CAROLINA HURRICANES
NEWS CLIPPINGS • January 12, 2025

The News & Observer

Eric Staal arrived at a franchise with no history, and helped make some worth celebrating

By Chris Seward

On the tenth anniversary, Eric Staal, then captain of the Carolina Hurricanes, reflected on the team's 2006 run to the Stanley Cup championship.

Raleigh

As a player, Eric Staal didn't have to sit through many of the ceremonies like the one celebrating his career Sunday afternoon. The Carolina Hurricanes didn't have a Hall of Fame. There wasn't a long list of former greats waiting patiently for their moment of honor.

There were two in his early years, both in seasons more memorable for other, ensuing events: Ron Francis' No. 10 was retired in 2006, during Staal's second NHL season, and Glen Wesley's No. 2 in 2009. Staal is a big reason those seasons leap so quickly to mind.

Eric Staal is greeted by former Carolina Hurricanes teammates, including Tuomo Ruutu, as he arrives to have his jersey retired on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C.

Eric Staal is greeted by former Carolina Hurricanes teammates, including Tuomo Ruutu, as he arrives to have his jersey retired on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C. Robert Willett rwillett@newsobserver.com

What happened in 2006, when Staal led the NHL in postseason scoring after the franchise's (still) only 100-point regular season, before setting up Justin Williams for the empty-net goal that secured the Stanley Cup, remains the high point of both the Hurricanes' existence and Staal's career.

Three years later, the Hurricanes' playoff run expired in the conference finals, but not before Staal scored one of the great goals in franchise history to eliminate the New Jersey Devils. Those good times, Staal said Sunday, far outweigh any of the leaner years that followed in his mind.

Jordan Staal greets his brother Eric Staal as he arrives to have his jersey retired by the Carolina Hurricanes on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C.

Jordan Staal greets his brother Eric Staal as he arrives to have his jersey retired by the Carolina Hurricanes on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C. Robert Willett rwillett@newsobserver.com

Here we are 15 years later, a different Staal brother wearing the C, and the good moments Eric Staal was a part of remain the best moments. A night like this, when Staal's No. 12 joined those of Francis and Wesley and Rod Brind'Amour in retirement, is nothing new for the current players. They've done it before, even if they may not always know exactly why.

"It's a little different, that routine of having to sit through a ceremony," Staal said. "A couple of those guys are young guys. 'Who is this guy? We have to watch this?'"

To celebrate history, you have to make history.

Staal arrived at a franchise with almost none. He became its first homegrown superstar, part of moments so powerful even a snippet of "The Rising" summons old emotion. The parade of former teammates who greeted him on the ice Sunday, men easily recognized by their nicknames joined him in creating a legacy worth recognizing.

Eric Staal acknowledges his family and fans as he has his jersey retired on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C.

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Wardo and Willy. Stiller and Whit. Heddy and Juice. Rudy and Rosey and the Robe. And so on.

Some of them are already in the Hurricanes' nascent Hall of Fame. Others will join Staal soon enough.

"It's not new," said Brind'Amour, the current coach and former Staal teammate who preceded him as captain. "We have a history now. We have players like that we can celebrate that have had great, great careers. I think that says a lot about what's going on here, and he was a huge part of establishing that and the culture and everything we talk about being a Carolina Hurricane."

Photos: Carolina Hurricanes retire Eric Staal's jersey

Eric Staal, his wife Tanya, along with sons Finley, Levi and Parker watch as the former Carolina Hurricane has his jersey retired on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C. Robert Willettrwillett@newsobserver.com

When Staal left in 2016, the Hurricanes were in shambles: Underfunded, poorly coached, caught in a repeat cycle of incomplete rebuilding. What's happened since, with younger brother Jordan captaining a consistently competitive contender in front of sellout crowds, is proof what Staal helped build was never dead, merely dormant.

"You'd think I would hold a little bit (of a grudge), because you're right, all those things did happen," Staal said. "When I was here, I wanted that to be the case. I wanted us to be a contender, adding guys at the deadline and spending to the cap. But it just wasn't what we were. So when I left and was somewhere else and seeing them where they are now, I was pumped. One, because my brother's here, for one reason. But that wouldn't have been the only one."

Robert Willett rwillett@newsobserver.com

It's easy to traffic in nostalgia when ticket sales are sluggish or success on the ice seems distant. That's not the case for the Hurricanes right now. Whatever they were when Staal was here, they have evolved into something new and stronger. The highs may not be as high yet, but there are none of the lows Staal so often endured.

So honoring Staal on Sunday was no desperate grab at past glory; it's a reinforcement of how the Hurricanes got here. Who and what they are today is inextricably linked to what they were. That didn't exist when Staal arrived.

He helped create it. He made history.

Hurricanes raise Eric Staal's No. 12 to the rafters, rally for a point against the Ducks

Chip Alexander

Jim Rutherford, former general manager for the Carolina Hurricanes, greets Eric Staal as he is introduced for the retirement of his jersey on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C.

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Raleigh

The Carolina Hurricanes retired Eric Staal's jersey Sunday, then put him to work.

