Just a lot of fun."

He returns home a world champion. Now he just needs a job. Here's betting that happens.

The Athletic LOADED: 06.08.2021

1215459 Websites

The Athletic / Marián Hossa had already moved on from hockey, and now his contract has too. What does his future hold?

By Scott Powers Jun 7, 2021

Marián Hossa was recently at the HOSS Sport Center in Trenčín, Slovakia, when a friend asked if he would mind showing some kids how to shoot a puck.

Hossa was initially reluctant. It had been some time since he picked up a hockey stick. There was a good chance his shot might not resemble the one that led to his Hall of Fame career.

"I started laughing and said I haven't held a stick, and I'm not lying to you, for four years," Hossa recently said by phone. "So I grabbed the stick because he had a longer stick there and showed them how they're supposed to put the weight on it and how to release it and then I slowly got into it. I'm like, 'I miss shooting pucks.' After I started shooting 20-30 pucks just by myself, I'm like, 'Hold on a second.' I started hitting the net really good. I felt like a little kid again. I haven't done it in so long and someone gave me a stick, so that was a good reminder."

Hossa still has those moments when he's reminded of how long it's been since he stepped away from playing hockey due to a skin condition, like recently, when he was signing hockey memorabilia and was asked to include the date of his last NHL regular-season game on an item.

"It was 4/8/17," Hossa said. "I'm like, four years ago I played my last game? No way. You don't think about it, but that's four years, man. Like, it's going super-fast, right?"

Hossa has never wavered on his decision to leave behind hockey. He just couldn't swallow another pill in an attempt to treat his condition. He had too much life ahead of him to risk his health. He hasn't worn a piece of hockey equipment since April 17, 2017, when his Chicago Blackhawks were eliminated by the Nashville Predators in the Stanley Cup playoffs.

If Hossa hadn't won three Stanley Cups or had the long career he had, leaving hockey may have been harder, but he departed the game content.

"Like, I'm surprised I'm not missing it," Hossa said. "Because I'm away already four years, I kind of got used to life after hockey. And I've been pretty fortunate to be busy with things I like to do in my firm (a food company) and sport center and different types of things.

"But definitely, when the hockey wasn't on TV, I missed watching it. I missed following the Blackhawks. But I am surprised I thought maybe the first year would be like, OK, you've got a break after a long time and then you're going to be off hockey and then you're going to start missing it. But I think playing so many seasons, I just felt like, OK, I don't miss it. You know I don't miss putting the equipment on and don't miss going to practice every day. It's kind of surprised me in one way. But, you know, honestly, this is how I feel."

This particular season is different than the last three he sat out. This year marked the final season of his contract, and because a medical condition ended his career, his contract carried on with a long-term injured reserve designation. When he stopped playing, he had four years remaining on his 12-year deal with the Blackhawks, who carried the contract for the first of the last four years before trading it in 2018 to the Arizona Coyotes, who have had it for the last three seasons. Hossa had to visit Arizona to be examined after the trade, but there's been minimal interaction with them since. It's not as if he's wearing a Coyotes sweatshirt around Slovakia. He recently received his final NHL paycheck.

Notable NHL contracts still on the books

PLAYER	TEAM	AMOUNT	NEXT SEASON	EXPIRES
	TYPE			

Andrej Sekera

Oilers

\$1.5 million

2023

Buyout

Roberto Luongo

Canucks

\$3.04 million

2022

Cap recapture

Rick DiPietro

Islanders

\$1.5 million

2029

Compliance buyout

Vincent Lecavalier

Lightning

\$1.8 million

2027

Compliance buyout

Phil Kessel

Maple Leafs

\$1.2 million

2022

Retained salary

Karl Alzner

Canadiens

\$2 million

2024

Buyout

Kyle Turris

Predators

\$2 million

2028



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Buyout  
Ilya Bryzgalov  
Flyers  
\$1.6 million  
2027  
Compliance buyout  
Cody Hodgson  
Sabres  
\$790K  
2023  
Buyout  
Christian Ehrhoff  
Sabres  
\$860K  
2028  
Compliance buyout  
Roberto Luongo  
Panthers  
\$1.1 million  
2022  
Cap recapture  
Brad Richards  
Rangers  
\$1.1 million  
2026  
Compliance buyout  
Dion Phaneuf  
Senators  
\$1.1 million  
2023  
Buyout  
Mike Richards  
Kings  
\$900K  
2032  
Terminated contract  
Ilya Kovalchuk  
Devils  
\$250K  
2025  
Cap recapture penalty  
(CapFriendly)

Hossa has had a few more of those “reminder” moments this season because it was the end.

“When the season finally started this year, I think my wife told me, this is your last year, you know?” Hossa said. “I told her, yeah, you remember your last year. (laughing) We had a little talk, but obviously, it’s just the last year of the contract. This is my fourth year not playing, but I definitely know this is my last year.”

