



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • November 25, 2024

The News & Observer

Carolina Hurricanes goalie Pyotr Kochetkov leaves game after scary collision

Chip Alexander

The Carolina Hurricanes' goaltending problems may have gone from bad to worse.

The Canes, who already have goalie Frederik Andersen sidelined eight to 12 weeks following knee surgery, had goalie Pyotr Kochetkov leave Saturday's game at Columbus after a collision with defenseman Sean Walker.

Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour had no immediate update after the game, which Carolina lost in a shootout, but said of the play, "It didn't look good."

"Obviously we already have one goalie down. This is not ideal, for sure," Brind'Amour said.

The Canes returned from their three-game road trip after the Columbus game and did not practice Sunday. Carolina (14-5-1) hosts the Dallas Stars on Monday at Lenovo Center and will hold a morning skate.

The Hurricanes on Sunday recalled goalie Yaniv Perets from the Chicago Wolves of the AHL.

The Canes also said forward Seth Jarvis had been activated off injured reserve after missing the past seven games with an upper-body injury. Jarvis should be available Monday against the Stars.

Kochetkov's injury came in overtime as Blue Jackets defenseman Zach Werenski was carrying the puck to the net. Walker, to the inside of Werenski, tried to drive him wide of the post when he ran into Kochetkov, who had moved to his right and was pokechecking the puck when he was hit in the head by Walker.

Kochetkov fell to the ice behind the net as Canes trainer Doug Bennett quickly came out to assist. After a few

moments, Bennett helped Kochetkov back to the bench and then to the training room.

"It didn't look too good," Canes defenseman Jalen Chatfield said after the game. "I hope it's not as bad as it looked. He took a pretty hard hit."

Spencer Martin, called up from the AHL's Chicago Wolves with Andersen out, took over in net for the remainder of the OT and the shootout. The Blue Jackets' Sean Monahan had the only shootout goal as Columbus won, 5-4.

Kochetkov, 25, sustained a concussion in January of this year after a collision in net with forward Isac Lundestrom of the Anaheim Ducks. That came at a time when Andersen was dealing with a blood-clotting issue that kept him out a big chunk of the 2023-24 season — the Canes started veteran goalie Antti Raanta and recalled Perets as the backup.

Kochetkov was placed in the concussion protocol in January and missed eight games.

Kochetkov missed a game this season with an unspecified injury, again suffered after a collision with Walker during a road game at Utah. Martin entered the Utah game and started the next.

Martin, 29, was claimed on waivers from Columbus last season and was a valuable addition, playing six games and going 4-1-1.. He now has appeared in five games this season and took the loss Saturday despite not giving up a goal in regulation or the OT.

The loss at Columbus was a tough one for the Canes, who had 4-3 lead late in regulation but had the Blue Jackets tie the score with a sixth attacker. The Canes had some chances to win the game in overtime before the Kochetkov injury.



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The Athletic

Weekend NHL rankings: Change in Boston, déjà vu in Ottawa and expected storylines

Sean McIndoe

We're a quarter of the way through the NHL season, which means it's time for two things: saying "quarter-pole" around your most pedantic friends just to annoy them and writing pieces about how nothing is going the way we expected.

We've been covering that latter ground for most of the season around here, including last week's reminder that you were wrong about all this stuff, too. So this time, let's switch it up. Sure, this is a league where almost nothing is playing out the way we thought: The Oilers are bad, the Flames are good, the Predators are terrible, the Capitals and Wild are great, the Jets are dominant, the Avalanche are .500 and the Bruins are collapsing. Connor McDavid is outside the top 10 in points, Connor McMichael is unstoppable and Connor Bedard is regressing in Year 2. None of it makes any sense. But if we dig deep enough, surely we can find a few things that are actually playing out the way we all expected, right?

Of course we can. I'm not sure we can find five, but let's try.

Bonus five: Early-season stories playing out pretty much the way we all expected

5. The bottom of the barrel — Apart from the Predators trying to nudge their way in, the battle for dead last has pretty much featured the teams you'd expect. The Hawks, Sharks and Habs are all struggling through another rebuild year and are holding a spot open for the mildly surprising Ducks and Blue Jackets.

4. The Leafs are good — While the path has had a few surprises, like an Auston Matthews injury and better-than-expected goaltending, the Leafs under Craig Berube are pretty much right where we would have thought: a little better defensively, a little worse offensively, on pace for home ice in the playoffs and still subject of the occasional freak-out when they lose two in a row. And, as always, good enough to be an early playoff lock but not quite good enough to feel like strong Cup contenders.

3. The Stars are really good — They're the only team from the West that's been in the top five each week so far, and I can't tell you how much I appreciate them making my job just a little bit easier every Sunday.

2. The awards races other than the Hart — The MVP race has already thrown us a curve, with Kirill Kaprizov emerging as the early favorite while McDavid starts slow and Matthews falls off the board. But elsewhere, we're closer to seeing the expected names. The Norris is shaping up to be another round of Cale Makar vs. Quinn Hughes, with a bit of Victor

Hedman, Adam Fox and Rasmus Dahlin mixed in. The Calder race has been led by Matvei Michkov, Logan Stankoven and Macklin Celebrini, with a bit of Lane Hutson mixed in. And the Vezina would come down to a battle between the two consensus favorites, Connor Hellebuyck and Igor Shesterkin. Pretty much how we would have drawn it up.

1. The Metro, except for the Capitals — OK, we were all wrong about the Caps, and if you think I'm going to suggest they're in trouble now that Alex Ovechkin is out for a while, forget it. But aside from Washington, the rest of the division seems about right. The Hurricanes are very good, as always. The Rangers are also good, but leave you wanting more. The Devils are back. The Islanders are OK. The Flyers and Blue Jackets are out playing tough but aren't playoff contenders. And the Penguins are playing out the worst-case scenario of what felt like a wide range of outcomes.

It's nice when things work out the way you thought they would, if only for 20 games or so. On to this week's rankings ...

Road to the Cup

The five teams with the best chances of winning the Stanley Cup.

It's trade board time. Check out CJ's opening list of the season to find out which players your contending team will no doubt be adding for that one 27-year-old prospect and a fifth-round pick.

5. Vegas Golden Knights (13-6-2, +17 true goals differential*) — Fair warning: It's a weird week for the top five, with most of the league's top teams riding mini-slumps. That's OK for our purposes, where the long term is more important than an occasional two-game losing streak. The Knights had one earlier in the week but shook it off with wins over the Senators and Canadiens. They get Colorado and Winnipeg this week, which should be a slightly tougher test.

4. Florida Panthers (12-8-1, +1) — They dropped the rematch with the Jets on Monday, one of three straight regulation losses that have opened the door for the Leafs to pass them for top spot in the Atlantic. They get their first matchup of the season with Toronto on Wednesday, part of a very tough week that also features the Capitals and a home-and-home with the Hurricanes.

3. Dallas Stars (13-6-0, +21) — They're the only team in this week's top five that's reasonably hot, with regulation wins in



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five of their last six. They get the Hurricanes tonight in what may be the game of the week.

2. Winnipeg Jets (17-4-0, +34) — They took another regulation loss, their third in their last five games, and this time against a bad Predators team. Nobody should be panicking yet, but a strong performance in a showdown game with the Wild tonight would certainly help settle some nerves in Winnipeg.

In other news, Kyle Connor is a goon now.

1. Carolina Hurricanes (14-5-1, +28) — Two losses aren't a big concern. But losing another goalie would be, and Pyotr Kochetkov having to come out in overtime after a collision is bad news. We don't know the extent of the injury, so we won't count it against the Hurricanes quite yet, but it's worth watching.

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

Not ranked: Boston Bruins — So, now what?

We got our first coach firing of the season this week, one that went from far-fetched to inevitable real quick. Jim Montgomery came into the season with the highest win percentage of any Bruins coach ever. But after the Bruins rolled over for the Blue Jackets on home ice on Monday night, it was over. On the podcast, the debate wasn't whether Boston would make a change but whether it would happen while we were recording. They held out for a few extra hours, for the record.

OK, so they've done the easy part. And the Joe Sacco era at least got off to a decent start with a pair of coach's dream low-scoring wins, 1-0 over Utah and 2-1 over the Red Wings. For all the times a good coach ends up as a scapegoat and a change doesn't help anything, sometimes you really do need a new voice and a fresh set of eyes. Maybe Sacco is that guy, and can nudge what still seems like a good team on paper back in the right direction. Or maybe the coach won't matter much, but Jeremy Swayman will finally shake off the rust of a missed camp and start playing like his pre-extension self, at which point everything else solidifies from the net out.

If not? That's where it gets tough. There really is an end-of-era feel about this Bruins start. Maybe we don't need to overthink it. Maybe this is a team that isn't good enough down the middle, whose second-best forward is slowing down at 36 and whose blue line isn't quite good enough to paper over a slumping young goaltender, and it all adds up to a playoff miss nobody saw coming but maybe should have.

This is the part where I'd wonder what Don Sweeney would do in that case, only I'm not sure it would be Sweeney making those calls. The NHL's fourth-longest tenured GM has had a ton of success in Boston, and maybe this is just the inevitable ending in a league that craves parity and punishes excellence.

But as far as getting this group, or something close to it, back on track? If there's an easy answer, apart from a new-coach bounce and a goalie snapping out of his funk, I'm not seeing it. Bruins fans, where's your hope index at as we hit the quarter mark?

The bottom five

The five teams that are headed toward dead last and the best lottery odds for James Hagens, or maybe someone else.

That Bruins coaching story continued when the biggest news of the weekend came out of St. Louis, where the Blues jumped at the chance to hire Montgomery. That meant firing Drew Bannister after only 76 games, just 22 of those without the interim tag. That's a tough call to make, but clearly Doug Armstrong didn't want to let an opportunity slip by, especially with his team struggling badly in his penultimate year as GM.

For now, we'll keep the Blues out of the bottom five until we see what Montgomery can do. But that doesn't mean we don't have room for a new entry ...

5. Pittsburgh Penguins (7-12-4, -33) — I can't keep them out any longer. Not after a weekend that saw them outscored 10-2 in a pair of losses. Ah well, at least one of those goals provided a bit of history:

You've still got Crosby, Pens fans. Just don't think about how it's all going to end.

4. Columbus Blue Jackets (9-9-2, -3) — The whole David Jiricek situation is weird. You're building a culture of accountability, so you certainly don't want to hand anything to anyone based on draft pedigree. But you're also rebuilding, and the development of a guy you spent a No. 6 pick on has to be a priority. Maybe that development is more likely to happen with big minutes in the AHL, and that's all this demotion is. But it's led to some trade speculation, and GM Don Waddell didn't exactly sound like a guy who wasn't thinking that way when he was asked about it. Let's see where this goes.

3. Montreal Canadiens (7-11-2, -20) — They played maybe their best game of the season in last Monday's win over the Oilers, then maybe had too many days off to think about it before a disappointing follow-up against the Knights.

2. Chicago Blackhawks (7-12-2, -14) — You know what, it's been a rough season, we'll allow it.

Also, Bedard is a shutdown defensive center now. He also has three goals on the year, and I don't even want to think about where this discourse is going to go in the next month or two if the puck doesn't start going in for him.

1. San Jose Sharks (6-12-5, -23) — I thought this was a neat find by Eric: The Sharks are racking up goals with the goalie out, scoring a league-leading six times at six-on-five. Does that mean they should play the whole game that way? No, obviously not, don't be ridiculous. You'd definitely put a goalie in net if it was late in the third period and you were defending a lead. But should they start every game at six-on-five? Look, I'm just saying that the math checks out.

Also, Joe Thornton absolutely rules.

(And for the record, yes he still would.)

Not ranked: Ottawa Senators — They swore it wouldn't happen again.

The Senators went into the season expecting improvement. Ideally that would mean a playoff spot, although even the most optimistic fan knew that wasn't a guarantee. But at a minimum, they'd be in the race, playing meaningful hockey all season long.



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The one thing that wouldn't happen — that couldn't happen — would be yet another slow start that had them looking up at the race by the end of November. That had been the theme in Ottawa for years: offseason optimism, then almost immediate disappointment, then months of finger-pointing between games that didn't matter.

But those were Pierre Dorion's teams, and D.J. Smith's teams, and even Eugene Melnyk's teams. This was a new start. This time was going to be different.

So far, it hasn't been all that different.

Twenty games into a crucial season, the Senators are under .500, sitting at 8-11-1 after dropping their fifth straight, a 4-3 home loss to the Canucks on Saturday. Maybe worse, it's largely been the same story as the last few seasons: An exciting and talented core has too many lapses at too many wrong moments, and pays for it because of substandard goaltending. That last part was supposed to be fixed by the Linus Ullmark trade, and the Senators have 33 million reasons to hope his slow start is just a case of a veteran adjusting to a new team. But this has been a pattern in Ottawa, where goalies with solid track records show up and immediately get worse. And it can't happen again.

The season certainly hasn't been a disaster, and the Sens are one four-game win streak from being right back in the mix. The fall of the Bruins has put an unexpected playoff spot

into play, canceling out the one the Capitals seem intent on keeping. The path is there. But with a new owner, a new GM, a new coach and a new starting goalie, there are going to be tough questions if it all plays out the same way it always does. And for once, those questions might have to start with maybe the most uncomfortable of all: Are we sure this young core is actually good enough?

For what it's worth, Steve Staios is still preaching patience, because he's an NHL GM and that's all they know how to do, at least publicly. And the players, especially captain Brady Tkachuk, are still saying all the right things. They've certainly had plenty of practice over the years. So have their fans, who have been through this enough times that they're getting used to reading pieces about their team that lean on words like "scars" and "baggage."

The next two weeks should be crucial, and if so, it's at least a decent schedule — after the Flames tonight, they head off for the three-game California trip that features two rebuilding teams, then come home for winnable games against the Red Wings, Predators and Islanders. You'd think that four-game win streak should be in there somewhere. But if it isn't ... well, maybe Julian's got it right.

For now, we've seen this movie before in Ottawa. This time, the remake features a largely new cast. Sens fans are waiting to see if this one is going to finally have a different ending.

NHL at the quarter mark: One stat that sums up each team's 2024-25 season so far

Scott Powers, James Mirtle, Aaron Portzline, Max Bultman, Arpon Basu, Michael Russo, Jonas Siegel, Jeremy Rutherford, Kevin Kurz, Josh Yohe, Murat Ates, Arthur Staple, Shayna Goldman, Fluto Shinzawa, Eric Stephens, Matthew Fairburn, Daniel Nugent-Bowman, Mark Lazerus, Jesse Granger, Sean Gentile, Peter Baugh, Joe Rexrode, Thomas Drance, Julian McKenzie, Cory Lavalette

Surprising save percentages, star-level offensive performances and surging special teams.

As the 2024-25 NHL season passed its quarter mark this week, The Athletic asked its NHL staff for a stat to sum up each team's season so far.

What's the defining data point for your favorite team? Here are all 32 answers.