Staal was the siren sounder at the Lenovo Center as the Canes took the ice to face the Anaheim Ducks. Batting leadoff, with former teammates Mike Commodore and Brandon Sutter to follow on the siren, Staal gave it a long, determined crank.

The Hurricanes tried to give Staal a victory on his big day, rallying in the third period, but the Ducks came away with a 3-2 overtime win on Cutter Gauthier's second goal of the game at 1:52 of the OT.

Anaheim Ducks left wing Cutter Gauthier (61) reacts after scoring the game winning goal in overtime to give the Ducks' a 3-2 victory over the Carolina Hurricanes on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C.

Anaheim Ducks left wing Cutter Gauthier (61) reacts after scoring the game winning goal in overtime to give the Ducks' a 3-2 victory over the Carolina Hurricanes on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C.

The Canes (26-15-3) trailed 2-0 in the third and had a goal overturned by a goaltender interference call. But Andrei Svechnikov scored on the power play and Seth Jarvis tied it 2-2 with 56 seconds left in regulation after the Canes pulled goalie Pyotr Kochetkov for a sixth attacker.

"We didn't quit and found a way to tie it up," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "Special night. Too bad it ended this way,"

The Canes players were seated at the bench area during the half-hour pregame ceremony as Staal's No. 12 was raised to the rafters, making it a foursome of retired jerseys. Ron Francis, who wore No. 10, was the first to receive the honor, followed by Glen Wesley's No. 2 and then Brind'Amour's No. 17.

"There's not a lot of ceremonies like that and the boys were willing to be a part of it and I appreciated it," said Canes captain Jordan Staal, Eric's younger brother. "It was a really cool moment and we tried to battle for a win tonight, but unfortunately didn't get it."

Jordan Staal greets his brother Eric Staal as he arrives to have his jersey retired by the Carolina Hurricanes on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C.

Jordan Staal greets his brother Eric Staal as he arrives to have his jersey retired by the Carolina Hurricanes on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C. Robert Willett rwillett@newsobserver.com

At one point during his remarks, Eric Staal glanced behind him at the players, later joking that some probably were saying, "Who is this guy, this old guy? We have to watch this?"

Not that Jarvis felt that way, saying the ceremony was "super cool" and adding, "I think one of my ultimate goals as a player is to have a legacy like that, and to affect not only the lives of the people in the organization but the fans, as well."

Staal, whose legacy includes all of that, had a pertinent point to make to the players, one born of experience.

"Even when it's your sixth game in nine days, and you're sore and tired, there's nothing better than competing with your teammates and being out on this ice in front of these great fans," he said. "Cherish the moments and the memories because it really does go by in a blink of the eye."

Brind'Amour, seated next to team owner Tom Dundon, nodded. He knows.

Brind'Amour was traded to the Canes from Philadelphia in 2000, won a Stanley Cup in 2006, served as captain, retired from playing, had his jersey retired and now is in his seventh season as Carolina's head coach.

A blink of the eye.

For Staal, he said he didn't know where Raleigh was located when he was drafted in 2003. He began his NHL career, won the Stanley Cup in 2006, played 12 seasons and more than 900 games for Carolina and set several franchise records.

Photos: Carolina Hurricanes retire Eric Staal's jersey

Eric Staal, his wife Tanya, along with sons Finley, Levi and Parker watch as the former Carolina Hurricane has his jersey retired on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C. Robert Willettrwillett@newsobserver.com

After leaving the Canes, he competed for the Cup again with both the Montreal Canadiens and the Florida Panthers, then as the aging veteran center. Finally retiring after the 2022-23 season, his 18th in the NHL, he now lives in Edina, Minnesota, outside Minneapolis.

But like playing with the Canes, Staal cherishes his time in Raleigh. He said he became engaged to his wife, Tanya, in Raleigh. He said it's where they bought their first home and where the couple brought each of their three sons — Parker,

Levi and Finley — home from the hospital after being born in Raleigh.

From left, Parker, Levi and Finley Staal, Tanya Staal, and former Carolina Hurricanes Captain Eric Staal watche as his jersey is lifted into the rafters during a retirement ceremony on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C.

From left, Parker, Levi and Finley Staal, Tanya Staal, and former Carolina Hurricanes Captain Eric Staal watche as his jersey is lifted into the rafters during a retirement ceremony on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C. Robert Willett rwillett@newsobserver.com

Brind'Amour said Sunday that he had been able to chat with Staal a bit about what to expect in the ceremony, about seeing the jersey number go up.

"It's a lot and I know in talking to Eric he's feeling it a little bit," Brind'Amour said before the ceremony. "There's a lot of nerves, a lot of things. It's a real special day."

Staal handled Sunday's ceremony well, with the grace and poise he often showed on the ice. He thanked his former teammates and coaches, plus so many from the Hurricanes organization who were on hand. Only in mentioning his family did he tear up a little.

Eric Staal embraces Tripp Tracy during the retirement of his jersey ceremony on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C.

Eric Staal embraces Tripp Tracy during the retirement of his jersey ceremony on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C. Robert Willett rwillett@newsobserver.com

"I didn't know what to expect," Staal said after the ceremony. "I remember as a player being through some of these ceremonies and moments. But when it's really focused on you, it's kind of a weird feeling. It's such a team sport and a collective thing that when you have a night where it's totally narrowed in on you, it's a little different.