Hossa fills up his time with plenty else. He’s taken on a large role with his food company. He’s involved with his sports center, which includes a golf course. His two daughters keep him quite busy.

Plus, he’s picked up boxing as a recreational activity.

“I do individual training with my coach, and Fridays we do sparring with my brother (Marcel) and some other guys,” Hossa said. “So we like to get into it a little bit, but there’s limits. It’s not like real hard. It’s controlling. It’s cool to kind of experience it, and you get a respect for fights. You realize how it is to be in an individual sport and those fighters have to be in unbelievable shape. I don’t care how talented you are, you are alone and if you get one punch wrong, you have to deal with it for the next two or three minutes in a ring. You have to be in top shape to handle it.”

Yes, Hossa is still in top shape. He turned 42 in January, but he hasn’t slowed down.

“I feel pretty good,” Hossa said. “Like my wife told me, it feels like you’re going to train for when the season was starting and the guys were in camp. She’s like, ‘Are you going to the training camp or what?’ I’m like, ‘What, are you crazy?’ Because I like to train, I just enjoy it. It’s something I like to do. I think for a longer time I’m going to be doing it. That’s my lifestyle and you just enjoy those things.”

Hossa has continued to keep tabs on the Blackhawks, too. Throughout this season, he’d get up and look at the box scores and dig into who scored and the ice times. He knows less and less of the Blackhawks players personally, but he still keeps in touch with some of them. He still shoots Patrick Kane texts after watching a Kane highlight goal.

Asked about Hossa earlier this season, Kane made it clear he still misses having Hossa around on and off the ice.

“Yeah, talk to him every now and then,” Kane said. “Nice to see him last year when we went overseas, just an amazing teammate, amazing human being. Our team has gone downhill as far as the success we’ve had here. I don’t think that’s a coincidence. I was lucky to sit next to him in the room for a long time — had a lot of fun, lot of laughs, definitely miss a guy like that, especially having him around, his presence for younger players, a guy for younger players to watch, how he handles himself, plays the game. We definitely miss him as a teammate, we miss him as a person probably more.”

(Scott Powers / For The Athletic)

Could Hossa rejoin the Blackhawks in some capacity down the line? Former Blackhawks president John McDonough said in 2019, “He will work for the Blackhawks. Rocky (Wirtz) and I feel very strongly about that.”

Hossa seems open to that idea as well, but his contract only recently officially expired. There will be time for those discussions.

Hossa is also waiting to be officially inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame. He was part of the 2020 class, but the pandemic has postponed the official ceremony. The plan is for it to happen in 2022. Like everything else, Hossa is in no rush.

“I know it’s going to happen,” Hossa said. “It’s just a year later, which is fine. At least, I can enjoy it longer.”

He might even then be asked to pick up a hockey stick again.

The Athletic LOADED: 06.08.2021



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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1215460

Websites

The Athletic / Down Goes Brown: Revisiting the good, bad and outright embarrassing from my oddly specific 2021 NHL predictions

By Sean McIndoe Jun 7, 2021

Predictions are high on the list of any sportswriter's favorite things. They make for relatively easy content, the kind that doesn't require a ton of research or inside information. You just figure out what you think will happen, toss in a couple of bonus picks that you don't actually believe but will get a reaction, and you're good to go. If you know what you're doing, you can even keep everything vague enough that nobody can really accuse you of being all that wrong.

That last bit is the part that always trips me up. As longtime readers know, I have an annual tradition of making a single prediction for each team in the league. But I don't do vague. I steer hard in the other direction and go into way too much detail. Forget about who'll be the leading scorer — exactly how many points will he get? Don't tell me a team will improve their record — let's hear exactly how they'll finish. Oh, somebody's going to score a goal? Let's hear the exact date it's going to happen.

It's the Oddly Specific Prediction. I just think it's more interesting that way. But there's an obvious downside: I'm pretty much always wrong. Often embarrassingly so. Call me Erik Gudbranson, because I'm shooting about 3 percent for my career.

Does that mean I should make the predictions at the start of the season and then never speak of them again? It absolutely does, but that's no fun. So today, we're going to look back at the 32 oddly specific prediction I made on the day the season started in January, and see how I did. Spoiler alert: Not great! But also ... not awful?

Tier 1: Not just wrong but painfully wrong

It's one thing to miss the target. It's another to look back and realize you were aiming in the wrong direction entirely.

Buffalo Sabres — After calling back to one of my worst predictions — picking Casey Mittelstadt to win the Calder in 2018 — I went back to the Sabres rookie well by picking Dylan Cozens as a Calder finalist this year. He had 13 points. Next year's oddly specific Sabres prediction will not be about the Calder Trophy.

Dallas Stars — I said they'd beat the Lightning eight times over the regular season and playoffs combined. They went a rotten 2-5-1 against Tampa Bay during the season, and as for the playoffs ... oof.