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16 stats: Connor Bedard's linemates, Rangers' top-6 issues, Pierre-Luc Dubois' bounce-back

Anaheim Ducks

.915 team save percentage: On average as of Thursday, the Ducks allow the most shots on goal (34.1) in the league. Their special teams are not good, particularly a penalty kill that ranks 31st. They don't score enough to cover for breakdowns or mistakes. One reason they still struggle to drive possession is their 42.3 percent win rate in the faceoff circle puts them at league bottom. But they're 8-8-2 with just 54 goals allowed because of terrific goaltending. Anaheim's .915 save percentage ranked eighth in the NHL. Lukas Dostal is among the league leaders with a .924. Dostal has

also made 14 more saves than expected for the shots he faces. John Gibson has returned from missing several weeks for recovery from appendicitis and has won his first three starts while posting a solid .906. If the Ducks build on their better play as of late, they could make a move up the standings due to some strong netminding. — Eric Stephens

Boston Bruins

11.9 percent power play: The Bruins have the worst power play in the league. This is not just problematic in terms of team success. That David Pastrnak, Brad Marchand, Charlie McAvoy, Elias Lindholm and Pavel Zacha have not scored enough on the power play has bled into their five-on-five play. This was a big reason Jim Montgomery lost his job. — Fluto Shinzawa

Buffalo Sabres

Two combined five-on-five goals from Dylan Cozens and Jack Quinn: Cozens and Quinn were supposed to provide Buffalo's lineup with the secondary scoring necessary to make this team a contender. Instead through Thursday, they have combined for two five-on-five goals, and Cozens has both of them. Together, they have combined for 12 total points. And the Sabres have just 44 percent of the expected goals when these two are on the ice together at five-on-five. Getting them going again is key to Buffalo's making a push in the standings. — Matthew Fairburn

Calgary Flames

.917 team save percentage: The Flames' goaltending is a huge reason they've remained competitive early in the season. Dustin Wolf, in particular, has earned the right to start more games and has vaulted himself into the Calder



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Trophy discussion. In a year that's supposed to be one of transition and rebuilding for the Flames, Calgary can say its faith in Wolf is paying off. — Julian McKenzie

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Surprise NHL breakouts? Lane Hutson, Marco Rossi and top 10 under-the-radar young players

Carolina Hurricanes

Martin Necas' 31 points: The story of the Hurricanes' season through 19 games is Necas' 31 points. The 25-year-old winger, who was the subject of trade rumors this summer before signing a two-year contract extension as an RFA, ranks third in the league in scoring and is tied for first in power-play points. His hot start has masked Sebastian Aho's early-season scoring woes: Aho has five goals and only one at five-on-five. — Cory Lavalette

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Is Martin Necas a Hart Trophy contender?

Chicago Blackhawks

Outscored 26-16 in the third period: The Blackhawks have just a minus-3 goal differential in the first two periods of games this season. The third, though, has been a challenge for them. Nine of those 16 third-period goals have been empty-netters, but that also tells the story of their season so far. They've been in nearly every game, but they haven't consistently been able to find ways to win them in the third period. — Scott Powers

Nathan MacKinnon leads the NHL with 27 assists and tied for the league lead with 34 points. (Christopher Hanewinckel / Imagn Images)

Colorado Avalanche

Nathan MacKinnon's 27 assists: Things haven't exactly gone the Avalanche's way early in this season. Colorado has missed several key players, and the goaltending has struggled tremendously. Despite all of that, the Avalanche are still sitting in a playoff spot — largely thanks to the heroics of MacKinnon. He leads the NHL with 27 assists, tied with Kirill Kaprizov for the league lead with 34 points. MacKinnon is following up his Hart Trophy season with an even more impressive encore. — Jesse Granger

Columbus Blue Jackets

Six goals or more in six games: It will be a successful season in Columbus if its plethora of young forwards establish themselves as impact players in the NHL. So far, so good. Though wildly inconsistent, the Blue Jackets have had stretches when their offensive dynamism has shown through. Six times in 19 games, the Blue Jackets have scored six or more goals in a game. Keep in mind most of that has been done without injured Kent Johnson and Boone Jenner in the lineup. — Aaron Portzline

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Blue Jackets end losing streak and scoring drought with rout of Penguins

Dallas Stars

2.33 goals-against per game: No team in the NHL has been stingier than the Dallas Stars, who are giving up the least goals per game in the league — a marked improvement from last year's 2.83 GA per game. Much of that can be traced to Jake Oettinger, who is fifth in the league in GSAx at 9.76 (Casey DeSmith has been excellent, too). The question is, can they keep it up? Dallas is middle of the pack in terms of expected goals against, but it has some wiggle room, considering it's the third-highest-scoring team in the league, as well, trailing only Colorado and Toronto. — Mark Lazerus

Detroit Red Wings

2.53 goals per game: The Red Wings have struggled mightily to score this season, dropping from a top-10 scoring team last season to the bottom 10. This 2.53 figure is nearly a full goal lower than their 2023-24 pace, at 3.35. Even more jarring is that's all despite a power play clicking to the tune of 30.2 percent, a top-five unit in the league. There's nuance in why the drop-off has been so significant, including roster changes, an increased emphasis on defensive responsibility, and just plain old struggles to generate and maintain zone time, but the result has been a team that simply hasn't scored enough — a big reason Detroit has found itself underperforming so far in the standings. — Max Bultman

Edmonton Oilers

2.76 goals per game: The Oilers led the NHL in offense at 3.96 goals per game two seasons ago. They were fourth last season at 3.56. Their scoring rate has plummeted through their first 21 games. It's the most unexpected thing about this team and arguably the biggest reason they're a mediocre 10-9-2. Leon Draisaitl and Connor McDavid are the only two forwards producing. They've accounted for 24 of the 58 goals the Oilers have scored. No other forward, including now-injured 54-goal scorer Zach Hyman, has more than four. — Daniel Nugent-Bowman

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Twenty crucial Oilers questions after an uneven 20 games

Florida Panthers

Sam Reinhart's 28.85 shooting percentage: Reinhart's incredible 2023-24 wasn't a fluke — he'd been a good player for a long time. Still, expecting him to improve on 57 goals would've been unreasonable, and yet here he is, tied for the league lead with 15 and on pace for 62. His shooting percentage has somehow increased from 24.26 to 28.85, and his status as one of the league's pre-eminent snipers has been secured. — Sean Gentille

Los Angeles Kings

A 2-5-0 record against over .500 teams: The Kings have collected points over the first quarter of a schedule that's been road-heavy with 12 of their first 18 games away from Crypto.com Arena, but it's also been rather light on facing top-tier competition. And they haven't fared too well when running up against better teams. Wins over Vegas and Minnesota — their best two victories — are the only ones



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they have in seven games against squads that have a points percentage better than .500. Though a 10-7-3 mark in their first 20 is certainly passable, their lack of notching many triumphs against quality clubs speaks to a team that's still a couple of sizable steps away from being among the elite. Upcoming home games versus Winnipeg, Dallas and Minnesota will serve to help measure whether they're an adequate bunch or something more. — Eric Stephens

Minnesota Wild

26 five-on-five goals in 19 games: The Wild are one of the best defensive teams in the NHL, and it's a huge part of the reason they have the second-most points (29) in the NHL. They are allowing a league-low 1.37 five-on-five goals per game. According to MoneyPuck, the Wild have given up the second-fewest expected five-on-five goals (31.25), a league-low expected five-on-five goals against per 60 minutes (1.64) and a league-low 26 five-on-five high-danger shots against. Filip Gustavsson told The Athletic this week the trust between goaltenders and the skaters is off the charts right now. — Michael Russo

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Behind Filip Gustavsson's comeback: Self-reflection, conditioning — and trust in his Wild teammates

Montreal Canadiens

2.07 expected goals against per 60 at five-on-five: That is the Canadiens' expected goals against per 60 minutes of five-on-five ice time in eight games in November. In 11 games in October, that number was at 3.79, easily the worst in the league. Had the Canadiens continued playing such porous defense, they would be so far out of the picture by now that any hope of being relevant in December — let alone February or March — would already be long gone. But shoring up their defensive game this month has led to their goaltenders' playing better and the team's being more competitive in general, to the point where the Canadiens remain on the cusp of relevancy. It's a significant step forward from how bad the first three weeks of the season went for them. — Arpon Basu

Nashville Predators

League-worst minus-17.94 goals for above expected: This team has a top-10 power play, the best penalty kill in the league and an elite goaltender in Juuse Saros with a .917 save percentage. And it's a bad team, the most disappointing team in the league. Nashville is a five-on-five disaster. Still, it's 13th in five-on-five expected goals for, which isn't great but also isn't disastrous. The inability to convert, for a team with this much proven talent, is truly confounding. — Joe Rexrode

New Jersey Devils

Seven forwards with double-digit points: The Devils bolstered their depth during their busy offseason, adding Paul Cotter and Stefan Noesen via trade and signing. Both are among the team's forwards with double-digit points, and Noesen is up to 10 goals. The fact New Jersey is getting that level of production from across the lineup is an encouraging sign, especially with high-skill players like Jack Hughes and Jesper Bratt contributing big points. — Peter Baugh

New York Islanders

Seven tying or go-ahead goals allowed in the final five minutes: The Islanders have done enough to hold a few late leads this season. And somehow, seven times in six games out of the 20 they've played this season, they've blown it late. Thursday night was the rare double, allowing a tying goal and then a go-ahead goal in the last five minutes of regulation. Call it bad luck, call it a lack of confidence, call it whatever you want — they've done it so often this season and last season that it's mind-boggling. — Arthur Staple

New York Rangers

11-0 with Will Cuyllé, Filip Chytil and Kaapo Kakko together: The Cuyllé-Chytil-Kakko line has been excellent, and the group has remained effective with Jonny Brodzinski filling in for Chytil, who is day to day with an upper-body injury. With Cuyllé-Chytil-Kakko on the ice at five-on-five, the Rangers are not only outscoring opponents but also out-chancing them (69-56), outshooting them (80-61) and controlling the expected goal share (65.29 percent), per Natural Stat Trick. That line's success has been vital in New York's hot start. It lengthens the lineup dramatically. — Peter Baugh

Ottawa Senators

Linus Ullmark's .887 save percentage: It's hard to boil down the Senators' season in one stat. Despite hovering around the .500 mark, they still need to shed the inconsistencies and deficiencies that have plagued them from years past. Goaltending is at the top of that list. And though Anton Forsberg hasn't been perfect himself, more blame will be thrown at starting goaltender Ullmark. The Sens need him to be better consistently. — Julian McKenzie

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Should GM Steve Staios remain patient with this Senators group?

Philadelphia Flyers

An .887 team save percentage: No. 1 Sam Ersson has been decent, with a 2.70 goals-against average and a .902 save percentage in 11 games. But he's missed some time lately due to injury, so the Flyers have had to rely on Ivan Fedotov and Aleksei Kolosov. Though both of them have been a tad better lately, the numbers are still brutal. They've combined for a 3-8-0 record (Fedotov has all three wins), with a 3.69 goals-against average and .875 save percentage. It's not a stretch to suggest that if the Flyers had simply signed a veteran, NHL-worthy backup in the offseason, they'd have at least 4 or 5 more points in the standings. — Kevin Kurz

Pittsburgh Penguins

Five games lost in which they've held a 2-0 lead: Blame the leaky goaltending. Blame the horrendous defensive work. Blame the coaching. Blame the forwards for rarely expanding those 2-0 leads. The Penguins' inability to win games in which they have a multiple-goal lead has been brutal to watch this season. — Josh Yohe

San Jose Sharks

Six goals scored at six-on-five: No team has scored more with a sixth attacker than the Sharks, who also have tallied



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twice when operating on a six-on-four power play with the goalie pulled. The latest occurred Thursday when Alex Wennberg scored with 8.8 seconds left to force overtime in an eventual shootout loss to St. Louis. It's reflective of a team that still has to come back from deficits, but the proficiency also speaks to a Sharks club that is much more competitive than last season and has picked up points when it ordinarily shouldn't. This might not last, and protecting late leads is a preferable option to goalie pull situations, but there's a resiliency with these Sharks that's a good thing to have when rebuilding. — Eric Stephens

In Philipp Grubauer's seven starts this season, the Kraken have won just one game. (Steph Chambers / Getty Images)

Seattle Kraken

Philipp Grubauer's 1-6-0 record: The Kraken's playoff chances amid a crowd of Pacific Division hopefuls are being materially harmed by the performance of their expensive backup netminder Grubauer. In Grubauer's seven starts, the Kraken have won just one game. In Joey Daccord's 13 starts, the Kraken have won nine games. Sometimes a goaltender's win-loss record doesn't tell the full story, but in this case, it's straightforward. Daccord has managed a .923 save percentage while stopping 8.2 goals saved above average, according to Natural Stat Trick. Grubauer, in contrast, is sporting a .881 save percentage and has permitted over 3.3 goals saved below average. Seattle needs more saves when Daccord gets a game off, or it could sink the Kraken's season. — Thomas Drance

St. Louis Blues

Trailing by two goals 11 times: The Blues have played 21 games this season and have trailed by two goals or more in 11 of them. They've rallied to win a couple of those, but simply put, they have been chasing games entirely too much. The offense is ranked 29th in the NHL (2.43 goals per game) through Thursday and has scored two goals or fewer in 12 of the 21 games. They have no players with more than six goals. So they're getting behind because of the lack of offense, and they don't have the firepower to catch up. — Jeremy Rutherford

Tampa Bay Lightning

1.67 goals against per 60: The Lightning seriously missed Ryan McDonagh. Tampa Bay has had the most challenging schedule to open the season, and McDonagh has shouldered one of the toughest workloads in the league as a result. Despite that burden, the Lightning have only given up 2.45 expected goals per 60 in his minutes, with even better results to match (1.67 goals against per 60). McDonagh's return has revitalized Erik Cernak's defensive game, giving the team a reliable shutdown second pair again. And that's made life a lot easier for Victor Hedman, who is averaging the sixth-best Game Score in the league through 18 games at 1.86. — Shayna Goldman

Toronto Maple Leafs

2.5 goals against per game: Last season, the Leafs ranked 21st in the NHL in goals against, yielding more than three goals per game. This season, they've leaped into the top 10, just outside the top five, in fact. Through 20 games, they've allowed a mere 2.5 goals a night. That's due to a few things. One, the goaltending has been much improved. Anthony

Stolarz, in particular, has impressed. Two, offseason additions like Chris Tanev have made a huge impact, not just at even strength but also on a penalty kill that's made great strides from last season. And three, first-year head coach Craig Berube has this group playing a simpler, safer overall game. That's hurt the offense, but it's helped the defense. — Jonas Siegel

Utah Hockey Club

33 goals in their last 16 games: After the team was shut out for a fifth time (!) Thursday against the Bruins, Utah's offensive drop-off is reaching new lows. After scoring 16 goals in their first three games — all wins — to open the season, the Hockey Clubbers are dead last in the NHL offensively since that point. Their power play has just seven goals on the season, tied for last in the NHL, and is down to 12.7 percent on the year. They also have the worst record in the league since starting 3-0, with just four wins in their last 16 games. Fourth-liner Jack McBain leads all Utah forwards in scoring over this ghastly stretch with just four goals. It's ugly. — James Mirtle

Vancouver Canucks

Minus-2 goal differential: The Canucks have had a rocky start to the season, but not an unsuccessful one. Despite prolonged absences from a Vezina finalist goaltender (Thatcher Demko), an X-factor middle-six forward (Dakota Joshua) and a 40-goal scoring winger (Brock Boeser), the club is in third place in the Pacific Division by point percentage through 18 games. That said, this isn't a club that's run nearly as pure as it did last season. That's best captured by the Canucks' goal differential, which is narrowly in the red — minus-1 through 18 games — and stands in sharp contrast with what this club accomplished 12 months ago (when it held a league-best plus-30 goal differential through 18 games). What this tells us is that Vancouver's margin in games has disappeared. We haven't seen the 8-1 or 10-1 blowouts the Canucks managed in various games early last season. To this point, for a variety of reasons with player health and less fortunate percentages chief among them, the Canucks haven't had that sort of juice in the early going this season. — Thomas Drance

Vegas Golden Knights

30.8 percent power play: As successful as the Golden Knights have been from their inception, they've never had a strong power play. They've always won despite their struggles with a man advantage. This season, the power play is an asset for Vegas, ranked second in the NHL. Everything runs through Jack Eichel, who is off to the best offensive start of his career. Tomas Hertl is an excellent finisher in front of the net, and Pavel Dorofeyev has elevated his game on that unit. It's the best the power play has ever looked. — Jesse Granger

Washington Capitals

Plus-24 goal differential at five-on-five: Plenty was made, here and elsewhere, about the Caps' abysmal overall goal differential last season — and there was no way around it. Minus-37 is a number you see from bottom-feeders, not playoff teams. Credit where it's due, but something needed to change, and it has, in a big, big way. At five-on-five specifically, the Caps are leading the league with a plus-24 differential. Before Alex Ovechkin's injury, he and linemates



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Dylan Strome and Aliaksei Protas were winning their minutes 16-5. — Sean Gentille

Winnipeg Jets

14-12 when the top line has been on the ice at five-on-five: That's the scoreline (as of Thursday) when Winnipeg's top line of Kyle Connor, Mark Scheifele and Gabriel Vilardi has been on the ice together at five-on-five this season. The fact Winnipeg is winning those minutes after a rough start on that

Don Waddell enjoys fresh start with Blue Jackets but holds good feelings about Hurricanes

Aaron Portzline

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Don Waddell surprised many in the Carolina Hurricanes organization last May when he announced, only a day after the Hurricanes were bounced from the second round of the playoffs, that he was resigning as president and general manager.