"But it's special, too, to have an opportunity and a platform to speak some truth about people that mean a lot to you, and that's what I was excited to do. I tried to speak the right words that came from the heart and enjoy the moment."

Staal's parents, Henry and Linda, were there for the big moment. Next to them were two of Staal's brothers, Marc and Jordan. The youngest brother, Jared, is coaching the Savannah Ghost Pirates in the ECHL and was unable to make the ceremony.

Growing up in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the four Staal brothers were super-competitive with one another — forget the hockey part; their pillow fights were said to be pretty savage. Linda Staal often had to be the "referee" and keep the boys in line, and Eric's mention of his mom Sunday caused him to lose his voice for a moment.

Eric Staal, his wife Tanya, along with sons Finley, Levi and Parker watch as the former Carolina Hurricane has his jersey retired on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C.

Eric Staal, his wife Tanya, along with sons Finley, Levi and Parker watch as the former Carolina Hurricane has his jersey retired on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C. Robert Willett rwillett@newsobserver.com

Soon after, No. 12 was slowly raised as Eric, Tanya and the kids beamed.

"It'll be staring at me for a while," Jordan Staal mused after the game. "It's a great honor for sure and rightfully so for what he was for this organization and what he brought to Raleigh and Canes fans, and the way he carried himself in this room."

Eric Staal, now 40, was asked how he spends his time in retirement. He smiled.

"Lots of Saturdays in a row," he said, sounding the common retirement refrain.

Staal said he helps coach two of his sons in hockey after picking them up from school, grinning and saying: "When I'm coaching they probably don't want me around sometimes.."

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NORTH STATE JOURNAL

Hurricanes rally, but Gauthier's two goals spoil Eric Staal Night in Ducks overtime win

Ducks forward Cutter Gauthier (61) is congratulated after his winning overtime goal by teammate Jackson LaCombe as the Hurricanes' Martin Necas skates in Anaheim's 3-2 win Sunday in Raleigh. (Karl DeBlaker / AP Photo)

RALEIGH — On the night the Hurricanes retired the No. 12 of Eric Staal, the opening 47 minutes of their game against the visiting Ducks on Sunday looked a lot like the end of the former captain's tenure in Raleigh, with Carolina unable to score and Anaheim building a two-goal lead.

The final 13 minutes of regulation, however, were like some of Staal's greatest moments shown on the video board during his retirement ceremony before the game.

Carolina got a power play goal just before the midway point of the third and then scored with the goalie pulled with under a minute to play in regulation to earn a point before losing in overtime on rookie Cutter Gauthier's second goal of the night in a 3-2 loss.

"The game was there," Hurricanes captain Jordan Staal said, "and the boys battled back and ground out a point. But still kind of a kick in the privates at the end."

Gauthier entered the Carolina zone at 3-on-3 and shot from the left faceoff circle, scoring past a drifting Pyotr Kochetkov to give the visiting Ducks a win. It was the second of three goals on the night that Kochetkov looked out of sorts allowing.

"There's a couple goals there you'd probably like to have back, but that's hockey," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said.

The Hurricanes were fortunate to earn a point after trailing 2-0 in the third period.

Carolina got within one on its first full power play of the game — though it had to score twice to make it count.

After Sebastian Aho's goal was called off following a challenge for goaltender interference, Aho set up Andrei Svechnikov for a back door tap-in at 7:48 of the third for his 15th goal of the season to make it 2-1.

Then, with Kochetkov on for an extra attacker, Seth Jarvis missed on a wide-open chance off a Svechnikov feed but made amends with 56 seconds left, spinning and shooting into the far corner over the glove of Ducks goalie Lukas Dostal (35 saves) to tie the game 2-2.

"It was a good job by everybody just bearing down and at least scavenging a point out of it, but the whole goal is always to get two points," Jarvis said. "Especially on a night like this, it's a little bit disappointing when you have such a special night and honoring someone that meant so much to this organization, to lose is a little tough."

Despite playing their third game in four nights, the Hurricanes got off to a strong start that was squandered because of a blown coverage that handed the Ducks a 1-0 lead after 20 minutes.

Just before the midway point of the opening period, Nikita Nesterenko collected the puck on the left boards and centered a pass in between four Carolina players to a slashing Jansen Harkins, who shot from the hash marks over the blocker of Kochetkov (18 saves) to give Anaheim the early lead.

After a second period without any scoring, the Ducks doubled their lead on the second shift of the third.

Gauthier drove wide on Carolina defenseman Jaccob Slavin and lifted a shot over the shoulder of Kochetkov at 1:18 of the third.

The Ducks effectively kept Carolina from around Dostal's crease, and the Czech netminder — who won a World Championship last summer playing on his national team with Martin Necas — outplayed Kochetkov.

Dostal's best save of the game came just five minutes in when he lunged for a Necas shot and got a piece of the puck with the shaft of his stick.

"Those are the inches here or there that just change the whole game," Brind'Amour said.

Still, the Hurricanes managed to bank five of six points in their three-games-in-four-days stretch to keep pace in the Metropolitan Division.