New York Rangers — I predicted big things for Alexis Lafrenière, including a 45-point season that would put him in the mix for the most successful teenaged rookie runs in Rangers history. Instead, Lafrenière had a disappointing season, and his 21 points was under half of what I promised.

Colorado Avalanche — I said the Avs would take part in the longest shootout of the season. They didn't give me much to work with, appearing in just one all year, and that one ended after five shots.

Columbus Blue Jackets — With rumors of a Pierre Luc-Dubois trade swirling, I penciled him in to match last year's scoring pace. That would have been about 40 points; he was barely half that, finishing with a career-low 21.

Edmonton Oilers — I picked Connor McDavid to win the Art Ross, which he did, but that doesn't even count as a worthwhile prediction. So I went one further and said he'd finish the year with exactly 87 points. That

would indeed have been enough to win the Art Ross, but McDavid blew by the total by a mile; he was over 87 with weeks left in the season.

Tier 2: Not embarrassingly wrong, but still wrong

This is usually the largest category, featuring predictions that were wrong but aren't completely terrible in hindsight.

New York Islanders — In the face of criticism that the Islanders were a boring team that tried to win every game 2-1, I predicted they wouldn't have a single win this season by that exact score. They had three, although only one was in regulation.

Ottawa Senators — I predicted Tim Stützle would break the record for points by a German-trained rookie, which was Jochen Hecht's 34 in 1999-2000. Stützle was good but fell five points short.

New Jersey Devils — I had Jack Hughes rebounding with a 14-goal season. He did improve but finished with 11.

Washington Capitals — Alex Ovechkin did not finish second in goals scored for the first time in his career; he was tied for 13th.

Vegas Golden Knights — Alex Pietrangolo did not tie Torey Krug in points. (Krug beat him by nine.)

San Jose Sharks — I said the Sharks would finish with the same number of points as last year — 63, albeit in a shorter schedule. They didn't, finishing with 49, which was actually pretty close to the same pace as last year. But that's not what I said.

Detroit Red Wings — I predicted that new goalie Thomas Greiss would play well enough for a bad team to get a couple of sympathy Hart Trophy votes. We haven't seen the ballots yet, but Greiss wasn't all that good, so I feel safe saying this one won't happen.

St. Louis Blues — Mike Hoffman did not finish with exactly 21 goals; he had 17.

Nashville Predators — I said that Roman Josi would finish third in the Norris voting. The book on this one isn't officially closed yet, because we won't know the finalists until Wednesday, but there was virtually no buzz about Josi as a candidate this year, so I'm going to pre-emptively mark this one wrong.

Florida Panthers — I had Sergei Bobrovsky having a minor rebound, and predicted he'd finish with a .910 save percentage. He ended up at .906, meaning I was four goals off.

Winnipeg Jets — I said the Jets would take three-of-four from the Flames in their February series, reversing the results of their play-in round from last summer. The Jets won two to go with a shootout loss. Close but no cigar.

Carolina Hurricanes — After they had a perfect record in 2019-20 when leading after two periods, I predicted they'd lose their season opener to the Red Wings that way. They teased us a bit, holding a meager 1-0 lead after 40 minutes, but held on for a 3-0 win.

Los Angeles Kings — Another opening night miss, as I had the Kings giving up a 5-on-4 shorthanded goal to the Wild (after not giving one up in 2019-20). They did not. They'd end up giving up three on the year, but the first one didn't come until seven weeks into the season. It's cool, you guys had my back last year.

Philadelphia Flyers — After pointing out that Carter Hart had never had an assist or a penalty minute, I predicted he'd get both this year, and in close proximity. He didn't waste much time earning me half-credit by taking his first-ever penalty just three games in. But the assist never came, leaving me as the only expert in the world who was wrong about how Hart's season would play out.

Vancouver Canucks — Finally, I said the Canucks would have the most shots in a game by any team that was shut out this year, and they didn't. Man, I guess I can't get anything right when it comes to the Canucks and



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shutouts. ("Ironical foreshadowing" sign begins to blink in background.) But really, what kind of genius even could, you know?

Tier 3: Wrong, but just a little bit close

There's no partial credit in the oddly specific prediction game, but honestly, I have to find a way to break up the "wrong" category a bit.

Arizona Coyotes – I took a big swing by predicting that defensive defenseman Ilya Lyubushkin would score the first goal of his career and that it would come in his 100th game. He did score the goal, which remains the only one of his three-year career, but it came in Game 114.

Chicago Blackhawks – I predicted that the Hawks' no-name goaltending wouldn't be as bad as we all expected, and that they'd have multiple shutouts by February. They didn't, but if I'd said "in" February instead I'd have been right, and that Chicago's goaltending was legitimately better than we thought early on at least makes this one feel defensible.