The rest of the hockey world learned of his decision about a week later, a major shake-up for one of the most consistently competitive franchises in the NHL in recent seasons.

"I'd been there 10 years, six as the president and general manager," said Waddell, now general manager of the Columbus Blue Jackets. "It was a lot, beyond the day-to-day operation of the hockey club, plus an expansion project (with PNC Arena) and other projects.

"I made the decision way before the end of the season that it was time for me to move on. It was just time to find the next chapter in my life. I was very much a personal feeling. Probably a lot of things went into it, but I just felt it was time."

As the guy who ran both the business side and on-ice product, Waddell had long-established relationships all over the Hurricanes organization. So it will be a mini-reunion on Saturday when the Blue Jackets host Carolina in Nationwide Arena, and a much bigger get-back-together when the Jackets play in Raleigh, N.C., on Dec. 15.

"Any time you're with a team for 10 years, you've got a lot of friends there, a lot of ties to the organization," Waddell said. "The coaching staff, the trainers, the players, everybody in the office ... I had a big staff there, and there are a lot of good friends I've stayed in touch with.

"They're a very good team. I think they have, what, three losses? I just want (the Blue Jackets) to play hard and play our best and hopefully we win the game."

Saturday's game also marks the return to Columbus of forward Jack Roslovic, who, after 3 1/2 seasons in Columbus, was traded to the New York Rangers at the deadline last season. He signed with Carolina as an unrestricted free agent this summer.

Roslovic, who is second on the Hurricanes with 10 goals in only 18 games, will almost certainly get a first-period "welcome back" video on the scoreboard.

Waddell will have to wait until next month for his greeting in Raleigh, but Saturday is a testament to the status he's achieved as an NHL executive. He's now been a president and general manager of three franchises, including the expansion Atlanta Thrashers, who moved to Winnipeg in 2011.

front — and after that same line was outscored last season while getting outshot 120-88 — vindicates Scott Arniel's belief in them and their own commitment to puck management and defense. Connor, Scheifele and Vilardi's offensive gifts were always meant to impress and they've given themselves and their team a lot to be excited about so far. — Murat Ates

The Hurricanes could never get over the hump to reach the Stanley Cup Final during Waddell's run, but there were significant successes. What stands out?

"When I went there initially as president (2014), our attendance was among the worst in the league," Waddell said. "When I left, we were selling out every night.

"When Rod (Brind'Amour) and I took over (the roster) — he as the coach and me as the general manager — we had missed the playoffs in nine straight years. We then made the playoffs six years in a row. From where we started and where it ended up — and they're still going, obviously — I feel good about that. I think I left them in a good spot."

On May 16, Carolina lost Game 6 to the New York Rangers, ending their second-round series. The next day, a Friday, Waddell told Hurricanes owner Tom Dundon that he was stepping down, even though he didn't have any future plans in place.

"I had no idea, really, what was going on around the league," Waddell said. "We were in playoff mode, just going day by day and pretty focused on what was in front of us.

"I didn't know what Columbus was doing (with their GM search). I had permission on Sunday to talk with other teams, and I found out they were still looking. They asked me to come in and talk to them."

Waddell had developed a two-decade friendship with Blue Jackets president of business operations Mike Priest, who was running the Jackets' GM search. He immediately shot to the top of Priest's list of candidates, and a drawn-out process started moving forward quickly. He was hired on May 29.

Priest and Waddell had been friends for more than two decades after meeting at the NHL board of governors meetings in the early 2000s, when they were both trying to get expansion franchises off the ground in non-traditional hockey markets.

That relationship with Priest was a big draw, Waddell said. So was the Blue Jackets' young talent, especially at forward. But he was also delighted with the way the franchise operates internally.

Under Dundon, the Hurricanes are known to be run more collaboratively than most pro sports franchises. That's probably a nice way of putting it. There's a perception that the office staff can't order paper clips or printer ink without some level of discussion.

"A lot was done by committee," Waddell said. "At the end of the day, though, I can honestly say, there's nothing that I wanted to do ... for the most part ... nothing major ... that we couldn't get done.



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"But you had a lot of ... how should I put this? ... there were always a lot of questions about anything you wanted to do."

It's hard to argue with the Hurricanes' results. They've won division titles in three of the last four years, and they currently lead the Metropolitan Division.

But Waddell seems refreshed by the setup in Columbus.

"My day-to-day contact is Mike Priest," he said. "I keep him updated on anything that's going on, and he's been very supportive. Anything we've wanted to do — whether it's picking guys up off waivers, signing guys as free agents — he's been very supportive. I'm a firm believer that ownership has the right to know what's going on before they read about it.

"I'd say this about Carolina and now in Columbus, though. It's not the Don Waddell show. We have a lot of really good hockey people here in this organization who have big roles with us. Big decisions have to be made, and you want people around you whose opinions you trust. I had that there, and I have that here."

Waddell has been watching closely every aspect of the Blue Jackets organization. He has his coach in place after hiring Dean Evason a month into his Columbus tenure. Now, as his first season unfolds, he's watching the roster closely, admiring the young talent and trying to figure out which veterans will be part of the mix going forward.

This may take some time, but that's not because Waddell plans to slow-roll it. To the contrary.

"I like a lot of the young guys," Waddell said. "We hope they continue to grow. It's an important year for them to keep maturing, not only as players but as people. If they do that, we're in pretty good shape for the future.

"Saying that, we're going to have to add some more pieces next summer; we know that. Going into next summer, we're going to have lots of cap space. We're not going to waste it, we're going to spend it wisely. We've already started talking about what areas we need to identify."

Waddell wasn't out of work long, but he believes he's landed well. He's knee-deep in another project, trying to get the Blue Jackets to achieve the same sustained success as the Hurricanes, but perhaps with more postseason success.

"I was really excited by the opportunity here right from the moment I heard from the Blue Jackets, honestly," Waddell said. "And it's been everything I'd hoped and more. The city is great. The fans have been great. The players have played hard almost every night.

"We've been through some stuff, some rough patches (on the ice). But I really love it here. It's been a perfect fit."

NHL Power Rankings: Maple Leafs enter top 10, plus first quarter grades for every team

Dom Luszczyzyn, Sean Gentile

Pencils down, folks, it's report card time for every team, courtesy of the Rankings Boys.

Every team gets graded based on their performance over the first quarter of the season. Here at Rankings HQ, though, we grade on a curve — every grade is loosely based on expectations.

If you're a good team playing good, that's cool and all, but that's about what we expected out of you; an average grade is what you deserve. A good team playing great though? That gets an A, as would a terrible team playing just fine. Just fine is great for Columbus, but it's horrible for Edmonton.

That's the gist of it — here are our grades.

1. Winnipeg Jets, 16-3-0

Last week: 1

Sean's ranking: 1

Dom's ranking: 1

Sean grade: A+

Dom grade: A+

There are nits to pick with the Jets — some more prime chances at five-on-five wouldn't hurt, and they're probably not going to shoot 25 percent on the power play for a full season — but it'd be unfair to do any more than mention them in passing, at this point. It's been a remarkable start to

the season, and, if we're being honest, a surprising one, too. If they don't get full marks, who does?

2. Carolina Hurricanes, 14-5-0

Last week: 2

Sean's ranking: 2

Dom's ranking: 2

Sean grade: A+

Dom grade: A+

We've spent the entire first quarter (okay, fine, half decade) talking up the Hurricanes so it should come as no shock that they earn high marks for their start. Every new addition has crushed it to degrees no one could've seen coming and the returning players look as strong as ever. They've got depth, they've got oomph. They've got offense, they've got defense. Most of all, they've got their system and this might be the year it finally pays off.

3. Minnesota Wild, 13-3-3

Last week: 5

Sean's ranking: 3

Dom's ranking: 3

Sean grade: A

Dom grade: A

The Wild just keep on winning. They are now 13-3-3 and proud owners of the second-best points percentage in the



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league. They'd be division favorites if not for the first-place team, also from the Central.

Everything that needed to go right for the Wild this season did, and then some, and they're back to looking like a legit contender. Kirill Kaprizov is on an MVP run and everyone around him has elevated their games appropriately. Color us impressed, the Wild are the real deal.

4. New York Rangers, 12-5-1

Last week: 6

Sean's ranking: 4

Dom's ranking: 5

Sean grade: B+

Dom grade: B

It's hard to be too harsh on a 12-5-1 start. The Rangers are still plugging along and winning games at a high rate, but there is still room for concern. They've struggled this season against playoff opponents, have seen a rapid decline from Mika Zibanejad, and have had some second pair woes too.

A 114-point pace is still a 114-point pace, but the Rangers haven't exactly been given the toughest test so far. How they fare in Q2 and beyond might be more telling to what they can be.

5. Dallas Stars, 12-6-0

Last week: 4

Sean's ranking: 5

Dom's ranking: 4

Sean grade: B

Dom grade: B

The Stars are getting slow starts from Jason Robertson, Roope Hintz and Wyatt Johnson, but the fact that they're still clocking in this high is a testament to how good the rest of the roster has been. Let's start with Matt Duchene, who leads the team in scoring with 21 points. We'd say it's a throwback to his time in Colorado, but 4.62 points/60 is miles ahead of anything Duchene managed in his first 15 (!) seasons.

6. Florida Panthers, 12-7-1

Last week: 3

Sean's ranking: 7

Dom's ranking: 7

Sean grade: A-

Dom grade: A-

Losing to the Blackhawks? That's enough to bump Florida's grade down from "A" to "A-minus." Sorry, but we've got to be tougher critics against the defending champions. The expectations to keep being the best are very high.

So far, though, the Panthers are meeting them. The stars have shone bright and are getting the most out of a makeshift defense corps. Florida has enough sauce to win the Atlantic Division again, and even if the Panthers don't, they'll still be a tough out for any team unlucky to face them.

7. Washington Capitals, 13-5-1

Last week: 10

Sean's ranking: 6

Dom's ranking: 9

Sean grade: A+

Dom grade: A+

There's simply no underselling just how impressive Washington's start to the season has been. If there was a letter grade above "A-plus," the Capitals would've convincingly earned it. Sure, there's an element of puck luck involved with their start and they may cool down at some point — but that doesn't change how well this group has played over the first quarter. The kids have taken big steps, the stars have had resurgent seasons, and the team looks deep both up front and on the back end. The Capitals are the best story in hockey and we're enjoying the ride.

8. New Jersey Devils, 13-7-2

Last week: 9

Sean's ranking: 7

Dom's ranking: 8

Sean grade: B+

Dom grade: B+

A lot of people figured the Devils would get back on the contention path after a surprising down season, and that's exactly what we've seen from them so far. Sheldon Keefe deserves a lot of credit here for the team's defensive improvement; the Devils are in the top 10 for xGA/60 after finishing 20th last season. They looked especially good against Carolina in that regard Thursday night.

9. Toronto Maple Leafs, 12-6-2

Last week: 11

Sean's ranking: 10

Dom's ranking: 6

Sean grade: B+

Dom grade: B+

The Leafs woke up on Thursday in first place in their division (and ahead of their preseason points projection) despite Auston Matthews not playing since Nov. 3. They've now got six players on injured reserve. That alone gets them reeeeeeally close to an "A" — and if they keep it together much longer, we'll have to revisit.

10. Vegas Golden Knights, 12-6-2

Last week: 7

Sean's ranking: 9

Dom's ranking: 10

Sean grade: A

Dom grade: A-

It's business as usual for Vegas who are on pace for 107 points. That gets an A-grade from us thanks to playing at a



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much stronger pace than we figured given how weak their wingers looked to start the season. That the Golden Knights have survived lately with Mark Stone missing time (something we all assumed would happen at some point), makes it even more impressive. Pavel Dorofeyev, by the way, is on pace for 41 goals. That unexpected leap certainly helps!

11. Tampa Bay Lightning, 10-6-2

Last week: 12

Sean's ranking: 12

Dom's ranking: 11

Sean grade: B

Dom grade: B

The Lightning deserve two grades: one for Andrei Vasilevskiy games (yay!) and one for Jonas Johansson games (boooooo). The difference between the two has been stark, enough to leave the Lightning at a solid B. Tampa Bay is playing at a 100-point pace and is pretty much right in line with expectations so far — no complaints here.

12. Los Angeles Kings, 10-7-3

Last week: 15

Sean's ranking: 11

Dom's ranking: 15

Sean grade: B+

Dom grade: B+

Lockdown defense (1.95 goals against per 60 at five-on-five) and juiced-up offensive production put the Kings solidly ahead of their preseason projections. The fact that they've done almost all of it without Drew Doughty, and while getting substandard goaltending, makes it all even more impressive.

13. Vancouver Canucks, 9-6-3

Last week: 8

Sean's ranking: 13

Dom's ranking: 14

Sean grade: C

Dom grade: C

Outside of the play of Quinn Hughes — remember, he's an MVP candidate, not just a Norris candidate — not a ton has gone well for the Canucks. Example A: Brock Boeser is still tied for the team lead in goals (11) despite missing six games. Still, they've managed to keep their heads above water. And look, off in the distance! That's Thatcher Demko!