"I love how we fought, came back," Brind'Amour said. "Get a power play goal, get it taken off the board, come back on the same power play, score again, and then tie it up late. That's a good effort."

Notes: Ducks center Isac Lundestrom won 12 of 14 faceoffs. … Svechnikov's goal extended his point streak to six games. … Necas had two assists for his first multipoint game since Dec. 5. … Aho's assist ended a three-game point drought. … Gauthier had the first two-goal game of his career.

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Hurricanes score twice in third period, but fall to Ducks 3-2 in overtime

Louis Fernandez Jr.

RALEIGH, N.C. — RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Cutter Gauthier scored two goals, including one 1:52 into overtime, as the Anaheim Ducks beat the Carolina Hurricanes 3-2 on Sunday.

Jansen Harkins also scored, and Lukas Dostal stopped 35 shots to help the Ducks snap a three-game losing streak. Jackson LaCombe added two assists.

Carolina's Andrei Svechnikov scored a power-play goal midway through the third period, and Seth Jarvis tied it with 56 seconds remaining in regulation and the Carolina net empty. Pyotr Kochetkov made 17 saves.

Before the game, Carolina retired the jersey of former six-time NHL All-Star and longtime Hurricanes captain Eric Staal. The 40-year-old Staal, who holds several team records, became the fourth Hurricane to receive that honor.

Ducks: Gauthier, the fifth overall pick of the 2022 draft, showed his potential with his sixth and seventh goals of the season.

Hurricanes: Carolina dominated possession of the puck and nearly doubled up Anaheim in shots, 37-20, yet had little to show for it.

Dostal kept it scoreless with 7:05 left in the second when he stopped Eric Robinson on the breakaway. The Hurricanes had several other chances to score but struggled to solve Dostal, who had allowed nine goals in his previous two games.

Carolina dropped to 3-3 in overtime this season, losing for the first time since a 4-3 shootout loss to Columbus on Dec. 31.

The Ducks continue a six-game road trip on Tuesday against Washington, while the Hurricanes visit Buffalo on Wednesday.

'Humbled to be here': Canes legend Eric Staal's jersey retired

Joseph Ochoa, Louis Fernandez Jr.

4–5 minutes

On Sunday, the Carolina Hurricanes honored one of its greatest players.

18-year veteran Eric Staal had his No. 12 jersey retired by the franchise before the Canes hosted the Anaheim Ducks.

"Man that feels so good to feel that energy," Staal said to begin his speech after receiving a standing ovation from the crowd. "I want to do a couple hot laps here," he laughed.

"I want to thank my family, former teammates, coaches and staff members who played a role in helping me live my dream, of playing in the NHL," Staal said in July when he signed a ceremonial contract to retire with the Hurricanes. "I will forever treasure the memories and friendships made during my 18 years in the world's best league."

Staal said as he prepared for his No. 12 jersey to be raised into the rafters, three words stuck with him: humbled, grateful and sacrifice.

"I'm very humbled to be here, grateful for the years spent wearing a Hurricanes jersey and deeply aware of the sacrifices so many have made to make this possible," Staal said.

Staal played 12 of his 18 seasons as a forward with the Canes between 2003 and 2016. Staal was traded to the New York Rangers during the 2015-16 season.

Originally from Thunder Bay, Ontario, Staal was honest about the moment he was drafted by the Hurricanes.

"I couldn't have even told you where Raleigh was on a map, but soon after moving down here I was hearing sayings like 'y'all,' 'bless your heart,'" he said.

"I immediately felt the love for the community for each other, for me and especially for the Hurricanes and I knew that this is where I belonged," Staal said.

Staal was a captain of the Canes between 2009 and 2016 and is the franchise leader in games played (909), assists (403) and points (775) since the franchise relocated from Hartford in 1997-98. He is second in team history between

Carolina and Hartford in goals scored behind Ron Francis and is the team's all-time leader in hat tricks with 13.

Staal kept his composure for most of the ceremony, but when he spoke to his parents, his normal stoic facade cracked.

"I wore No. 12 because it was my dad number, dad when this jersey gets raised up, you can know that a part of that jersey is yours, love you guys," Staal said as he wiped a tear from his eye.

Staal's best season came in 2005-06 when he had a league-high 100 points on 45 goals and 55 assists and helped the Hurricanes to their only Stanley Cup title along with current Hurricanes head coach Rod Brind'Amour.

"Eric is a uniquely central figure in franchise history," Hurricanes General Manager Eric Tulsky said. "Throughout his time in the Triangle, he made an immeasurable impact on his teammates, the organization and the community. We look forward to raising number 12 to the rafters and celebrating the career of a man who has meant so much to hockey fans in North Carolina."

He is the fourth Hurricanes/Whalers player to have his jersey retired, joining Glen Wesley (No. 2), Ron Francis (No. 10) and Brind'Amour (No. 17).

Staal ended his speech with a thank you to the Caniacs - "Thank you for the love and making this the loudest house in the NHL. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the memories, I'll see y'all at the rink."

The first 6,500 fans in attendance received a limited edition Eric Staal Retirement Night bobblehead courtesy of UNC Health, and everyone at the game received a commemorative Eric Staal Retirement Night mini banner, also presented by UNC Health.