Minnesota Wild – I said the Wild would start hot, with 12 points in their first eight games. They did start well, but had to settle for 10 points to go with a couple of one-goal losses that could have tipped the scales if a bounce had gone another way.

Anaheim Ducks – Another start prediction, this time from the other side. I said the Ducks would start slow by winning just two of their first eight. They won three, but two of those were 1-0 wins and I think we can all agree that those should only count as half-wins.

Boston Bruins – I said that Brad Marchand would avenge this disaster by scoring the winning goal in a Bruins shootout win over the Flyers. He did indeed score a shootout winner in the Bruins' very first game of the season, but that one wasn't against Philadelphia. Still, a decent start, and some of you got very excited a few nights later when the Bruins and Flyers went to a shootout in their very first meeting of the season. We were all set up here, but Bruce Cassidy had other ideas, and tragically Marchand did not get to shoot this time. Curse you, Bruce.

Pittsburgh Penguins – We'll end this section with one I went back and forth on. I predicted that the Penguins would be one-half of the deadline's biggest buyer/seller hookup, although I intentionally didn't commit to which side they'd be on. Sure enough, they went out and landed Jeff Carter. Was that the deadline's biggest trade? It wouldn't be completely crazy to try to say that, but I'm not going to try to make the case. Taylor Hall was the biggest move of the deadline, both at the time and in hindsight, so I'll chalk my Penguins call up as a near-miss.

Tier 4: Wrong, but with an asterisk

Is there replay review for oddly specific predictions?

Tampa Bay Lightning – My Lightning prediction was that after never losing consecutive games during their Cup-winning playoff run, they lose back-to-back in their third and fourth games of the season, against the Stars and Blue Jackets. They didn't lose those two games. But that's because they didn't happen; the Stars season was delayed, so the Lightning skipped them, instead going to Columbus and then on to Carolina. They lost both of those games, and it was their first two-game losing streak of the season. But it was Games 4 and 5, not 3 and 4, so while I think I deserve partial credit under the circumstances, I can't claim this one was actually right.

Tier 5: Still to be determined

There's one prediction still twisting in the wind, and while I didn't want to delay this whole post for weeks just for that, it needs its own category.

Seattle Kraken – My first ever oddly specific Kraken prediction was that somebody who scored an overtime goal in the 2021 playoffs would end up being picked in the expansion draft. We'll have to wait on this one, but given all the overtime we've had so far, my odds aren't terrible.

Tier 6: I don't want to talk about it

Yeah, yeah I know shut up.

Toronto Maple Leafs – I'll just cut and paste the prediction, word for word: "Let's see if I can will this one into existence: For the first time in over 40 years, the Leafs face the Canadiens in the playoffs. And it goes seven."

Yeah, nice work buddy, you sure did will that into existence. Maybe next year you can will a dump truck into running over your bike.

Tier 7: Swish

My goal every year is to get just one single prediction that's indisputably right. Did I manage it this year? Sadly, no ... because I got two.

Montreal Canadiens – The Habs raised a few eyebrows by giving Josh Anderson a big contract on the heels of a one-goal season. I predicted he'd surpass that total in his very first game, scoring twice in his Canadiens debut. Sure enough, that's exactly what he did against Toronto. Man, I sure am super-duper good at predicting what happens between the Leafs and Habs.

Calgary Flames – I predicted that prized UFA signing Jacob Markstrom would record a shutout in his first start against his former team, the Canucks. Sure enough, in just his second start of the season, he did exactly that. Do not mess with me when it comes to Jacob Markstrom shutouts.

That's two predictions that were exactly right, which is two more than I typically expect. Did both of them come in the season's first few days? Yes. Did that raise expectations to an unreasonable level? In hindsight, probably. Did I pretty much go oh-for-three months immediately afterward? Maybe I did and maybe I didn't, I don't see your oddly specific predictions doing much better. Am I saying I got two right instead of three because I'm still ignoring what happened in Tier 6? This post is over, no further questions.

The Athletic LOADED: 06.08.2021

1215461 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canadiens earning respect with unified effort during special playoff run

Eric Engels June 8, 2021, 1:43 AM

MONTREAL — All hail the Kings of the North — the Montreal Canadiens, Demoralizers of Maple Leafs, Sweepers and Grounders of Jets.

No, seriously. If this team hasn't earned your respect by coming back and beating a Toronto team that finished 18 points ahead of it in the standings and then obliterating a Winnipeg team that dispatched Connor McDavid, Leon Draisaitl and the Edmonton Oilers in four games, that's your problem. We'll give them their due.

They're not the most skilled of the teams remaining in these Stanley Cup Playoffs. Not even by a long shot.

But they just might be the most unified, and that's what gets it done at this time of year.

The Canadiens are moving on to the Stanley Cup semifinals for the first time in seven years. They're doing so on a seven-game winning streak, as a team that hasn't trailed in 4:37:53 of game time. They're just over 50 minutes away from tying an NHL record, set by the 1960 Canadiens, who swept the Maple Leafs to win it all.