14. Colorado Avalanche, 11-9-0

Last week: 13

Sean's ranking: 16

Dom's ranking: 12

Sean grade: C-

Dom grade: C

It's a bit unfair to grade the Avalanche right now. They're like the kid who missed a month with mono — of course they're going to be behind the rest of the class. The Avalanche have played commendable hockey despite all the absences and things are starting to turn around of late now that they're getting healthier. Still, it's hard to give anything higher than a C right now. Yes, their circumstances were tough, but the work they've handed in so far still leaves a bit to be desired.

15. Edmonton Oilers, 10-9-2

Last week: 14

Sean's ranking:

Dom's ranking: 13

Sean grade: D-

Dom grade: D

We're not mad, we're just disappointed.

Once again, the Oilers got off to an extremely slow start where Connor McDavid looked a bit off before being sidelined with injury, and Stuart Skinner forgot how to make a save. The "D" stands for "deja vu."

Will the Oilers be better going forward? Probably. They should still be able to challenge for the Pacific Division title despite their tepid start. But we expected a whole lot better from the team many expected to be the league's absolute best going into the season. It's not enough to just show up to the regular season — you have to put in the work. The Oilers are learning that lesson all over again.

16. Calgary Flames, 11-6-3

Last week: 22

Sean's ranking: 15

Dom's ranking: 16

Sean grade: A-

Dom grade: A

Raise your hand if you had the Flames fifth in the West after the first quarter with an 11-6-3 record. No one? Not a single soul? We didn't think so.

Few starts have been more shocking this year than Calgary's and while we wait for the other shoe to drop, the Flames just find a way and keep winning. Blame Dustin Wolf who is showing some serious juice as a full-time starter. His work during an audition last year left a lot to be desired, but he's made up for it quickly this year. He's carrying the Flames.

17. Buffalo Sabres, 9-9-1

Last week: 19

Sean's ranking: 14

Dom's ranking: 17

Sean grade: C+

Dom grade: C

We assume Buffalo tried (and failed) to petition for an immediate end to the regular season on Thursday morning — they'd have been in the playoffs on tiebreakers. We'll use this space to mention Alex Tuch for the first time in a while;



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he's tied for the team lead in points (18) and scored a couple shorthanded goals along the way. When he, Tage Thompson and JJ Peterka are on the ice together, good things happen.

18. New York Islanders, 7-8-5

Last week: 16

Sean's ranking: 18

Dom's ranking: 18

Sean grade: C-

Dom grade: D+

With five minutes left against Detroit Thursday night, the Islanders were up 1-0. Five minutes later they went home empty-handed with not even a beloved loser point to hold on to. It was yet another missed opportunity for an Islanders team that's been on the wrong side of mid this season. We thought this would be a 95-point team, not an 85-point one — and they're not even on pace for that.

The Islanders are dealing with a lot of injuries so they get a slight pass for that. But this is how you re-pay us for actually believing in you guys?

The good news? The rest of the Eastern playoff hopefuls look just as bad right now, so the Islanders haven't technically lost much ground yet.

19. Seattle Kraken, 10-9-1

Last week: 23

Sean's ranking: 19

Dom's ranking: 19

Sean grade: C

Dom grade: C

The Kraken projected as an aggressively mediocre team ahead of the season, and they've delivered on that potential. A middle-of-the-table team, almost across the board. Also, Matty Beniers has three points in his last nine games and 10 overall. Seems like a potential problem!

20. Boston Bruins, 9-9-3

Last week: 20

Sean's ranking: 20

Dom's ranking: 20

Sean grade: F-

Dom grade: F-

The Bruins looked a lot better (on the power play anyway) in their first game under Joe Sacco, but there's a lot of damage that still needs to be undone. It's not like we expected the Bruins to be world beaters by any means, but what they've shown so far has been nothing short of pathetic. It was difficult to watch Jim Montgomery try to coax a weak and flawed roster into looking like a contender and he ultimately paid the price for the sins of Don Sweeney. Maybe Sacco presses the right buttons to get the team back on track — it's not like the rest of the East poses much of a threat — but it'll take a helluva turnaround.

When a team with playoff aspirations has to fire their coach because they're tied for second last in goal differential with the San Jose Sharks, an F-minus is the only fair grade that can be given.

21. Detroit Red Wings, 8-9-2

Last week: 21

Sean's ranking: 21

Dom's ranking: 21

Sean grade: D

Dom grade: C

How you feel about the Red Wings' start depends a lot on how you felt about the Red Wings to start. The Model viewed them as an 81-point team and at 8-9-2 they are pretty much exactly what they were expected to be.

But damn is it still disappointing to see it actually happen in practice. Moritz Seider looks great, Simon Edvinsson might be the real deal, and the goaltending has been actually solid. And yet the team still stinks.

It's possible that Thursday's comeback regulation win over the Islanders can serve as a turning point, but it's still been an ugly, ugly start. The Red Wings just don't look good enough.

22. Ottawa Senators, 8-10-1

Last week: 17

Sean's ranking: 22

Dom's ranking: 22

Sean grade: C

Dom grade: C-

"This year will be different!" Whoops!

To Ottawa's credit, the team's underlying numbers are indeed much improved and it is tragically ironic that the team's major offseason fix is currently the biggest problem. If Linus Ullmark looks like Linus Ullmark more often, the Senators might be fine. But he hasn't and so here we are. The strong xG might mean they earn a better grade in Q2. For Q1, it's hard to give a team that was supposed to make some sort of leap much credit for an 8-10-1 start.

23. Utah HC, 7-9-3

Last week: 18

Sean's ranking: 23

Dom's ranking: 23

Sean grade: C+

Dom grade: C-

Things started so well for Utah in its inaugural season but have imploded since. Losing Sean Durzi stung, as did the news of John Marino being out long-term. But even with those losses on the back end, Utah should be better than what they've shown over the last month. The team's offense has felt anemic most nights and Connor Ingram has been a shade of himself between the pipes. There was some hope



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that Utah could climb to relevancy this season after a big offseason, but instead it's been more of the same.

24. Columbus Blue Jackets, 8-9-2

Last week: 29

Sean's ranking: 24

Dom's ranking: 25

Sean grade: A-

Dom grade: A-

Everyone in the hockey world hoped for nothing but the best for Columbus this season and thankfully that's exactly what we're getting. The team is winning games in thrilling ways, they're seeing breakthroughs from some young players, Zach Werenski looks like a truly elite No. 1 defenseman (he had five points against the Lightning!) and Sean Monahan is channeling his best self to play the best hockey of his career. It's been a storybook start that has the Blue Jackets hovering around .500, a beautiful sight to see.

25. Anaheim Ducks, 8-8-2

Last week: 30

Sean's ranking: 26

Dom's ranking: 24

Sean grade: C-

Dom grade: B-

Credit where credit is due, the Ducks are playing .500 hockey right now which is way better than many could've expected. Credit Lukas Dostal's heroics and a three-game winning streak for that one.

But man does this team still look rough on a nightly basis. We'll give them a pass because a win is a win, but even a record well above expectations isn't enough for high marks when the Ducks are still getting caved in and the young core has seemingly regressed.

26. Philadelphia Flyers, 8-10-2

Last week: 26

Sean's ranking: 25

Dom's ranking: 26

Sean grade: B-

Dom grade: C+

Technically speaking, the Flyers haven't had a great start to the season. They're 8-10-2 and don't look close to the team that clawed its way into the playoff race last season.

In other words — Q1 could not have gone better.

The Flyers look better positioned for a high pick thanks to their weak start which should get their rebuild back on track. On top of that, all the players the team needs to look good are looking great right now. Travis Konecny has been awesome, Travis Sanheim has been a rock, and Matvei Michkov has been as good as advertised. All that and a losing record? Perfect. No notes.

27. St. Louis Blues, 9-11-1

Last week: 24

Sean's ranking: 27

Dom's ranking: 27

Sean grade: D+

Dom grade: C-

For all the hemming and hawing about us not respecting the Blues, here they sit after the first quarter with a 9-11-1 record. They're 24th in the league in points percentage and have the fourth-worst goal differential. We can't even say "We are who we thought they were" because the Blues might actually be worse. Sorry for being correct!

28. Pittsburgh Penguins, 7-10-4

Last week: 27

Sean's ranking: 28

Dom's ranking: 28

Sean grade: F

Dom grade: D

Just when you thought things couldn't sink any lower for the Penguins, they deliver a craptastic start to the season that has left absolutely no doubt about the team's direction. Any hope of a last playoff run with Sid and Co. is essentially over — this team is cooked.

go-deeper

GO DEEPER

The Penguins have hit rock bottom. What is the path forward?

29. Montreal Canadiens, 7-10-2

Last week: 32

Sean's ranking: 29

Dom's ranking: 29

Sean grade: C-

Dom grade: D

Things are starting to pick up a bit lately for the Canadiens, but those expecting the club to take a step this season have been sorely disappointed. There have been a few bright spots (Cole Caufield's goal-scoring being the biggest), but far more sore spots to call Montreal's Q1 performance anything but a failure.

30. San Jose Sharks, 6-11-5

Last week: 31

Sean's ranking: 30

Dom's ranking: 30

Sean grade: D+

Dom grade: C

The Sharks have been feisty and Macklin Celebrini has been worth the price of admission so far. That's a plus, but they're still the Sharks and they're still one of the worst teams in hockey. Even grading on a curve can't save them.



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31. Chicago Blackhawks, 7-12-1

Last week: 28

Sean's ranking: 31

Dom's ranking: 31

Sean grade: D-

Dom grade: D+

The only thing that really matters for this Hawks season is getting Connor Bedard to reach the next level. So far the Blackhawks have mostly failed to do that thanks to some puzzling linemate choices. It's nice that the Blackhawks beat Florida Thursday and have been 'in it' in almost every game this season. But the end result is still a team with a whole lot of Ls.

32. Nashville Predators, 6-11-3

Last week: 25

Sean's ranking: 32

Dom's ranking: 32

Sean grade: X

Dom grade: F-

Sure, there were reasons to side-eye the Predators' summer spending spree, but anyone who says they expected them to have a worse points percentage than the Sharks is a liar. Good power play, abysmal everything else. They're not even fun!



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Canes activate Jarvis from IR, recall Perets from Chicago

Pat Welter

RALEIGH, NC – Eric Tulsy, General Manager of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, today announced that the team has activated forward Seth Jarvis from injured reserve. In addition, the team has recalled goaltender Yaniv Perets from the Chicago Wolves of the American Hockey League (AHL) and assigned defenseman Ty Smith to the Wolves.

Jarvis, 22, has missed Carolina's last seven games with an upper-body injury. Prior to the injury, he earned 11 points (4g, 7a) in 13 games played. Jarvis ranked second among Hurricanes skaters in goals (33) and points (67) in 2023-24, establishing career highs in goals, assists (34), points, power-play goals (13), shorthanded goals (2) and game-winning goals (9). The 5'10", 184-pound forward led Carolina in power-play goals, was tied for the team lead in shorthanded goals, was second on the team in game-winning goals and was tied for second in assists.

Perets, 24, has posted a 1-2-0 record, 3.67 goals-against average, .825 save percentage in three AHL games with Chicago this season. He spent the 2023-24 season with the Norfolk Admirals of the ECHL, registering an 18-11-3 record, 2.99 GAA, .889 SV% and two shutouts in 34 games. The 6'1", 181-pound goaltender made his NHL/Hurricanes debut in relief against Los Angeles on Jan. 15, 2024, stopping the only shot he faced over 12:46 in the third period.

Smith, 24, has not appeared in an NHL game this season, and has posted three assists and a plus-2 rating in four games with the Wolves. The Lloydminster, Alb, native spent the 2023-24 season with the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins, totaling 43 points (9g, 34a) in 63 games played. Originally selected by New Jersey in the first round, 17th overall, at the 2018 NHL Draft, he has appeared in 123 career NHL games with New Jersey and Pittsburgh, earning 47 points (8g, 39a) and totaling 48 penalty minutes.

Marchenko ties it late, Monahan gets only goal in shootout as Blue Jackets beat Hurricanes 5-4

WRAL

COLUMBUS, Ohio — COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Kirill Marchenko tied it late in the third period with his second goal of the game, Sean Monahan had the only score in a shootout, and the Columbus Blue Jackets beat the Carolina Hurricanes 5-4 on Saturday night for their third straight win.

Dmitri Voronkov had a power-play goal and Dante Fabbro also scored for Columbus. Elvis Merzlikins made 32 saves, including stopping all three shots he faced in the shootout to help the Blue Jackets get their third straight win for the first time since March 11-16, 2022.

Sebastian Aho had a power-play goal and an assist, and Jack Roslovic, Jalen Chatfield, and Jackson Blake also scored for Carolina, which dropped a point behind first-place New Jersey in the Metropolitan Division. Pyotr Kochetkov made 27 saves before leaving the game with two minutes left in overtime after colliding with Zach Werenski. Spencer Martin made one save in relief.

Carolina Hurricanes: Carolina let slip the chance to beat a Metropolitan Division rival and instead lost for the third time in four games on its road trip. The Hurricanes still have the highest point percentage in the Eastern Conference.

Blue Jackets: The Blue Jackets had a pair of leads and a four-minute third-period power play but could not close the door on Carolina until the shootout.

Marchenko's goal with 1:06 left in regulation sent the game to overtime, where the Blue Jackets ultimately found a way to win.

Martin Necas had two assists to give him 22 on the season, tying him for third in the league. He leads Carolina and is third in the NHL with 33 points.

Hurricanes host Dallas on Monday to open a three-game homestand, and Blue Jackets host Montreal on Wednesday.



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Canes Take Top Spot In ESPN's 'Future Power Rankings'

Walt Ruff

RALEIGH, N.C. - It's a great time to be a Carolina Hurricane.

Following six consecutive playoff berths and a 13-4 start after a summer that was supposed to see the team "take a step backward", the team continues to earn recognition from the hockey world.

Earlier this week ESPN's panel of hockey contributors put their heads together to come up with a "Future Power Rankings", considering how teams are set up for success this season as well as the next three seasons.

The panel rated each team in four categories -- roster (with an emphasis on players 26 and under); prospects; cap situation and contracts; and front office, ownership, and coaching -- using this scale:

100: A+ (elite)

90: A (great)

80: B (very good)

70: C (average)

60: D (very bad)

Inside The Brain of Seth Jarvis

Walt Ruff

Did you know that #24 took a pottery class in high school?

COLUMBUS, Ohio - Due to an upper-body injury, Seth Jarvis can't be with his Carolina Hurricanes teammates right now. Clearly, that's no fun to him.

Looking for a way to pass the time until puck drop on Thursday, the 22-year-old forward took to X to connect with Caniacs, answering their hard-hitting questions.

Nobody was safe from Jarvy's honesty throughout the Q&A session, but the 2020 first-round pick did have some nice things to say about his teammates too.

Canes Activate Jarvis From Injured Reserve

Canes PR

50: F (disastrous)

Guess which team came out on top?

Earning a league-high score of 86.2, the grouping of personalities gushed over how Carolina is competing now and set up to compete for years to come as well.