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Recap: Canes Rally, Earn Point On Eric Staal's Enshrinement Day

Walt Ruff & Peter Dewar

Svechnikov, Jarvis tally late goals to force overtime

RALEIGH, N.C. - The Carolina Hurricanes struck twice in the third period to erase a two-goal deficit and earn a point, but the Anaheim Ducks captured the extra, taking a 3-2 overtime decision at Lenovo Center on Sunday.

Despite a 10-7 shot advantage for the home club in the opening period, the Ducks buried the game's first goal midway through the frame and held a 1-0 lead at the first break. A scoreless second stanza yielded the game's first power-play opportunities for both clubs, but no goals - though Carolina's shot advantage swelled to 21-10.

Against the run of play, another Ducks goal just 1:18 into the final frame made Carolina's mountain a bit harder to climb. Sebastian Aho appeared to get the Canes on the board at 7:25, but his goal was disallowed upon review due to goaltender interference. Nevertheless, Carolina responded with a beautiful tic-tac-toe play 23 seconds after action resumed, culminating in Aho finding Andrei Svechnikov wide open at the back door for the hosts' first (legal) goal to halve the deficit.

The Hurricanes continued to dominate possession from there before finally, inside the final minute of play, knotting the score at two. With Pyotr Kochetkov pulled for an extra skater, Seth Jarvis took a Martin Necas pass at the bottom of the left circle, spun, and tucked it upstairs past Lukas Dostal to force overtime.

In the extra period, though, Cutter Gauthier's second strike of the night sealed the second point for Anaheim at 1:52 of the five-minute frame.

Kochetkov finished with 17 saves on 20 shots.

ANA at CAR | Recap

Stats & Standouts

From opening night until American Thanksgiving, the Canes scored first in 14 of their 22 games played - first among all NHL teams. After conceding the opening tally against Anaheim tonight, they've now scored first in just 7 of their 22 outings since Thanksgiving - tied for the second-fewest in the league.

With a goal in the third period, Andrei Svechnikov extended his point streak to five consecutive games - the longest active stretch on the roster and three shy of his season high of eight. Svechnikov's 15 goals are tied with Martin Necas for second on the team, trailing only Jack Roslovic's 17.

Speaking of Necas, his two assists tonight marked his first multi-point performance since Dec. 5. Necas produced two or more points in 12 of 22 games to start the season, but just twice since then before tonight. He's now found the scoresheet in five of his last eight outings, and his first double feature of 2025 could be a positive sign of things to come (back) for #88.

After missing the last seven games due to an upper-body injury, Shayne Gostisbehere returned to the lineup tonight. He played 20:36 - including 3:11 on the power play - and registered three shots.

They Said It...

Eric Staal describing his emotions during the pregame ceremony..

“I didn’t really know what to expect. I remember as a player being through some of those ceremonies and moments, but when it’s really focused on you, it’s kind of a weird feeling. It’s such a team sport and such a collective thing, that when you have a night where it's totally narrowed in on you, it's a little different. But it's special, too, to be able to just have an opportunity and a platform to speak some truth into some people that mean a lot to you, and that was what I was excited to do. I tried to speak the right words that came from the heart and deliver them as best I could, then enjoy the moment."

Rod Brind'Amour on the loss...

"I thought we got better as the game went on. It was a sluggish start. It wasn't great. It wasn't poor, but it wasn't great. I thought we played pretty well after that. I love how we fought and came back. We got a power play goal and got it taken off the board. That same power play we scored again and then we tied it up late. It was a good effort... We had our opportunities tonight. There were a couple of goals there that you'd like to have back, but that's hockey. I liked the way we

dug in and kept going. It wasn't a pretty game necessarily, but I thought we got better as it went on."

Jordan Staal sharing similar thoughts...

"We definitely gave ourselves enough chances to win the game. We didn't give up a ton. I thought the game was there. The boys battled back and grinded out a point, but obviously it's still kind of a kick in the privates at the end."

Jaccob Slavin describing his difference in the game...

"We had our opportunities to score. Their goalie made some big saves and we had some lapses. Overall, I thought we played a pretty good game, it was just a couple of shifts and a couple of bounces and that was the game... We didn't bear down on our scoring chances and we had a lot of them. We just have to score a little bit more."

Jordan Staal speaks on tonight's 3-2 lose to the Anaheim Ducks.

What's Next?

Carolina will not practice tomorrow. They will before traveling to Buffalo on Tuesday. They'll then take on the Sabres Wednesday night at KeyBank Center.

Next Game: Wednesday, Jan. 15 at Buffalo | 6:00 p.m.

Next Home Game: Friday, Jan. 17 vs. Vegas | 7:00 pm | Tickets | Parking | Upcoming Theme Nights

A Trip Down Memory Lane Ahead Of The Canes' 2025 Alumni Game

Walt Ruff & Peter Dewar

Looking back at some great moments from players returning to North Carolina this weekend

RALEIGH, N.C. - A crew of former Hurricanes are making their way back to Raleigh to celebrate Eric Staal's jersey retirement and induction into the team's Hall of Fame.

Some will even be lacing up the skates to help put a bow on the festivities, playing in the annual Hurricanes Alumni Game presented by Coastal Credit Union against the NC State Icepack on Monday night at Lenovo Center.