And yet, they will be talked about like lambs awaiting the slaughter against whoever emerges from the battle between the NHL's two best teams from this regular season.

Not by us, though.



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You may underestimate these Canadiens at your own peril.

"It kind of feels like nobody believes in us," said Tyler Toffoli, who scored at 1:39 of overtime to secure the 3-2 win in Game 4 and the sweep over the Jets. "The only people we have are ourselves and our fans, which clearly with the small amount of fans in the building, it sounded a lot more than what it was, are behind us and our friends and family. We're sticking together. We're playing as one and we're winning games and having fun."

Phillip Danault, who blanketed Toronto and Winnipeg's best players in these playoffs, called it the best time of he and his teammates' lives as he chomped on some celebratory pizza.

Danault was born just months before the Canadiens last were crowned Stanley Cup champions. The 28-year-old Victoriaville, Que., native contemplated what it would be like to end the Cup drought with this edition.

Who can blame him for even going there?

"I've been dreaming about bringing it back to Montreal one day," Danault said. "I think this is our chance this year. We've been playing well. We've just got to go one step at a time and not look too far and just enjoy the process and have fun."

Fun is pushing these Jets to the brink, and then out-shooting them 42-16 and coming through with three goals to secure the series.

Erik Gustafsson gave the Canadiens a lead on the power play 8:01 into the first period of Monday's game. It was the ninth time in 11 games this team had secured the first goal in this post-season.

Artturi Lehkonen, who came back from a concussion to replace Jake Evans, who was concussed in Game 1 on a charge that eliminated Jets top centre Mark Scheifele from this series, scored for a second consecutive game to give the Canadiens a 2-0 lead with 51 seconds remaining in the first period.

Carey Price may have blinked for the first time in these playoffs by allowing two goals to Logan Stanley in the second period, but by pushing through and winning in overtime, the Canadiens showed how this team — unlike almost every one that's played in front of Price since he was drafted by the organization in 2005 — is about so much more than its goaltender.

"These guys are playing as well as any team has ever played," he said.

They're certainly playing better than any he's been behind since 2014, when the Canadiens last made it to the semifinals and were undone with New York Rangers winger Chris Kreider crashing skates up into Price and knocking him out of the playoffs.

The 33-year-old, who has a .935 save percentage through 11 games, hasn't been given a chance to come anywhere near this far since and he has treated this one like he may not get another.

"I said that at the start of the year," Price said, "every opportunity you get is a golden one."

This group so clearly understands that.

It's a team bolstered by the Cup-winning experience of Corey Perry, Eric Staal, Joel Edmundson, Jake Allen and Toffoli, and one completely energized by players under the age of 22, like Nick Suzuki, Jesperi Kotkaniemi and Cole Caufield.

It was 21-year-old Alexander Romanov who jumped into Game 4 cold after playing 54 of 56 regular-season games and watching the first 10 playoff games in a suit. Without Jeff Petry (who was injured in Game 3), in a back-to-back situation, they benefited from his jump — even if he played only 9:27.

Others, like Ben Chiarot, Brendan Gallagher, Paul Byron and Josh Anderson, have led the way for the Canadiens with their tenacity and

intensity. Bit players, like Gustafsson, Brett Kulak and Joel Armia, have delivered much more than expected of them.

And then there's 35-year-old Shea Weber, the captain, who missed the final eight games of the season with a thumb injury. He couldn't hold a stick with his left hand in the lead up to the Toronto series, but he's since played the third-most minutes per game of anyone still left in the playoffs.

He had a word for why the Canadiens should be respected.

"There's such a great group of guys in there," Weber said. "That translates on the ice. Everyone does their job and has a specific job that they're supposed to do on the ice. And that's part of it, too. But I think that everyone plays for each other and does the right thing for their teammates."

Isn't that what this is about?

It has to continue to be when the Canadiens resume play. No matter who they're up against.

"It's going to be a helluva job," said coach Dominique Ducharme, who took over from Claude Julien on Feb. 24 and must now prepare his team to play an opponent they haven't faced all year.

"We played the teams we beat nine or 10 times, but it's good to measure ourselves against the best," Ducharme continued. "(The Avalanche and Golden Knights) finished first and second in the league, (respectively), but our objective isn't to finish here. So, if we want to get to where we want to get to, we have to beat the best teams."

And this isn't about matching up with the improbable Cup-winning Canadiens teams of the past. It's got nothing to do with 1993 or 1986.

"Every year is different," said Ducharme. "You look back at those guys, it's special, but yeah, there's something special in our group, and we said it that it was a good group."

"Now, can we write our own story? That's what we want to do."

Two chapters are already in ink, and one crown has already been earned.

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Sportsnet.ca / Jets' season ends after offensive contributors go silent

Ken Wiebe June 8, 2021, 1:04 AM

WINNIPEG — Let the off-season speculation begin.