"Carolina is a perennial Stanley Cup contender for good reason. Coach Rod Brind'Amour constantly gets the most out of his roster, and it's a great one with enviable forward depth (led by Sebastian Aho, Andrei Svechnikov and newcomer Jack Roslovic, having his best season in years) and a booming back end that stays stingy," Kristen Shilton wrote.

Breaking it down by the aforementioned four categories, Carolina ranked third in 'Owner/GM/Coach', sixth in 'roster', 11th in 'prospects' and 13th in 'cap/contracts'.

"Carolina is built to win now and so it does, sitting top five in offense (averaging four goals per game), top 10 in defense (giving up fewer than three goals per night) and boasting solid special teams. Even scarier? Carolina has a strong prospect pool -- think Alexander Nikishin, Bradly Nadeau and Jackson Blake, who could all make an NHL jump sooner than later."

Speaking of music taste, Jarvis also shed a bit of light on his own.

But it wasn't all serious business from #24...

We even got a glimpse into some of Jarvy's other food takes...

Hopefully, Jarvis can take his thinking cap off and put his helmet back on soon, perhaps on Saturday in Columbus or when the Canes return home on Monday to take on the Dallas Stars.

RALEIGH, N.C. - Eric Tulsy, General Manager of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, today



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NHL Buzz: Jarvis activated from injured reserve by Hurricanes

NHL.com

Samberg placed on IR by Jets; Domi remains out for Maple Leafs

Welcome to the NHL Buzz. Each day during the regular season, NHL.com has you covered with all the latest news.

Carolina Hurricanes

Seth Jarvis was activated from injured reserve on Sunday.

The 22-year-old forward has missed the past seven games with a upper-body injury he sustained in a 6-4 loss at the Colorado Avalanche on Nov. 9. He has 11 points (four goals, seven assists) in 13 games this season.

The Hurricanes (14-5-1) went 4-2-1 without Jarvis in the lineup. Their next game will be against the Dallas Stars on Monday (7 p.m. ET; FDSNSO, Victory+).

Carolina also recalled goaltender Yaniv Perets from Chicago of the American Hockey League on Sunday. The move comes one day after Pyotr Kochetkov was injured at 3:52 of overtime in a 5-4 shootout loss to the Columbus Blue Jackets. Kochetkov was hit in the head by the knee of teammate Sean Walker.

The Hurricanes were already without goaltender Frederik Andersen, who it was announced on Thursday is expected to be out 8-12 weeks because of a knee injury that will require surgery.

Perets has made one NHL appearance, stopping the only shot he faced against the Los Angeles Kings on Jan. 15, 2024. Spencer Martin, who made one save in relief against the Blue Jackets, is 1-2-1 with a 3.21 goals-against average and .870 save percentage in five games (three starts).

Winnipeg Jets

Dylan Samberg (lower body) was placed on injured reserve by the Jets on Sunday.

The defenseman left a 4-1 loss to the Nashville Predators in the second period on Saturday after blocking a shot from Steven Stamkos.

Samberg has six points (three goals, three assists) in 21 games this season while averaging 20:17 of ice time.

Ville Heinola was recalled from his conditioning assignment with Manitoba of the American Hockey League. Heinola (ankle infection) has yet to play this season.

Winnipeg (17-4-0) visits the Minnesota Wild on Monday (8 p.m. ET; FDSNWI, FDSNNO, TSN3).

Toronto Maple Leafs

Max Domi missed his second straight game because of a lower-body injury when the Maple Leafs played the Utah Hockey Club on Sunday.

"He's still rehabbing," coach Craig Berube said. "He's not ready to get on the ice yet."

The forward, who has six assists in 19 games this season, though no points in his past 13 games, had been attempting to play through the injury prior to going on injured reserve Wednesday, retroactive to Nov. 16.

Toronto was also without forward Matthew Knies, who sustained an upper-body injury in a 3-0 win against the Vegas Golden Knights on Wednesday.

Forward Alexander Nylander made his season debut after signing a one-year contract Friday. He had 12 points (eight goals, four assists) in 14 games with Toronto of the American Hockey League while on an AHL contract.

Nylander had 15 points (11 goals, four assists) in 23 games with the Columbus Blue Jackets last season after he was traded there by the Pittsburgh Penguins on Feb. 22.

"It was amazing yesterday, such an incredible feeling," Nylander said. "Just really happy and excited about being here and being ready for the game tomorrow... I know what I can do at the NHL level, I had a really strong finish with the Columbus Blue Jackets last year and just have to build off that, get better every day. It all starts with working hard every shift and the rest kind of comes by itself when I do that." -- Dave McCarthy

Vancouver Canucks

Brock Boeser returned to practice wearing a noncontact jersey for the Canucks on Friday.

The forward left a 4-2 win against the Los Angeles Kings on Nov. 7 after being hit by Tanner Jeannot midway through the first period. He has missed the past six games.

"He had a noncontact practice today so that's protocol," coach Rick Tocchet said. "We'll see how he is ... it's day to day. I think he had a good day today but once you add contact, then you've got to make those other decisions."

Boeser has 11 points (six goals, five assists) in 12 games this season.

The Canucks (10-6-3) won 4-3 at the Ottawa Senators on Saturday to start a six-game road trip that will continue at the Boston Bruins on Tuesday.



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Marchenko ties it late, Monahan gets only goal in shootout as Blue Jackets beat Hurricanes 5-4

By NICOLE KRAFT

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Kirill Marchenko tied it late in the third period with his second goal of the game, Sean Monahan had the only score in a shootout, and the Columbus Blue Jackets beat the Carolina Hurricanes 5-4 on Saturday night for their third straight win.

Dmitri Voronkov had a power-play goal and Dante Fabbro also scored for Columbus. Elvis Merzlikins made 32 saves, including stopping all three shots he faced in the shootout to help the Blue Jackets get their third straight win for the first time since March 11-16, 2022.

Sebastian Aho had a power-play goal and an assist, and Jack Roslovic, Jalen Chatfield, and Jackson Blake also scored for Carolina, which dropped a point behind first-place New Jersey in the Metropolitan Division. Pyotr Kochetkov made 27 saves before leaving the game with two minutes left in overtime after colliding with Zach Werenski. Spencer Martin made one save in relief.

Takeaways

Carolina Hurricanes: Carolina let slip the chance to beat a Metropolitan Division rival and instead lost for the third time in four games on its road trip. The Hurricanes still have the highest point percentage in the Eastern Conference.

Blue Jackets: The Blue Jackets had a pair of leads and a four-minute third-period power play but could not close the door on Carolina until the shootout.

Key moment

Marchenko's goal with 1:06 left in regulation sent the game to overtime, where the Blue Jackets ultimately found a way to win.

Key stat

Martin Necas had two assists to give him 22 on the season, tying him for third in the league. He leads Carolina and is third in the NHL with 33 points.

Up Next

Hurricanes host Dallas on Monday to open a three-game homestand, and Blue Jackets host Montreal on Wednesday.



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The NHL coaching carousel spun a little earlier than usual this season.

The Boston Bruins fired Jim Montgomery after 20 games. The St. Louis Blues hired Montgomery just five days later to replace Drew Bannister, whom they promoted last season on an interim basis after 28 games to replace Craig Berube. Bannister's tenure as the Blues' official head coach lasted only 22 games.

Such is life for a struggling team. The salary cap and player contracts make roster overhauls difficult -- and it's not as if the general manager is going to fire himself for a poorly constructed team. So coaches take the fall or give new hope. A tale as old as time.

These two coaching changes probably won't be the last in the NHL this season. Some other seats are getting increasingly toasty.

Here's a temperature check on the NHL's coaching hot seats for all 32 teams, including insight from sources within the coaching community.

Burning up

Derek Lalonde, Detroit Red Wings

Luke Richardson, Chicago Blackhawks

As soon as the NHL picked up its collective jaw from the floor after Montgomery's dismissal, one name appeared at or near the top of every "coaches' hot seat" ranking: Derek Lalonde of the Red Wings, for whom all the boxes can be checked for a coach in trouble.

The Red Wings have regressed in the standings after last season's 91-point campaign. Their offensive output is way down, from 3.35 goals per game last season to 2.53 after 19 games this season. Their 1.52 goals per 60 minutes at 5-on-5 is 31st in the NHL. This isn't about puck luck: Detroit's 2.06 expected goals per 60 minutes is last in the league. They're better in goals against per game season over season, but a lot of that credit should go to goalie Cam Talbot, who is making GM Steve Yzerman look smart.

But the biggest harbinger was the one that haunted Montgomery: Lalonde, in his third season with the Red Wings, does not have a contract beyond 2024-25.

The general speculation is that if the Red Wings don't make the postseason, Lalonde surely pays for that with his job. But would Yzerman pull the plug in-season, in the hopes of getting Detroit back to the playoffs for the first time since 2016?

There also has been speculation that it might happen, and one rumor that made the rounds in NHL coaching circles this month was that Joel Quenneville might take over the Detroit bench.

"Two weeks ago, I heard Quenneville for Detroit," a coaching source said.

Following Jim Montgomery's firing, the name of Red Wings coach Derek Lalonde, above, shot up to the top of NHL hot-seat lists. Joe Robbins/Icon Sportswire via Getty Images

On July 1, the NHL said it would allow three former Chicago Blackhawks executives to seek employment in the league after they were banned in October 2021 after an independent investigation into how they handled a sexual assault allegation in 2010. Former Chicago GM Stan Bowman was the first of the three to find employment, taking over as Edmonton Oilers GM from the departing Ken Holland.

Bowman spoke at length at his introductory news conference about what happened in 2010 and the fallout, including his own path back to the NHL. "I can tell you without a doubt that those things will never happen on my watch again," Bowman said.

Quenneville would obviously need to do the same no matter where he ends up, and then answer more questions beyond that. Oilers president Jeff Jackson knew what he was getting into when he hired Bowman; so would Yzerman, even if the buck stops at the GM.

"[Yzerman's] got the gravitas to pull it off both as a Detroit hero and someone who's a long-running general manager," another coaching source said.

Another source poured cold water on a Quenneville-Detroit connection, noting that Quenneville's salary could be a sticking point. The coach made around \$6 million annually for the Florida Panthers before his resignation in 2021.

Coaches don't often reduce their asking price, let alone those who have three Stanley Cup rings. "He's a great coach, but I don't think this happens unless Joel says, 'I've made so much money that I don't really care,'" the source said.

But the other issue is the Red Wings. Though they have some impact players and a promising pool of prospects, they're not a win-now team. Quenneville is 66 years old. He's 275 wins away from Scotty Bowman's all-time record for an NHL coach. He's in a win-now place.

If Detroit went with an internal candidate, it has former Panthers and San Jose Sharks head coach Bob Boughner on the bench.

Meanwhile, the situation in Chicago has caught the attention of the coaching community for several reasons.

Richardson, 55, is in his third season coaching the Blackhawks. According to reports, the first three years were



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guaranteed, and the Blackhawks have the option for a fourth season.

The Blackhawks are in a deep rebuilding mode, which is why Richardson has a .342 points percentage after 184 games behind the bench. They're slightly better season over season in the standings so far, but near the bottom of the league and nowhere near relevance. That has led to frustration within the Chicago locker room, especially with their franchise savior Connor Bedard.

Bedard, 19, had three goals and 12 assists in 20 games for Chicago. He's openly expressed frustration with his own game, recently saying there were "100 things" he'd like to change about it, but also with the constant losing he has experienced in his first two seasons in the NHL. To get Bedard's confidence back, Richardson recently shifted him to the wing and cast him in a more defensive role.

The way Richardson handled the benching of veteran Taylor Hall raised some eyebrows, admitting that he should have communicated that it was a possibility with the former NHL MVP before making him a healthy scratch.

Through 20 games, the Blackhawks were 30th in offense, but their team defense was in the top half of the league.

Of the internal candidates, only assistant coach Derek King has NHL head-coaching experience, having led the Blackhawks for 70 games in 2021-22 after the firing of Jeremy Colliton.

It has been a rough season in Chicago, with some now wondering about Luke Richardson's job security. Jeff Vinnick/NHLI via Getty Images

Again, it's still a considerable rebuild for Chicago, but they did invest in some veteran free agents in the offseason such as Teuvo Teravainen and Tyler Bertuzzi. Would it be worth it for GM Kyle Davidson to make a change now, or would this decision wait until the offseason? Or does he have faith that Richardson's commitment to defense will ease some of the headaches about losing, even if it doesn't juice Bedard's scoring stats?

"To me right now, it's more of a 'when' and not an 'if' on Richardson," a coaching source said.

Hot in the summer

Andrew Brunette, Nashville Predators

Greg Cronin, Anaheim Ducks

Joe Sacco, Boston Bruins

Andre Tourigny, Utah Hockey Club

Should Brunette have been included in the "burning up" tier?

One could make the argument that with a .405 points percentage after 21 games, the second-year Predators bench boss belongs there. Of particular concern is an offense that cooked last season (3.24 goals per game) having no pop this season (2.38) despite adding Steven Stamkos and Jonathan Marchessault. But that could easily be explained by GM Barry Trotz not filling out the middle of the lineup better, as Nashville is reportedly in the trade market for a center already.

But if Trotz did make a move behind the bench, it probably wouldn't be until after the season and a full audit of what went wrong. That is, if things don't turn around for Nashville, which is another part of this equation: Brunette was the coach that helped turn around the Predators' 2023-24 season with an epic winning streak. Perhaps he can still pull off an encore with this talented roster. Obviously, they need to get U2 back at a Sphere residency and then not take the players to see them.

Sacco is the interim coach for the Bruins after they fired Montgomery. He has waited since 2012-13 to get another head-coaching gig in the NHL, having gone 130-134-30 in four seasons with the Colorado Avalanche (2009-13).

The Bruins have played well early for him and there's a lane where this could end up being his gig permanently. If not, would Boston stay in-house and give assistant coach Jay Leach the shot he has been waiting to have? Or would they import someone from outside the family? A lot would depend on where president Cam Neely and GM Don Sweeney see this roster trending.

Cronin is a tough one on whom to get a handle. Multiple sources said GM Pat Verbeek's front office plays things very close to the vest, so getting a read on everything from Cronin's status to the future of Trevor Zegras is a difficult task. Verbeek did say after last season that he has "a super long time for Greg Cronin" and that he loves "his approach to life and his approach to our hockey team. I'm very happy with the job that he did this year."

The Ducks have hovered around .500 this season, with a slightly improved offense -- thanks to the continued improvement of players such as Leo Carlsson and Olen Zellweger -- and a much improved goals-against per game, thanks to an incredible start for goalie Lukas Dostal. Anaheim's team defense is still a mess, as no one gives up more shots (34.6) or had a higher expected goals against (3.46 per game) through 19 games. But great goaltending make for safe coaches, as Cronin might be witnessing firsthand.

The Ducks' front office might have more patience with Greg Cronin given where the team is in its rebuilding process. Glenn James/NHLI via Getty Images

Tourigny received a contract extension before the Arizona Coyotes franchise shifted to Salt Lake City, putting him under contract through 2026-27. He had gotten a lot out of a little during his three years in Arizona. But this is Utah, with cash-rich owners and elevated expectations for a new NHL franchise that wants to be competitive immediately.