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Before the fellas try and relive some of their glory days, let's take a look back at some of the great moments that include some of those upcoming participants.

The Miracle At Molson...

Carolina's first trip to the Stanley Cup Final in 2002 featured plenty of drama along the way, encapsulated perfectly by its Game 4 win over the Montreal Canadiens in the second round of that postseason on May 9, 2002.

Trailing 2-1 in the series and 3-0 early in the third period on the road against the Habs, Sean Hill, Bates Battaglia and Erik Cole combined to spark a remarkable Canes comeback in the final frame. Niclas Wallin went on to score the overtime winner for Carolina, finishing off the first of three straight wins for the team en route to a 4-2 series victory.

The Canes' seven overtime victories during that run are tied for the second most in a single playoff year in NHL history, including a thrilling 2-1 win in Toronto to win the Eastern Conference Final and a 3-2 victory in Detroit for the team's first-ever victory in a Stanley Cup Final. But neither of those would have been possible without the iconic Miracle At Molson.

The Wizard Works His Magic...

Brandon Sutter and Ray Whitney will skate together again and it reminded us of when the two hooked up for a dazzling tally in Raleigh on January 24, 2010.

There weren't many times in his Hall of Fame career that Zdeno Chara was on the wrong end of a highlight, but "The Wizard" walked right on by the 6-foot-9 monster before setting up Sutter for one of his career-best 21 goals that season.

When all was said and done for Whitney's career, he played 372 games with Carolina, the single-most of any team in his 1,330-game career.

Two-Man Advantage? Not So Fast...

The NHL didn't start keeping track of "Goals By Strength" as a statistical category until the 2009-10 season, and would you believe that the Canes haven't recorded a 3-on-5 goal since?

Well, they've scored at least one in team history, and it came courtesy of Mike Commodore on October 20, 2006.

One of just two shorthanded goals in Commodore's career, he jumped up in the play late in the game and put home an Erik Cole rebound.

Ladies And Gentlemen, The Stanley Cup...

No trip down memory lane at 1400 Edwards Mill Rd. would be complete without a look back at the franchise's crowning achievement (so far). In total 10 of the 19 members of Monday's alumni game roster helped capture the Stanley Cup back on June 19, 2006.

There are plenty of highlights from that decisive Game 7 against Edmonton, from Aaron Ward opening the scoring just 1:26 into the game, to Cam Ward's heroic pad save to protect a late lead, to Justin Williams putting the game on ice and starting the party in Raleigh - but for now, we'll just leave you with the best Cup lift in NHL history.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • January 12, 2025

Gauthier scores 2nd goal in OT, Ducks recover to defeat Hurricanes

Kurt Dusterberg

Dostal makes 35 saves for Anaheim; Jarvis ties it late in 3rd for Carolina

Ducks at Hurricanes | Recap

RALEIGH, N.C. -- Cutter Gauthier scored his second goal of the game 1:52 into overtime to lift the Anaheim Ducks to a 3-2 win against the Carolina Hurricanes at Lenovo Center on Sunday.

Gauthier carried the puck from his own blue line into the offensive zone, cut to the left circle and scored on a wrist shot for his first two-goal game in the NHL.

“I saw the two [Carolina players] there kind of communicating which guy to take. I just kind of took the open lane there and made a fake,” Gauthier said. “I had dinner with (Anaheim goalie) John Gibson, and he told me to shoot five-hole, so I shot five-hole and thankfully it went in.”

ANA@CAR: Gauthier nets his second goal of the game, wins it in overtime

Seth Jarvis tied it 2-2 with 56 seconds remaining in the third period for the Hurricanes. With the extra attacker on, Jarvis took a pass on the backhand before spinning to his forehand and roofing a shot.

Jansen Harkins scored, and Lukas Dostal made 35 saves for the Ducks (18-20-5), who had lost three in a row (0-2-1). Anaheim was shut out 6-0 at the Philadelphia Flyers on Saturday.

“We talked this morning about getting back to basics, and that always starts with your work habits,” Anaheim coach Greg Cronin said. “I thought guys worked hard, and obviously Dostal was the best player on the ice. And when your goalie is your best player, you’re probably going to win a lot of games.”

Andrei Svechnikov also scored for the Hurricanes (26-15-3), who had won two in a row. Pyotr Kochetkov made 17 saves.

“I thought we got better as the game went on,” Carolina coach Rod Brind’Amour said. “It was a little sluggish start. I love how we fought and came back.

“We had our opportunities tonight. There were a couple goals there [Kochetkov] would probably like to have back, but that’s hockey.”

ANA@CAR: Harkins buries snap shot for opening goal

The Ducks took a 1-0 lead at 9:35 of the first period. Harkins received a centering pass from Nikita Nesterov in the slot and beat Kochetkov with a snap shot over the blocker. The goal was Harkins' first with Anaheim in his 30th game.

“We play hockey to score goals. For me, it’s definitely a boost for my confidence,” Harkins said. “Everyone is out there working their butts off. Personally, I’m just trying to bring what I can to the team.”

Gauthier made it 2-0 at 1:18 of the third period when he held off Hurricanes defenseman Jaccob Slavin in the left circle and flipped a shot that beat Kochetkov short side high.