On a night when All-World goalie Connor Hellebuyck did everything in his power to extend the Winnipeg Jets season, the battle for ice outside the blue paint continued to be the storyline that simply wouldn't go away.

And when the Jets got hemmed in the defensive zone early in overtime, Cole Caufield found Tyler Toffoli for a one-timer on the doorstep that put an abrupt end to the Jets season, a 3-2 defeat at the end of this long road that will in some ways be remembered as the tale of two seasons — and the tale of two distinctly different playoff series.

The Toffoli goal was the exclamation point on a four-game sweep for the Montreal Canadiens, who have won seven games in a row after falling behind 3-1 in the opening round against the Toronto Maple Leafs.

The Jets didn't hold the lead for a single second in the series and were chasing in each of the four games, which played right into the Canadiens' game plan.



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"They're such a good team when they get the lead that they play a frustrating brand of hockey. They don't give you a lot," said Jets centre Adam Lowry, who finished the series with two goals. "They make it tough to get to the net. Obviously, that was a big difference in the series."

While the Jets executed their game play efficiently in the first round, their puck management wasn't good enough and their defensive-zone coverage sprung a leak against the Canadiens.

"It was extreme, which was the case of the year, the story of the year, just extreme," said Jets head coach Paul Maurice. "All these things you've never faced before. We played an NHL season without fans in the building. We played an NHL season without a road game in our time zone. There's a whole lot of things we've never dealt with before."

"And you roll through four games against a team with the two best players in the league, and you like the defensive game and then you get beat four straight times. They were good and they were better than we were in this series and they deserved to win."

For the second consecutive playoff, Jets top centre Mark Scheifele ended the season on the sidelines.

It was an injury that knocked Scheifele out on his third shift of the series opener against the Calgary Flames in August and a four-game suspension for charging in the final minute of the opening game against the Canadiens this time around.

The circumstances were vastly different — other than being highly unpredictable events — but the end result was nearly identical.

Trying to replace a first-line pivot and play driver proved to be virtually impossible for the Jets in nearly all facets of the game.

"You can't. I mean, he's a top-10 player in the NHL," said Jets captain Blake Wheeler, who was held without a point in the four games in the series and was asked to describe the impact of Scheifele's absence. "I'm not saying we would win the series in five games because he was in the lineup but it just changes our team."

"He makes me better. He makes Kyle (Connor) better. As a line, we're able to do some things that are pretty dynamic and from there, the matchup just works a lot better for us because then we can rely on our depth a lot more. We can rely on Adam Lowry's line coming out third and they dominate in that three hole. It just makes our team look a lot different. So, it's a damn shame."

This isn't about playing the blame game.

The Jets simply didn't get enough offensive contributions throughout the lineup, with rookie defenceman Logan Stanley supplying the only offence in Game 4.

By the time the series was over, the Jets had scored only six goals in total — four of which came at even strength.

The biggest issue was that three of those goals came from the defence corps, including one from Derek Forbort.

Kyle Connor had the other goal for the Jets and it came in Game 1 with the extra attacker.

Special teams were a massive factor in the series, as the Canadiens finished with a 6-1 edge in that department — with three shorthanded markers (one into an empty net) and three power play markers countered by a single shortie for the Jets.

Just like that, all of the hope built by an opening-round sweep of the Edmonton Oilers vanished into thin air.

In a season where a Canadian team was guaranteed a berth into the Final Four by winning the North Division, this series was over before it even began.

While the Jets advanced to the second round for just the second time in franchise history, it is also just the third playoff series win in 10 seasons since relocation.

Winning is incredibly difficult, but so is some of the discussions taking place during and after the exit interviews.

It would be a surprise if either Maurice or general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff were shown the door, but this roster is going to require an upgrade in order to move forward — especially as they return to the Central Division in 2021-22.

The loss of defenceman Dylan DeMelo to a soft tissue injury just 29 seconds into Game 1 against the Canadiens underscored the importance of enhancing the blue line this summer.

The Jets have high-end defence prospects in Ville Heinola and Dylan Samberg ready for full-time duty in the fall and while Stanley's emergence was an important development, they're also likely to be shopping for an experienced blue-liner in either free agency or via trade.

Speaking of trades, Monday's loss capped the end of a frustrating season for Jets forward Pierre-Luc Dubois, who started the game on the second line, but also took some turns on the third and even the fourth.

Dubois played all three forward positions for the Jets and never truly found chemistry on a regular line, finishing with eight goals and 23 points in 48 games — including the post-season.

The turbulent campaign took a sideways turn nobody could have seen coming when Dubois was acquired from the Columbus Blue Jackets on January 23 for Patrik Laine and Jack Roslovic.

Dubois appears to be dealing with a nagging lower-body injury as he's been unable to generate much power in his skating stride and he seemed to lose his confidence when it comes to handling the puck or looking for his shot.