The Utah Hockey Club squandered a hot start and now has a points percentage under .500. Tourigny has had some terrible luck with long-term injuries to defensemen Sean Durzi and John Marino, and the inexplicable dud of a season from goalie Connor Ingram. There's still time to turn it around for a well-liked head coach. But he's a coach that owner Ryan Smith inherited and one whose contract he didn't approve.

One more note on Smith: There has been plenty of chatter around the NHL about his relationship with Tampa Bay Lightning coach Jon Cooper.



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The two are friends, and as one source put it "golfing buddies." Smith has lavished praise on Cooper, telling The Athletic that the Bolts coach is the NHL's version of Ted Lasso. He even set up a mentorship situation between Cooper and Utah Jazz coach Will Hardy, believing the Lightning head coach has excellent attention to detail.

The relationship between Smith and Cooper might not mean anything regarding the status of Utah's current coach. But it's a link that certainly hasn't gone unnoticed since Smith became an NHL owner. Hockey culture loves connecting dots.

Getting warmer

Peter DeBoer, Dallas Stars

Kris Knoblauch, Edmonton Oilers

Peter Laviolette, New York Rangers

Patrick Roy, New York Islanders

Martin St. Louis, Montreal Canadiens

John Tortorella, Philadelphia Flyers

It might be a little odd to see last season's Western Conference finals coaches listed here, but that's the way the NHL works.

In Knoblauch's case, the Oilers set the bar as high as it can be set for a team chasing the Stanley Cup, losing in Game 7 of the Final. He helped patch a sinking ship when he arrived in Edmonton last season after 13 games. The Oilers have been inconsistent at best so far in 2024-25, thanks in no small part to rather ghastly goaltending.

But the regular season doesn't matter -- unless Edmonton doesn't qualify for the playoffs. The postseason matters, and that's where Knoblauch's status will become clearer in the eyes of a general manager (Bowman) that didn't hire him. Although his boss did, to the delight of the franchise's star player who had Knoblauch in juniors, which does make this more interesting ...

DeBoer is signed through 2025-26 season. Again, the expectations are massive: Dallas has made consecutive conference finals. DeBoer lasted three seasons in Vegas and Florida, four in New Jersey and five in San Jose -- in the latter two cases, having made the Stanley Cup Final with those teams. The results have clearly been there for Dallas under DeBoer -- his .675 points percentage is his highest with any team -- but his contract and the Stars' window to win make this a situation worth watching.

Peter DeBoer brought the Stars to the Western Conference finals the past two seasons. Glenn James/NHLI via Getty Images

Laviolette is another coach whose team has lofty expectations, with two trips to the conference finals in three seasons. The Rangers have him signed through 2025-26, and there's no reason to believe he'd be gone before that season barring a surprising playoff miss in the Eastern Conference. But given the contract, the market and the James Dolan of it all, who knows after that?

Tortorella is signed through the 2025-26 season. The Flyers see him as an ideal coach for shaping a young roster, including the tough love moments he has had with players

such as rookie star Matvei Michkov. Management has backed him, even though the current brass didn't hire him. If The Flyers don't show season-over-season improvement, is that just a growing pain from the rebuild, or something they reassess with Tortorella before a lame-duck season?

Bottom line: Tortorella is most likely the head coach at the start of next season, and then it's matter of how good management believes the Flyers should be vs. where they are.

Montreal exercised a two-year option on St. Louis in April 2024, meaning that the coach is signed through the 2026-27 season. The Canadiens are on track to drop in several statistical categories and in the standings season over season. But this is another situation in which previously dependable goaltending becomes wobbly and rest of the team is affected by it. Canadiens management has lavished praise on St. Louis for multiple seasons; but at some point, the training wheels have to come off this team.

Roy is reportedly signed through the 2025-26 season. At this point, the Islanders have a 50-50 chance of making the postseason cut, per Money Puck, which is apropos for a .500 team. Would a third straight playoff appearance and another first-round exit be enough to keep Roy around? Is it enough to keep GM Lou Lamoriello around? The Islanders have an aging roster seemingly stuck in stasis, and one wonders how long ownership is going to follow that plan.

Just seated

Scott Arniel, Winnipeg Jets

Craig Berube, Toronto Maple Leafs

Dan Bylsma, Seattle Kraken

Dean Evason, Columbus Blue Jackets

Travis Green, Ottawa Senators

Jim Hiller, Los Angeles Kings

Sheldon Keefe, New Jersey Devils

Jim Montgomery, St. Louis Blues

Lindy Ruff, Buffalo Sabres

Ryan Warsofsky, San Jose Sharks

All of these coaches have been hired since April, although in Hiller's case he took over the Kings on an interim basis in February before getting that label taken off in the offseason.

Hiller joins coaches such as Arniel, Berube and Keefe who have seen instant success in their new gigs. Ruff seems to be turning the Sabres in the right direction, and the same could be said of Evason and the Blue Jackets. Warsofsky is in his first NHL head-coaching season for a rebuilding team with zero expectations. The ink on Montgomery's five-year deal with the Blues is just drying.

The one coach that hasn't really gotten things going is Green with the Senators, who haven't translated improvements in offense and defense season over season into success in the standings. But that should generate a lot more chatter and action around the construction of the roster than the coach, who is signed through the 2027-28 season.

Long-tenured temp check



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Jared Bednar, Colorado Avalanche

Rod Brind'Amour, Carolina Hurricanes

Jon Cooper, Tampa Bay Lightning

Bednar and Brind'Amour are both signed through the 2026-27 season. The Hurricanes have been one of the best teams in the NHL while the Avalanche are starting to get rolling now that they've gotten some players back in the lineup.

Cooper is signed through the 2025-26 season. He's the longest tenured coach in the NHL, having been hired on March 25, 2013. The Lightning look like a playoff team so far this season, having made the cut for seven straight seasons under Cooper that included back-to-back Stanley Cup wins.

It'll be interesting to see what Cooper and the Lightning want out of their respective futures. Victor Hedman, Nikita Kucherov, Andrei Vasilevskiy and Jake Guentzel are all north of 30 years old, while 34-year-old Stamkos was allowed to leave, signing with Nashville. Would the Lightning want to pay Cooper's lofty salary during what could be a retool? Would Cooper want to hang in there with an aging roster?

Or are there other challenges the coach would like to take on in the NHL? He turned the Lightning into champions. Teams would be lining up, bags of cash in hand, to get him to do the same for their franchises.

Planet Sullivan

Mike Sullivan, Pittsburgh Penguins

He's one of the NHL's longest-tenured coaches, but his seat should be scorching.

The Penguins are a disaster this season, giving up nearly four goals per game on average, mustering only 2.5 goals per game offensively, and currently with a 1.9% chance of making the Stanley Cup playoffs, per Money Puck. It's a team with a veteran core of star players that seems destined to finishing outside of the postseason for a third straight season.

Normally, this would get any coach fired, especially one who has been with a team for a decade. But Sullivan is still there, behind the Pittsburgh bench, watching the definition of insanity play out on the ice every night.

Mike Sullivan was behind the bench when the Penguins last won the Stanley Cup. But the recent seasons have been bewildering. Minas Panagiotakis/Getty Images

He's under contract through 2026-27 but wouldn't suffer from lack of options if he and the Penguins ever parted ways. Penguins president of hockey operations Kyle Dubas and

Fenway Sports Group ownership have backed Sullivan in public and private. Sullivan told The Athletic that he's not going to leave on his own accord.

"I'm invested in the Pittsburgh Penguins," Sullivan said. "I care very, very deeply about this organization. I care deeply about the group of guys who have been in that locker room for a very long time. I love this organization with all of my soul. This organization and so many people associated with it have changed my life in so many ways. And so, for me, the challenge of trying to move this team forward and transition this team, it's a different kind of challenge, but it's one that I am welcoming."

That tracks with what sources in the coaching community believe.

"He's committed to win with that team. He knew what he was getting into," a source said. "I think he's the best coach in the league. People in Pittsburgh don't realize that these guys are all years older from when the last time they won, and there's just not a lot of young fresh talent there."

Ice cold

Spencer Carbery, Washington Capitals

Bruce Cassidy, Vegas Golden Knights

Ryan Huska, Calgary Flames

John Hynes, Minnesota Wild

Paul Maurice, Florida Panthers

Rick Tocchet, Vancouver Canucks

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For various reasons, these coaches can sit comfortably on their rumps with nary a singe from a hot seat.

Maurice won the Stanley Cup last season. Tocchet won the Jack Adams and is not considered one of Vancouver's issues at the moment. Hynes, Cassidy and Carbery have their teams playing well this season -- the Wild in particular are making a case of being the West's best team through two months. Huska also has the Flames playing well in the Pacific, but even if they level off, Calgary's retool means Huska sticks around for a while.

That said, the temperature can change in a hurry. One coach who was in the "ice cold" tier in 2023? Jim Montgomery of the Boston Bruins.



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Hurricanes' Pyotr Kochetkov shaken up after collision with teammate

Sportsnet Staff

Already missing Frederik Andersen, the Carolina Hurricanes may be faced with more goalie woes after Pyotr Kochetkov suffered an injury on Saturday night.

The de facto starter for the Hurricanes was forced out of Saturday's game against the Columbus Blue Jackets in overtime after a collision with teammate Sean Walker.

The incident happened just over halfway through overtime as the Hurricanes defenceman clipped his goaltender in the head while trying to take position away from a breaking Zach Werenski. Kochetkov laid on the ice, unmoving, for several seconds before team personnel came to his aid.

He was able to skate off the ice with the help of trainers, though he looked woozy, and was replaced by Spencer Martin for the remainder of overtime and the ensuing shootout.

Head coach Rod Brind'Amour had no update on Kochetkov's condition while speaking to reporters after the game.

The 25-year-old netminder is in his fourth season in the NHL. His career-best season came in 2023-24 when he posted a .911 save percentage and 2.33 goals-against average with four shutouts in 42 appearances.

In 12 games so far this season, Kochetkov has 10 wins, with a .907 save percentage and 2.30 goals-against average.



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Carolina Hurricanes Down Two Goalies, Where To Go From Here?

The Carolina Hurricanes have found themselves in perhaps the worst spot possible just 20 games into their season.

Things had been going pretty good for the Canes — who have defied the critics that had predicted that the team would see a drop off — as they sit third in the entire league for point percentage (0.725) with a 14-5-1 record.

However, with netminders Frederik Andersen undergoing knee surgery on Friday and Pyotr Kochetkov getting knocked out in Saturday night's game, all of a sudden, the net is looking very shaky for Carolina.

So what can the Hurricanes do?

With Kochetkov's status and timeline still up in the air, we don't really know how long he may be out.

But what is clear is that at least for the time being, Spencer Martin is the starter.

The 29-year-old started the season in the AHL (a 0.920 save percentage across three games), but the injury to Andersen quickly saw him make his way back up to the big leagues.

Martin has had an up and down year so far in Carolina (a 0.870 save percentage in five appearances) from getting left out to the Wolves in Colorado to then shutting out the Ottawa Senators.

But Martin's only win in five appearances was that Ottawa shutout and that's just not a recipe for success.

He's shown he can beat big teams with road wins over Boston and Vegas last year, so perhaps the Canes will be willing to give him just a few more chances to see if he can once again rise to the occasion.

Beyond him though, there's really not many in-house options. As the only other goaltenders Carolina has under contract are 24 year old Yaniv Perets (0.825 save percentage in three AHL starts) and 20 year old Ruslan Khazheyev (0.863 save percentage in five AHL starts).

If Carolina wants to try and wait for Kochetkov and Andersen to get healthy, they may find themselves in a hole too big to climb out of.

Related: Hurricanes Frederik Andersen To Undergo Knee Surgery on Friday

Work the Phones

The biggest problem for the Hurricanes is that they don't currently have a lot of cap space and none of their goaltenders have season-ending injuries.

So the usual idea of "Just throw someone on LTIR" doesn't work because when those players are finally healthy, you'd be in a really bad way cap-wise because then you'd have to

move someone else and you'd be trading from a position of weakness.

So how much space does Carolina have?

With Jesper Fast's LTIR relief, the Canes are looking at approximately \$1.5 million in cap space currently.

They could potentially free up another \$1.5 million by reassigning Tyson Jost and Ty Smith to the AHL, but that hinges on everyone else being healthy enough to play.

So the Canes would be shopping in the \$1.5 million to \$3 million range but you generally aren't finding too much value there.

There are options out there, like old friend Alex Nedeljkovic in Pittsburgh or perhaps one of Mackenzie Blackwood or Vitek Vanecek in San Jose, but we'll touch more on some of those more realistic options once we know more about Kochetkov's status.

However, what potentially will help if the team does go down this route is that they don't necessarily need a goaltender with only one-year left on their contract because Andersen is on an expiring deal.

There's obviously risk involved with grabbing a guy with multiple years left on their contract, but the Hurricanes are going to have to go that route anyway next year regardless, so might as well get a head start, right?

The Vegas Method

Part of what has made the Vegas Golden Knights so successful is their cutthroat approach to managing their roster.

No matter how meaningful a player was to the team or how much investment they have in them, if it will help the bottom line, they're open to moving them.

And that might be the best course of action for the Hurricanes when it comes to Frederik Andersen.

Carolina has given the Danish netminder plenty of opportunities to be the guy in Raleigh and he's put up some good numbers, but a never-ending cycle of injuries has prevented Andersen from really establishing himself as a top goaltender.

The Hurricanes can't wait on Andersen to be healthy when the risk of him dealing with something else down the line is so high. At this point, the team knows what he is.

Trading the 35 year old — which isn't as simple as it seems — would however free up an additional \$3.4 million in cap space and allow the team to seek out a new tandem partner to play alongside Kochetkov for the foreseeable future.



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The move could open up as much as \$7 million in cap space if they utilize Fast's LTIR relief space and reassign both Jost and Smith to the AHL.

Not saying the Canes will go this route, but it's certainly an option that would allow GM Eric Tulsky the option to go trophy fishing.

Goaltender depth an issue as Hurricanes host Stars

After dropping two of three games on a road trip, including a 5-4 shootout loss at Columbus on Saturday, the Carolina Hurricanes open a three-game homestand against the Dallas Stars on Monday night in Raleigh, N.C. Carolina has just lost

once in eight home games this season, tied with the Winnipeg Jets for fewest home defeats at the quarter-pole of the NHL season.

Hurricanes Activate Star Forward From Injured Reserve

The Carolina Hurricanes are one of the teams to beat in the Eastern Conference so far this season. With a record of 14-5-1, they are second in the Metropolitan Division but sit just one point shy of the top spot. The team now will have a more

full arsenal of offensive weapons as they announced that Seth Jarvis was activated from the injured reserve in a series of roster moves. Jarvis had been out of the lineup for the past seven games due to an upper-body injury.

Columbus Blue Jackets mature from comeback against Carolina Hurricanes: 5 takeaways

Brian Hedger, Columbus Dispatch

Four words landed heaviest in Blue Jackets coach Dean Evason's postgame comments Saturday at Nationwide Arena.

Following his team's ninth win, a thrilling 5-4 comeback against the Carolina Hurricanes that required a shootout, the Blue Jackets pulled even in points percentage (.500) with a 9-9-2 record. It was their second straight victory against an NHL heavyweight — after winning 7-6 against the Tampa Bay Lightning in overtime Thursday — and their first winning streak longer than two consecutive victories since March 11-16, 2022.