“It’s a testament to our group and our character,” Gauthier said. “We’ve been great with back-to-backs all season long. We can’t let all those outside factors affect how we play a full 60.”

Sebastian Aho threaded a pass from the left circle to Svechnikov for a power-play tap-in at the right post to cut the lead to 2-1 at 7:48. The Carolina power play had gone 0-for-17 in the previous six games.

Earlier in the same power play, Aho had a goal overturned after Anaheim challenged for goalie interference.

“Huge. It’s been a while for the power play,” Jarvis said. “It’s nice to get one, and hopefully that continues.”

NOTES: Isac Lundestrom was 12-for-14 on face-offs for the Ducks. … Hurricanes defenseman Shayne Gostisbehere had three shots on goal and three blocked shots in 20:36 after missing eight games with an upper-body injury. … Svechnikov has five points (three goals, two assists) in a five-game point streak.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • January 12, 2025

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cutter Gauthier scores twice, including in OT, to lift the Ducks over the Hurricanes 3-2

By DOUG BONJOUR

Updated 8:15 PM EST, January 12, 2025

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Cutter Gauthier scored two goals, including one 1:52 into overtime, as the Anaheim Ducks beat the Carolina Hurricanes 3-2 on Sunday.

Jansen Harkins also scored, and Lukas Dostal stopped 35 shots to help the Ducks snap a three-game losing streak. Jackson LaCombe added two assists.

Carolina's Andrei Svechnikov scored a power-play goal midway through the third period, and Seth Jarvis tied it with 56 seconds remaining in regulation and the Carolina net empty. Pyotr Kochetkov made 17 saves.

Before the game, Carolina retired the jersey of former six-time NHL All-Star and longtime Hurricanes captain Eric Staal. The 40-year-old Staal, who holds several team records, became the fourth Hurricane to receive that honor.

Takeaways

Ducks: Gauthier, the fifth overall pick of the 2022 draft, showed his potential with his sixth and seventh goals of the season.

Hurricanes: Carolina dominated possession of the puck and nearly doubled up Anaheim in shots, 37-20, yet had little to show for it.

Key moment

Dostal kept it scoreless with 7:05 left in the second when he stopped Eric Robinson on the breakaway. The Hurricanes had several other chances to score but struggled to solve Dostal, who had allowed nine goals in his previous two games.

Key stat

Carolina dropped to 3-3 in overtime this season, losing for the first time since a 4-3 shootout loss to Columbus on Dec. 31.

Up next

The Ducks continue a six-game road trip on Tuesday against Washington, while the Hurricanes visit Buffalo on Wednesday.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • January 12, 2025

Eric Staal sees his No. 12 retired by Carolina Hurricanes - ESPN

Ryan Clark

Eric Staal has No. 12 jersey retired by Hurricanes (0:34)

Hurricanes legend Eric Staal is honored by the franchise as his No. 12 jersey is raised to the rafters of the Lenovo Center. (0:34)

Associated Press

Jan 12, 2025, 06:13 PM ET

Reactions

RALEIGH, N.C. -- Eric Staal became the fourth player to have his number retired by the Carolina Hurricanes when his No. 12 was raised at the Lenovo Center prior to the team's 3-2 overtime loss to the Anaheim Ducks on Sunday.

The Thunder Bay, Ontario, native and former No. 2 draft pick spent 12 of his 18 NHL seasons with Carolina, recording 455 goals and 608 assists over 1,365 career games. He served as captain from 2009 to 2016 and appeared in six NHL all-star games, winning MVP honors in the 2008 contest.

The 40-year-old Staal, who retired in July after signing a one-day contract with the team, joined Rod Brind'Amour (17), Ron Francis (10) and Glen Wesley (2) in the rafters.

He set several franchise records after the team relocated from Hartford, Connecticut, in 1997, including for goals scored (322), assists (453), points (775), games played (909), power-play goals (105), power-play points (252) and hat tricks (13).

Aside from the individual accomplishments, Staal saw the franchise carve its place in history after winning a Stanley Cup in 2006. He called that the highlight of his career.

"The memory I have of a Hurricane is of a Stanley Cup champion," Staal said. "It's not easy to win one. I only have one, and I won it here."

Staal was joined for the ceremony by family, including his brothers Jordan, who is the current Hurricanes captain, and Marc, a former NHL defenseman. Current Hurricanes players took in the festivities from the bench, and several of his former teammates were also present. Cam Ward and Justin Williams, members of the Hurricanes Hall of Fame, donned varsity jackets and watched the ceremony from the ice.

A video montage was played, featuring highlights and interviews from Staal's playing days.

"Words can hardly do justice how much this means to me," said Staal, who was occasionally interrupted by fans chanting his name. "Growing up ... playing in the NHL felt like an impossible dream."

Staal was presented with a Breitling watch engraved with his name and number and the phrase "Forever a Hurricane."

Speaking with reporters afterward, Staal said he'd like to get involved with hockey again in some capacity. But for now, he's busy at home.

"I have three boys. They're 15, 13 and 10," Staal said. "I'm helping coach my oldest son and my youngest. ... Time just kind of goes fast."