The third overall pick of the 2016 NHL Draft finished the campaign on a 24-game goalless drought.

Perhaps nobody is looking forward to a reset more than Dubois, who was unable to find the success he's had previously and is sure to have plenty of motivation about the fresh start next season is going to bring.

The organization still believes in him, but it's clear Dubois can reach another level — and the Jets will need him to if they want to take the next step as an organization.

"Part of the growth of this young man, this year will be his most important year to get him to the next level," Maurice said. "I've got lots of confidence that he's going to get there."

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Sportsnet.ca / Bruins only have themselves to blame in Game 5 loss to Islanders

Iain MacIntyre June 7, 2021, 11:58 PM

A decade after bludgeoning the Vancouver Canucks with impunity on their way to a fully-deserved Stanley Cup, the Boston Bruins are now complaining about officiating. Apparently, they're victims.

Must be drastic times, drastic measures.

But don't expect the sympathy-meter to get above zero outside of New England.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Boston coach Bruce Cassidy, whose team is now a game away from another playoff elimination after losing 5-4 Monday to the New York Islanders, tried after Game 5 to work officials by complaining about the lack of power plays for the Bruins.

Maybe Cassidy will have more success than his team, which despite working the Islanders physically, suddenly trails the East Division final 3-2 after losing the last two games due to the Bruins' inferior depth.

Power plays in Game 5 were 4-2 for the Islanders, and New York scored on its first three chances with the man-advantage.

"We're playing a team that has, you know, very respected management and coaching staff; they won a Stanley Cup," Cassidy said, referring to Islanders coach Barry Trotz's championship with the Washington Capitals in 2018. "But I think they sell a narrative over there that it's more like the New York Saints, you know, not the New York Islanders. They play hard and they play the right way, but I feel we're the same way. The exact calls that are getting called on us do not get called on them, and I don't know why.

"Maybe we need to sell them more flop, but that's not us. You just hope they'd (referees) see them. I mean, the same calls go against us. It's not like I'm sitting there going, 'Well, every call against us sucks.' It's not true. It's just at the end of the day, the similar plays, they need to be penalized on those plays. Like I said, I think they... did a great job selling that narrative that they're clean. They play hard, a hard brand of hockey. I love the way they play. But they commit as many infractions as we do, trust me."

Actually, the Islanders were the second-least penalized time in the NHL during the regular season, so their apparent discipline in the playoffs – just 23 times shorthanded in 11 games against Boston and Pittsburgh – doesn't look especially suspicious.

The Bruins were the fourth-most penalized team in the regular season, shorthanded 38 times more over 56 games than the Islanders were.

Trotz refused to take the post-game bait when asked about the Bruins coach's allegation about the New York Saints.

"Just look at where we ended up during the year," Trotz said of the Islanders' ability to avoid penalties. "I don't know what he means by that. You'll have to ask him."

Boston has The Perfection Line: Patrice Bergeron, David Pastrnak and Brad Marchand, who also happens to have been suspended six times and is regarded as one of the NHL's dirtiest players. There isn't a player Marchand couldn't low-bridge.

But there is a lot of imperfection behind the Bruins' world-class trio, and the Islanders' greater depth has swung the series in their favour.

Brock Nelson's line drove New York offensively in its first-round series comeback against the Penguins, and Islanders star Mathew Barzal, the only player from his team close to Boston's big three, appears to be taking over this one.

He scored one power-play goal and set up Jordan Eberle on another Monday. Grinder Casey Cizikas scored the overtime winner for the Islanders in Game 2 and centres one of the most physical and most-used fourth lines in the NHL. And New York's third line is so good that centre Jean-Gabriel Pageau, who is in the conversation of best players in the series, swapped lines on Monday and played with Nelson's wingers to go head-to-head against Bergeron.

Trotz uses his sixth defenceman, Noah Dobson, on New York's top power play and has won games this series with both of his goalies, Semyon Varlamov and Ilya Sorokin.

Officiating has very little to do with the Bruins' 3-2 disadvantage, and it's not the referees' fault that Boston couldn't kill a penalty Monday when it mattered.

One of the moves of the game was Trotz's decision late in the first period to start using outstanding checking centre Pageau, who is kind of a Patrice Bergeron Lite, with wingers Josh Bailey and Anthony Beauvillier head-to-head against The Perfection Line.

Cassidy took advantage of last change in the series' first two games in Boston to put Bergeron out against Nelson, Bailey and Beauvillier, and that advantageous matchup resumed in Game 5 until Trotz swapped Nelson and Pageau.

The Bruins could either put Bergeron against Pageau, or keep Bergeron against Nelson and face Pageau's wingers, the smart and experienced Kyle Palmieri and Travis Zajac.