That span covers 988 days, 32-plus months and three head coaches. Evason didn't know any of that stuff and probably wouldn't have acknowledged it if he did. What he does know are good hockey teams, which made four monotone words he spoke boom louder than indoor cannon fire.

"That's a really good hockey team that we played tonight," Evason said, "and we are too."

Here are three takeaways:

Nov 23, 2024; Columbus, Ohio, USA; Columbus Blue Jackets right wing Kirill Marchenko (86) celebrates with teammates after scoring a goal against the Carolina Hurricanes in the first period at Nationwide Arena. Mandatory Credit: Aaron Doster-Imagn Images

Nov 23, 2024; Columbus, Ohio, USA; Columbus Blue Jackets right wing Kirill Marchenko (86) celebrates with teammates after scoring a goal against the Carolina Hurricanes in the first period at Nationwide Arena. Mandatory Credit: Aaron Doster-Imagn Images

Columbus Blue Jackets are growing up fast

Nipping the Hurricanes is no small feat for the Blue Jackets, who struggled against Carolina's pressure for two periods but trailed by only a goal starting the third.

That's when the Blue Jackets pushed back. Their energy surged starting the third, which resulted in Kirill Marchenko's tying 6-on-5 goal with 1:06 left in regulation. It was the sign of a talented young team the rest of the NHL wrote off months ago making big strides in all-important confidence.

Six of their nine wins are against teams holding playoff positions and two others — Tampa Bay and the New York Islanders — are on the cusp in the Eastern Conference. The Blue Jackets are also three points behind the Boston Bruins, who hold the East's second wild card spot after firing coach Jim Montgomery following a home loss to Columbus last Monday.

"I think we (are) growing as a team," Marchenko said. "We can feel how to win games, how we can play and it's, like, our standard. ... I don't want to think, like, 'Yeah, we are good,' and stop working. We need to work hard. Today, we tried to work hard. It's a great team against us, Carolina. They play really hard, too, and I think we win because we're harder and play harder. And that's it. Just go onto the next game and try to do the same thing."

Jul. 13, 2022; Lewis Center, OH USA; Columbus Blue Jackets forward Kent Johnson (13) talks to forward Kirill Marchenko (86) during development camp at the OhioHealth Chiller North in Lewis Center on July 13, 2022. Mandatory Credit: Adam Cairns-The Columbus Dispatch

Jul. 13, 2022; Lewis Center, OH USA; Columbus Blue Jackets forward Kent Johnson (13) talks to forward Kirill Marchenko (86) during development camp at the OhioHealth Chiller North in Lewis Center on July 13, 2022. Mandatory Credit: Adam Cairns-The Columbus Dispatch

Columbus Blue Jackets forwards Kent Johnson, Kirill Marchenko playing like NHL stars

It's still going to take a while for the rest of the NHL, especially those in media circles, to fully grasp how fortunate the Blue Jackets are to have Marchenko on the top line and Kent Johnson back from his 14-game injury stint.

Along with Sean Monahan, an established NHL top center, the Blue Jackets' top two young forwards played critical roles in the team's past two victories. Johnson scored two goals against the Lightning in his return from injured reserve and added two key assists against the Hurricanes, while Marchenko added two assists against Tampa Bay and two goals against Carolina.

His first goal was off a breakaway that he forced with a stick check, giving the Blue Jackets a 2-1 lead in the first period, and the second capped a 6-on-5 play that started with Johnson finding Monahan between the circles for a "Spin-O-Rama" setup to Marchenko in the left circle.



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Marchenko, Monahan and defenseman Zach Werenski are all tied for the Blue Jackets' scoring lead with 20 points each — averaging a point per game — while Johnson now has 4-5-9 in just six games. That's a ridiculous 102-point pace over 68 games if he keeps this up through the remainder of the Jackets' schedule.

Nov 23, 2024; Columbus, Ohio, USA; Carolina Hurricanes center Tyson Jost (27) skates with the puck against Columbus Blue Jackets defenseman Dante Fabbro (15) in the first period at Nationwide Arena. Mandatory Credit: Aaron Doster-Imagn Images

Nov 23, 2024; Columbus, Ohio, USA; Carolina Hurricanes center Tyson Jost (27) skates with the puck against Columbus Blue Jackets defenseman Dante Fabbro (15) in the first period at Nationwide Arena. Mandatory Credit: Aaron Doster-Imagn Images

Dante Fabbro is fitting nicely with the Columbus Blue Jackets

Dante Fabbro is making the most of his opportunity to play a big role with the Blue Jackets, who claimed him off waivers Nov. 10 from the Nashville Predators.

After scoring the game's first goal Saturday night with a tremendous individual effort to create a 2-on-1 rush with Adam Fantilli, Fabbro logged a season-high 25:36 as Zach Werenski's partner on the top defense pairing. Fabbro was asked to name the last time he'd soaked up that much ice time and guessed, incorrectly, that it hadn't happened "since college."

Fabbro's NHL career-high was set at 25:48 with Nashville on Nov. 13, 2021, which means he only missed setting a new high mark by 13 seconds Saturday against the Hurricanes. Regardless, he has seamlessly melded into the Blue Jackets' defensive lineup as a steady right-handed shot who has helped balance all three pairs. Fabbro also has two goals, two assists and four points in six games now, after not contributing anything offensively in six games for the Predators.

Last season, he finished with 3-10-13 in 56 games for Nashville.

Columbus Blue Jackets defenseman Zach Werenski (8) moves the puck around Tampa Bay Lightning right wing Cam Atkinson (13) during the second period of the NHL hockey game at Nationwide Arena in Columbus on Thursday, Nov. 21, 2024.

Columbus Blue Jackets defenseman Zach Werenski (8) moves the puck around Tampa Bay Lightning right wing Cam Atkinson (13) during the second period of the NHL hockey game at Nationwide Arena in Columbus on Thursday, Nov. 21, 2024.

Zach Werenski merits a spot in Norris Trophy debate

There's a lot of runway left in the season, but Werenski is a point-a-game defenseman with 6-14-20 in 20 games and is

Pyotr Kochetkov Exits Game With Apparent Injury

Ryan Henkel

As if things couldn't get any worse for the Carolina Hurricanes in regards to their current goaltending situation, goalie Pyotr Kochetkov left Saturday night's game against

leading the NHL in time-on-ice at 26:05 per game — 17 seconds more than Chicago Blackhawks defenseman Seth Jones (25:43), his former defense partner in Columbus.

Among NHL defensemen, Werenski trails only Colorado Avalanche star Cale Makar's 8-22-30 in scoring and remains tied for second in that category with the Winnipeg Jets' Josh Morrissey. Should Werenski score at that rate all season, he should be included at or near the top of ballots for the Norris Trophy — which is awarded annually to the NHL's top defenseman as chosen by the Professional Hockey Writers Association.

Werenski has a steep uphill climb in that competition, since Makar is a prolific offensive player and the Blue Jackets operate in obscurity compared to most NHL markets, but numbers like his to this point are impossible to ignore.

Columbus Blue Jackets left wing Dmitri Voronkov (10) skates in on Tampa Bay Lightning goaltender Jonas Johansson (31) during the second period of the NHL hockey game at Nationwide Arena in Columbus on Thursday, Nov. 21, 2024.

Columbus Blue Jackets left wing Dmitri Voronkov (10) skates in on Tampa Bay Lightning goaltender Jonas Johansson (31) during the second period of the NHL hockey game at Nationwide Arena in Columbus on Thursday, Nov. 21, 2024.

Dmitri Voronkov nets another big goal for the Columbus Blue Jackets

Now that he's shaken off rust from an injury-delayed start, Dmitry Voronkov is becoming quite a weapon as a big forward with good wheels. His goal against the Hurricanes gave the Blue Jackets a 3-2 lead in the second period, capping a power play, and extended his goal streak to three games.

Voronkov is listed at 6 foot 5, 227 pounds, which is roughly 15-20 pounds lighter than he was last season as a rookie, and he's moving around the ice better. Voronkov, however, is no less imposing. He has now scored four goals in the past five games, has five goals in 11 games since making his season debut and is scoring at a pace that would get him to 33 goals in 62 games.

Marchenko ties it late, Monahan gets only goal in shootout as Blue Jackets beat Hurricanes

Marchenko ties it late, Monahan gets only goal in shootout as Blue Jackets beat Hurricanes

Kirill Marchenko tied it late in the third period with his second goal of the game, Sean Monahan had the only score in a shootout, and the Columbus Blue Jackets beat the Carolina Hurricanes 5-4 on Saturday night for their third straight win. Dmitri Voronkov had a power-play goal and Dante Fabbro also scored for Columbus.

the Columbus Blue Jackets early after getting blown up by his own defenseman Sean Walker.

Nearly three minutes into overtime of the 4-4 game, Kochetkov came out to challenge a puck as Zach Werenski



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and Walker bore down on him and the Russian netminder was unable to get out of the way.

Walker's backside made direct and forceful contact with Kochetkov's head and the goalie stayed down on the ice not moving for a good while.

Eventually he was able to get to his feet but he had to be helped off the ice and looked clearly out of it as he went off.

Jack Roslovic Welcomed Back, Scores In Return To Columbus

Ryan Henkel

Carolina Hurricanes forward Jack Roslovic was welcomed back to Columbus Saturday night.

The Blue Jackets broadcasted a tribute video for the hometown kid who spent four seasons in Columbus during the first period of the Canes and Blue Jackets' game.

The Canes, who lost 5-4 in the shootout, are already without netminder Frederik Andersen who had knee surgery on Friday and won't be available for at least another two months so that leaves just Spencer Martin and another AHL goaltender.

It's a nightmare situation for Carolina who had found themselves near the top of the league standings after 20 games and it seems like general manager Eric Tulsy is going to need to start working the phones.

In 246 games with the Blue Jackets, Roslovic had 91 goals and 233 points.

Roslovic also welcomed himself back just a few minutes before that too as he beat Columbus netminder Elvis Merzlikins for his 12th goal of the season.

The 27-year-old forward now has goals in three-straight games and leads the Hurricanes in scoring.

Hurricanes' biggest surprise, disappointment to start 2024-25 season

Colin Gallant

Despite a couple of offseason subtractions, the Carolina Hurricanes are looking like one of the premier teams in the National Hockey League in 2024-25. The Canes are 14-5 through 19 games, good for first place in the Eastern Conference. This is looking like a true President's Trophy threat in the early going; just six points separates Carolina from the league-leading Winnipeg Jets.

The Hurricanes lost their first game of the season to the Tampa Bay Lightning, and have been on a terrific pace ever since. The team is fresh off winning three games in a row and have triumphed in four of six dating back to November 11. Pyotr Kochetkov has stepped up in Frederik Andersen's absence, although his standout play is not surprising — he's been solid throughout his tenure in Raleigh.

And the offence has been terrific, managing 3.89 goals per game — that's good enough for third best in the league.

Hurricanes are scorching hot in 2024-25

The Hurricanes are firing on all cylinders in the early going, with multiple players hovering around a point-per-game pace. Sebastian Aho and Andrei Svechnikov have been solid, managing 17 points each through 19 contests. Seth Jarvis is at 11 points in 13 games, although he's been sidelined with an injury for the last handful of games.

Shayne Gostisbehere has also looked excellent in his return to the team; the 31-year-old is quarterbacking the top powerplay unit, and is leading the blue line with 14 points in 19 games. But the biggest surprise for the Hurricanes in 2024-25 — and the best player on the team so far, period — has been Martin Necas.

Martin Necas has surprisingly gone nuclear

Carolina Hurricanes center Martin Necas (88) celebrates his goal against the St. Louis Blues during the third period at Lenovo Center.

The Hurricanes almost traded Necas in the offseason, and there were reports that 28 of the other 31 teams were interested in the Czech forward. And how happy general

manager Eric Tulsy must be that he didn't move the 25-year-old in his first summer on the job.

In 2024-25, Necas has gone nuclear. Fans in Raleigh know that this is a great player, but through 19 games, he has found a completely new gear that has him challenging for the league lead in scoring. Necas is up to 11 goals and 31 points, and he's looking poised to shatter his career highs across the board.

Necas is playing some of the best hockey of his career, and it's helped the Hurricanes vault to the top of both the Metropolitan Division and Eastern Conference. It's a shame he won't be participating in the 4 Nations Face-Off in February; Necas is emerging into a true superstar player in the NHL. Now third in league scoring behind two Hart Trophy favorites in Nathan MacKinnon and Kirill Kaprizov, Necas has certainly been Carolina's biggest surprise in 2024-25.

On the flip side, there have been two big disappointments for a powerhouse Canes team: the declining play of Brent Burns and the long-term injury to Frederik Andersen.

Brent Burns is finally showing signs of age

Burns has been a heart and soul kind of player throughout his fantastic career, first as a member of the San Jose Sharks and now with the Hurricanes. But at 39-years-old, the regression was beginning to show in the defenseman's play last season. Burns managed just 43 points in 82 games last year, which certainly isn't bad, but it's the lowest total of his career in a full campaign since 2011-12.

And this season, he's been even worse offensively. Burns hasn't scored a goal, and has managed just five assists over 19 games. Although he's still playing well overall at plus-five, he's been relegated to the second powerplay unit, with Gostisbehere continuing to quarterback PP1. Burns has been a great offensive defenseman throughout his career, but it's clear that age has caught up to the Barrie, Ontario native.

While Burns does still help to make up one of the league's best blue lines, his days being a significant offensive contributor seem to be over. He's probably been the biggest



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disappointment on a team that doesn't have too many thus far — at least on the ice. But losing Andersen to a long-term ailment for the second consecutive campaign has also been quite disappointing for Hurricanes fans.

Frederik Andersen's injury is hugely disappointing

Andersen has been terrific for Carolina whenever he's been on the ice — but that's becoming less and less frequent. The Swedish netminder missed a huge chunk of last season with a blood clotting issue, although he was lights out in his regular-season return. Although the Canes were beat in Round 2 by the New York Rangers in the 2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs, Andersen performed well in the crease in the postseason.

And he was superb to begin the 2024-25 campaign, winning three of his first four starts while playing to a sparkling 1.48 goals-against average and .941 save percentage. Those were league-leading numbers at the time. But Andersen suffered an injury and has been out of the lineup since October 26.

The Hurricanes announced earlier this week that Andersen underwent knee surgery, and will be expected to miss 8-12 weeks. For the second straight season, the effective veteran will be out long-term. Although Kochetkov is a great goalie and has handled the crease well over the last two seasons, it's an extremely disappointing update.

Andersen has proved that, despite being 35-years-old, he is still one of the best goalies the NHL has to offer. But he'll now be on the shelf until well into the New Year, meaning it'll be Kochetkov and Spencer Martin handling goaltending duties for the foreseeable future.

Despite Burns' declining offensive play and Andersen's unfortunate injury, the Hurricanes continue to surge in 2024-25. Necas is leading the way, but all four lines have been coming through for Carolina, while the blue line has never been an issue. There were slightly lowered expectations heading into the season, and the Hurricanes have shattered them in the early going. Once again, this looks like a contender to come out of the Eastern Conference.