The impact of Trotz's move was clear statically: in 6:07 of five-on-five ice time for Bergeron against Nelson, shot attempts with 10-1 in favour of the Bruins; in 5:42 of Bergeron vs. Pageau, it was 6-6.

## EXPERIENCE MATTERS

The Bruins outshot the Islanders 44-19, and New York did not register a shot on target after Nelson made it 5-2 from Craig Smith's turnover at 1:59 of the final period. Pastrnak and David Krejci scored to bring the Bruins within a goal with 5:17 remaining.

But Trotz called a timeout to settle his team and remind his players they're allowed to go forward, and the Islanders yielded little in the final five minutes while closing out the win.

Including last season's summer play-in round, the Islanders are in their eighth playoff series and have logged 41 playoff games since Trotz arrived on Long Island three years ago with general manager Lou Lamoriello.

"You go through different experiences, and it doesn't always go the way you map it out or the way you want," Trotz said. "You just understand that you've got to break the game down into smaller micro-type pieces. Like the end of the game, okay we're still up, we've just got to break that down to the last five minutes and if we do it right, then we can come up with a victory. And that's sort of what we did. It was uncomfortable, they made us uncomfortable. They played very well... but we didn't panic. There's a calmness about our group. Instead of worrying about all the things, I think what experience does — doesn't matter if it's hockey or it's in life — experience just lets you focus in on four or five things that are the most important, and everything else will fall into place."

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USA TODAY / Troubling signs: Where the Winnipeg Jets, Colorado Avalanche and Carolina Hurricanes stand in NHL playoffs

Mike Brehm

The Winnipeg Jets and Colorado Avalanche both lost 5-1 Sunday night, and their respective opponents, the Montreal Canadiens and Vegas Golden Knights, are showing all of the momentum in their second-round series.

"Once they get one chance, they swarm with two or three other chances," Avalanche coach Jared Bednar said of the Golden Knights, who have won two in a row to tie the series at two games.

The Central Division-leading Carolina Hurricanes, meanwhile, are facing elimination when they play at home against the third-ranked and defending Stanley Cup champion Tampa Bay Lightning on Tuesday night.

Where the three teams stand going into their next games:



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## Winnipeg Jets

USA TODAY LOADED: 06.08.2021

Winnipeg's Mark Scheifele said he had faith that he would be able to play another playoff game after he received a four-game suspension for a Game 1 hit on Montreal's Jake Evans.

But the Jets, who beat the high-powered Edmonton Oilers in four games in the first round, are in danger of being swept themselves during Monday night's Game 4 at Montreal.

The Jets (0-3) are victims of a red-hot Canadiens team that has won six in a row since trailing the Toronto Maple Leafs 3-1 and has never trailed in any of those games. Goalie Carey Price has allowed four goals on 87 shots (.954 save percentage) against the Jets.

But the lack of Scheifele, their regular-season leading scorer, also has hurt. Trade acquisition Pierre-Luc Dubois didn't work out on the top line and Paul Stastny was tried there in Game 3 during his return from an injury. The Jets' only goal in the last two games came from the third line.

The Jets don't have a power-play goal in the series and Montreal has scored three short-handed goals.

Only four NHL teams have overcome a 3-0 series deficit.

"You can't reinvent the wheel," Jets captain Blake Wheeler told reporters after Game 3. "You can't start over and try to do something completely different. I think there's some things in our game that we really like, some things we can clean up certainly, and hopefully we get a bounce to go our way."

## Colorado Avalanche

The home team has held serve in this series, and the Avalanche (2-2) will be at home on Tuesday night.

But the Golden Knights have outplayed Colorado the last three games and the Avalanche's 7-1 win in Game 1 might have been an outlier because Vezina Trophy finalist Marc-Andre Fleury was being rested.

The Avalanche took a quick lead Sunday night, but gave up the tying goal on a bad turnover.

Colorado is missing suspended second-line center Nazem Kadri, and the Golden Knights are getting production from their top lines, including a Jonathan Marchessault hat trick in Game 4.

Meanwhile, the Nathan MacKinnon line, after a big performance in Game 1, has been slowed down. MacKinnon has one assist in the past three games.

"They're frustrated, for sure," Bednar said. "It's tight checking, especially for those guys."

Bednar called out his team's effort after a Game 3 loss, but didn't do that after Game 4. He says the Avalanche have a good chance to prevail with two of the next three at home.

"We couldn't seem to find a rhythm tonight, but it wasn't because of lack of work or effort," he said.

## Carolina Hurricanes

The series has been tight, and the Hurricanes held two leads in Game 4 before falling 6-4 on Saturday.

The big difference is the Hurricanes have been short-handed 14 times in the series and have given up six power-play goals, including three in Game 4.

"Can't take six penalties," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said after that game.

## Monday's playoff games

N.Y. Islanders at Boston, 6:30, NBCSN. Series tied 2-2

Winnipeg at Montreal, 8, NHL Network. Canadiens lead 3-0