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SB NATION
CANES COUNTRY

Blue Jackets 5, Hurricanes 4 - SO

Bob Wage

The Carolina Hurricanes closed out their three game road trip with a hard fought 5-4 shoot out loss to the Columbus Blue Jackets on Saturday night.

After a back and forth game, the Canes were holding onto a one goal late into the game but the Jackets tied it with about a minute left.

After a scoreless overtime, Sean Monahan scored the only goal in the shootout to earn the win for the home team.

What could be worse news for Carolina is that goalie Pyotr Kochetkov was injured and had to leave the game late. With Fred Andersen already out for weeks, the Canes cannot afford to lose another goalie to injury.

There was no update on his status after the game.

Roslovic, Chatfield, Aho, and Blake had the goals for Carolina.

The team's recap is here.

<https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/recap-canes-earn-point-in-columbus>

Game Summary -

<https://www.nhl.com/scores/htmlreports/20242025/GS020328.HTM>

Event Summary -

<https://www.nhl.com/scores/htmlreports/20242025/ES020328.HTM>



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The Hockey News

Hurricanes Recall Goaltender From AHL For Game Against Dallas

Ryan Henkel

The Hurricanes have recalled Yaniv Perets from the AHL in preparation for tonight's game.

The Carolina Hurricanes have announced that they have recalled goaltender Yaniv Perets from the Chicago Wolves of the AHL and subsequently reassigned defenseman Ty Smith to the AHL.

After the loss of Pyotr Kochetkov to injury Saturday night, the Canes are now down two netminders (Frederik Andersen had knee surgery on Friday and is out two to three months) and as such, needed to recall a goalie.

Perets, 24, has a 0.825 save percentage in three games with the Wolves and while that isn't too promising, the Hurricanes don't have too many options with only one other goaltender — Ruslan Khazheyev — under contract.

We're still awaiting an update on just how long Kochetkov will be out, but for the time being it looks like Spencer Martin and Perets will be the tandem for at least the foreseeable future.

The Canes face the Dallas Stars tonight a 7 p.m. EST.

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SportScan

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

1329225 Carolina Hurricanes

Carolina Hurricanes goalie Pyotr Kochetkov leaves game after scary collision

Chip Alexander

Raleigh-The Carolina Hurricanes' goaltending problems may have gone from bad to worse.

The Canes, who already have goalie Frederik Andersen sidelined eight to 12 weeks following knee surgery, had goalie Pyotr Kochetkov leave Saturday's game at Columbus after a collision with defenseman Sean Walker.

Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour had no immediate update after the game, which Carolina lost in a shootout, but said of the play, "It didn't look good."

"Obviously we already have one goalie down. This is not ideal, for sure," Brind'Amour said.

The Canes returned from their three-game road trip after the Columbus game and did not practice Sunday. Carolina (14-5-1) hosts the Dallas Stars on Monday at Lenovo Center and will hold a morning skate.

The Hurricanes on Sunday recalled goalie Yaniv Perets from the Chicago Wolves of the AHL.

The Canes also said forward Seth Jarvis had been activated off injured reserve after missing the past seven games with an upper-body injury. Jarvis should be available Monday against the Stars.

Kochetkov's injury came in overtime as Blue Jackets defenseman Zach Werenski was carrying the puck to the net. Walker, to the inside of Werenski, tried to drive him wide of the post when he ran into Kochetkov, who had moved to his right and was pokechecking the puck when he was hit in the head by Walker.

Kochetkov fell to the ice behind the net as Canes trainer Doug Bennett quickly came out to assist. After a few moments, Bennett helped Kochetkov back to the bench and then to the training room.

"It didn't look too good," Canes defenseman Jalen Chatfield said after the game. "I hope it's not as bad as it looked. He took a pretty hard hit."

Spencer Martin, called up from the AHL's Chicago Wolves with Andersen out, took over in net for the remainder of the OT and the shootout. The Blue Jackets' Sean Monahan had the only shootout goal as Columbus won, 5-4.

Kochetkov, 25, sustained a concussion in January of this year after a collision in net with forward Isac Lundestrom of the Anaheim Ducks. That came at a time when Andersen was dealing with a blood-clotting issue that kept him out a big chunk of the 2023-24 season — the Canes started veteran goalie Antti Raanta and recalled Perets as the backup.

Kochetkov was placed in the concussion protocol in January and missed eight games.

Kochetkov missed a game this season with an unspecified injury, again suffered after a collision with Walker during a road game at Utah. Martin entered the Utah game and started the next.

Martin, 29, was claimed on waivers from Columbus last season and was a valuable addition, playing six games and going 4-1-1. He now has appeared in five games this season and took the loss Saturday despite not giving up a goal in regulation or the OT.

The loss at Columbus was a tough one for the Canes, who had 4-3 lead late in regulation but had the Blue Jackets tie the score with a sixth

attacker. The Canes had some chances to win the game in overtime before the Kochetkov injury.

News Observer LOADED: 11.25.2024

1329230 Dallas Stars

How to watch the Dallas Stars' game against the Carolina Hurricanes
SportsDay Staff

The Dallas Stars (13-6, 3rd in the Central Division) take on the Carolina Hurricanes (14-5-1, 2nd in the Metropolitan Division) on Monday night.

Can the Stars win a third game in a row?

Here's everything you need to know about Stars-Hurricanes:

Stars vs. Hurricanes

When: Monday, 6 p.m.

Where: Lenovo Center

TV/Streaming: Locally available on Victory+

Radio: 96.7 FM/1310 The Ticket (KTCK-AM)

Bottom line

The Dallas Stars hit the road against the Carolina Hurricanes trying to extend a three-game road winning streak.

Carolina has a 7-1-0 record at home and a 14-5-1 record overall. The Hurricanes are 6-1-0 in games their opponents commit more penalties.

Dallas has a 5-4-0 record in road games and a 13-6 record overall. The Stars have a 6-2-0 record in games their opponents serve more penalty minutes.

Monday's game is the first meeting between these teams this season.

Top performers

Martin Necas has scored 11 goals with 22 assists for the Hurricanes.

Tyler Seguin has scored seven goals with nine assists for the Stars.

Last 10 games

Hurricanes: 6-3-1, averaging 3.9 goals, 6.4 assists, three penalties and 6.4 penalty minutes while giving up 2.6 goals per game.

Stars: 6-4-0, averaging 3.7 goals, 6.5 assists, 3.6 penalties and 9.5 penalty minutes while giving up 2.6 goals per game.

Injuries

Hurricanes: None listed.

Stars: None listed.

Dallas Morning News LOADED: 11.25.2024

1329255 New York Rangers

Rangers turning to Brett Berard in hopes of shock to system after disappointing road trip

Mollie Walker5-6 minutes 11/24/2024

The Rangers had already been back home for a relatively full night's sleep when Brett Berard was announced as a healthy scratch ahead of the AHL Wolf Pack's 4 p.m. Sunday game against the Bridgeport Islanders in Hartford, Conn.



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Indeed, the 22-year-old was on his way to New York on his first official Rangers call-up in the wake of a disconcerting end to the varsity club's four-game trip.

It appears as though the Blueshirts are turning to their AHL affiliate's leading scorer to provide a shock to the system.

The Rangers presumably would not recall Berard unless there were intention to play him. Just like they wouldn't have shipped Victor Mancini across the country if he wasn't going to replace an injured Zac Jones against the Oilers on Saturday night.

Brett Berard (65) when the New York Rangers held their rookie training camp Wednesday, September 11, 2024.

Brett Berard (65) when the New York Rangers held their rookie training camp Wednesday, September 11, 2024. Robert Sabo for NY Post

Mancini, by the way, was returned along with Chad Ruhwedel to Hartford in a subsequent move. It is a good sign for Jones, but to have Mancini fly out for just one game instead of playing Ruhwedel, who was already on the trip, was a telling decision — especially if only to return Mancini the next day.

It was all very indicative of head coach Peter Laviolette's evaluation of his blue line.

Berard could be in line to make his NHL debut on Monday night against the Blues at Madison Square Garden.

Laviolette is likely looking to jump-start his team amid a month of middling play by the Rangers, who have made it quite difficult to project exactly how they stack up to the rest of the NHL.

They'll win games they have no business being in, like the 4-0 victory over Detroit.

A single period can serve as a detriment against any opponent, such as the middle frame in the 6-1 loss to the Sabres.

The power play was ranked 10th in the NHL at the conclusion of this road trip, a low mark for a group that has consistently owned the top spots for a few seasons now.

Most nights, only one line is able to sustain zone time. Defending the rush has become a weakness against teams who excel in that area.

The Rangers had a chance to feel really good about themselves coming away from this road trip.

Instead, the focus is on regrouping ahead of their final two contests — at home against the Blues and away against the Hurricanes — before Thanksgiving.

"It's tough with these last two games, I think it started off good," Adam Fox said after the Rangers' 6-2 loss at Edmonton. "We just kind of lost our way, I think. Those starts are just not going to cut it — especially against a team like [the Oilers]. You get down early and you start pressing, you start pinching a little more, you start staying in and trying to get some offense against some guys that are going to punish you.

"It was good to get those first two wins, but really disappointing the last two games. Got a home game [against the Blues on Monday] to regroup and definitely figure some things out and have a good bounce back."

The Rangers were outscored, 3-0, and outshot, 41-14, in their last two first periods combined.

For a team that cites offense being the best defense — as a club that is built for it — the Rangers have had zero killer instincts as of late. They have struggled mightily with retrieving the puck, a testament to their one-and-done chances in the offensive zone and repeated losses of puck battles.

It'll be interesting to see just how long of a leash the Rangers are on under Laviolette, if they continue trending in this direction.

Laviolette certainly has options with his power-play units. The same can be said about his defensive pairings.

The anticipated return of Chytil should buy the lines some more time, especially since the Czech center's unit with Cuyllé and Kaapo Kakko has been arguably their best.

A 12-6-1 record doesn't feel as good as it looks. The Rangers sounded like a team that knows they're fortunate for that following Saturday's loss.

"Urgency," Vincent Trocheck said of what he attributes the Rangers' slow starts to. "We've been lucky enough to have [Shesterkin and Quick] behind us thus far this season. We're leaving them out to dry early on."

New York Post LOADED: 11.25.2024

1329256 New York Rangers

Three takeaways from the Rangers' 2-2 road trip that started out well but ended badly

Colin Stephenson

3-4 minutes 11/24/2024

The Rangers went 2-2 on their four-game road trip to the Pacific Northwest and Alberta, and maybe when they first looked at the schedule, they would have been willing to settle for that.

But the way the trip played out — with two nice wins to start followed by two awful losses to close it out — left them in a bad place as they enter a busy Thanksgiving week.

Here are three takeaways from the Rangers' trip to Seattle and Western Canada:

1. Slow starts prove costly

You can't just not show up in the first period. In the two losses to Calgary and Edmonton, the Rangers were outshot 20-5 and 21-9 in the first periods. They ended up trailing at the first intermission in both games, and while they caught up against Calgary and tied the score before allowing the game-winner in the third period, they never got close against Edmonton.

"I think we're just coming out slow, playing on our heels, and it seems like it takes us being down a few goals to be pressing, be on the offense, be in their zone and kind of take the game to them a little bit more," defenseman Adam Fox said. "We keep reiterating those starts are just not going to cut it, especially against a team like [Edmonton]."

2. Problems need fixing soon

The things that are going wrong right now — an inability to get the puck out of the defensive zone cleanly, an inability to hold possession in the offensive zone, a propensity for neutral zone or offensive zone turnovers that turn into rush chances by the opponent — are not going to correct themselves.

The Rangers must find a way to be more proactive in doing something — work harder to get open for teammates, make better tape-to-tape passes and stop turning the puck over — to fix these problems, as opposed to just assuming their talent is good and their issues eventually will go away on their own.

"I think, yeah, you're spot on," Vincent Trocheck said.

3. Power play hurting them

They've been able to make up for their inadequacies in five-on-five play because their power play has been one of the very best in the league in the past five-plus seasons. But right now, the man-up unit is hurting more than it is helping. The Rangers haven't scored a power-play goal in five games, and against Edmonton, they were 0-for-3 and allowed a shorthanded goal.

"It was really bad," Fox said. "Just flat-out, you know, was not good today."

"They're not dropping right now," coach Peter Laviolette said. "There's some movement, there's some looks. We're walking in, but it's not falling for us . . . There's no question it can be better."

Laviolette moved Fox to the bumper spot and rotated Mika Zibanejad to the point. It didn't work. He was asked if the next step might be to change up the personnel, perhaps give Alexis Lafreniere a look with the first unit.

"Those are things that we talk about," Laviolette said.

Notes & quotes: The Rangers called up F Brett Berard from AHL Hartford and returned Ds Victor Mancini and Chad Ruhwedel to Hartford. The



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moves suggest that D Zac Jones is good to go for Monday's game against St. Louis and perhaps suggest that Filip Chytil is not ready to return to the lineup yet.

Newsday LOADED: LOADED: 11.25.2024

1329242 Florida Panthers

Florida Panthers Loved Their Time with Jumbo Joe Thornton

By George Richards

The Florida Panthers had not quite arrived in 2021 when Joe Thornton all but declared them a legitimate Stanley Cup contender.

During the pandemic-shortened 2021 season, the Panthers took a step forward.

They finished second in the reworked Central Division, and gave the Tampa Bay Lightning a fight in the first-round of the playoffs before bowing out in 6.

The Panthers looked like a team the NHL may need to take seriously.

Only they were, after all, still the Florida Panthers.

Then Jumbo Joe Thornton, a Hall of Famer who had never won the Stanley Cup, signed on to win a championship with the Panthers.

Yeah, the Florida Panthers.

Teams started to look at the Panthers a little differently.

After all, if Joe Thornton was going to go ring chasing with the Panthers, perhaps they really were a contender.

"We wanted to win for him," Aaron Ekblad said, "just as much as we wanted to do it for ourselves."

Florida Hockey Now LOADED: 11.25.2024

1329243 Florida Panthers

Barkov: Florida Panthers Losing Streak 'Will Make Us Better'

By George Richards

SUNRISE — There were only a handful of players in the locker room Saturday night following a 7-4 loss to Colorado, a third straight loss for the Panthers. Florida captain Sasha Barkov was one of them.

Sitting in his stall wearing a sweat-soaked gray t-shirt, Barkov was staring into space.

His team, the defending Stanley Cup champions, had just lost for the fifth time in six games since a seven-game winning streak put them atop the Eastern Conference standings.

Does life look bleak for the Florida Panthers?

Is it time to pack things in?

Massive changes are coming, right? Right!?!

No, most know better than that.

Barkov especially.

This is not a fun stretch for Barkov or the Panthers, but they are healthy and know things can get better in a hurry.

Life sucks right now, but there is faith things can around in a hurry.

They have done it numerous times before.

This does not mean the Florida Panthers are happy about this recent stretch, one that includes two losses to the Devils, one to Winnipeg, and another to the Blackhawks.

Not to mention whatever Saturday night was.

"Tough stretches? You never want to get in them," Barkov told FHN.

"But every team goes through them at some point. We just have to find our way out of it. Usually, we learn from tough moments and they make us stronger and a better team. All we can do is concentrate on the next game, work harder, be smarter."

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