The night ended when Anaheim's Cutter Gauthier scored in overtime, his seventh of the season, off assists from Jackson LaCombe and Frank Vatrano.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

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yahoo!sports

Cutter Gauthier's OT goal lifts Ducks over Hurricanes

The Associated Press

Former Carolina Hurricanes player Eric Staal, center, speaks during a...

Former Carolina Hurricanes player Eric Staal, center, speaks during a ceremony to retire his No. 12 jersey prior an NHL hockey game against the Ducks in Raleigh, N.C., Sunday, Jan. 12, 2025. (AP Photo/Karl DeBlaker)

1 of 6

Former Carolina Hurricanes player Eric Staal, center, speaks during a ceremony to retire his No. 12 jersey prior an NHL hockey game against the Ducks in Raleigh, N.C., Sunday, Jan. 12, 2025. (AP Photo/Karl DeBlaker)

Expand

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Ducks: Gauthier, the fifth overall pick of the 2022 draft, showed his potential with his sixth and seventh goals of the season.

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Dostal kept it scoreless with 7:05 left in the second when he stopped Eric Robinson on the breakaway. The Hurricanes had several other chances to score but struggled to solve Dostal, who had allowed nine goals in his previous two games.

Carolina dropped to 3-3 in overtime this season, losing for the first time since a 4-3 shootout loss to Columbus on Dec. 31.

The Ducks continue a six-game road trip on Tuesday against Washington, while the Hurricanes visit Buffalo on Wednesday.

Hurricanes Assign Ty Smith To Chicago

Canes PR

RALEIGH, N.C. - Eric Tulsky, General Manager of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, today announced that the team has assigned defenseman Ty Smith to the Chicago Wolves of the American Hockey League (AHL).

Smith, 24, who made his Hurricanes debut on Dec. 28, has registered two points (1g, 1a) in eight games with the club this season. He has also posted 10 points (3g, 7a) with a plus-11 rating in 13 games with the Wolves in 2024-25. The Lloydminster, Alta. 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 131 career NHL games with New Jersey, Pittsburgh and Carolina, earning 49 points (9g, 40a) and totaling 52 penalty minutes.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • January 12, 2025



Ducks 3, Hurricanes 2 - OT

Bob Wage

The Carolina Hurricanes started Sunday afternoon by celebrating the jersey retirement of Eric Staal, but ended up losing the ensuing game to the Anaheim Ducks by a score of 3-2, in overtime.

Once again, the Canes fell behind in this game.

Through two periods, it was 1-0 Anaheim and they made it 2-0 early in the third period.

But the home team did not give up. Later in the third, the Canes scored a powerplay goal off a perfect play when Sebastian Aho found Andrei Svechnikov at the doorstep.

This happened just after an apparent Aho goal was taken off the board when the Ducks wanted a review for goaltender interference. Their review was confirmed.

Still down by a goal, the home team tied the score off a nifty Martin Necas pass to Seth Jarvis with less than a minute left.

In overtime, the Canes had trouble getting a decent chance. The Ducks took possession and Cutter Gauthier scored the game-winner, his second of the game.

The Hurricanes did not allow very much and only allowed 20 shots on goal for the game. But they did not generate very many high danger chances themselves.

When they did, Anaheim goalie, Lukas Dostal was up to the task and stopped 35 of the 37 shots he faced.

The Ducks also had 28 blocked shots.

The Canes will get a couple of days off as their next game is in Buffalo on Wednesday night.

Game Summary - https://www.nhl.com/scores/htmlreports/20242025/GS020687.HTM

Event Summary - https://www.nhl.com/scores/htmlreports/20242025/ES020687.HTM

Interviews - https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/0e32qdsuthpt2johzug62/ANOsFKfy6qjBK7ndIW5N2qE?rlkey=kbwzeibgjwemydpjm0vu9c3bb&e=1&st=152ofubr&dl=0

Team’s Recap - https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/recap-canes-rally-earn-point-on-staals-enshrinement-day

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • January 12, 2025



Anaheim Ducks' Cutter Gauthier spoils Eric Staal's jersey retirement game in 3-2 win over Hurricanes

Aidan Carlson, Assistant Sports Editor

For the first time since 2011, the Carolina Hurricanes retired a jersey as they lifted Eric Staal's No. 12 into the rafters of Lenovo Center.

On a night honoring the longest-tenured captain in Hurricanes history, it was Anaheim Ducks rookie left wing Cutter Gauthier who got the last laugh. Scoring twice, Gauthier netted the overtime winner and took the life out of Lenovo Center as the Ducks beat the Hurricanes 3-2.

"Tonight was about [Eric Staal] and it was unfortunate we couldn't get the win for him," said defenseman Jaccob Slavin.

The Ducks' defense pushed the Hurricanes to the perimeter of the ice and, as a result, the team largely struggled to generate high-danger opportunities for a majority of the game. It was almost 50 minutes of scoreless hockey for the Hurricanes before right wing Andrei Svechnikov scored his ninth power-play goal of the season to cut the deficit to 2-1.

Once Svechnikov got the game within one, the Hurricanes mounted more offensive pressure, leading to a final-minute goal from center Seth Jarvis to tie it a 2-2 and send it to overtime. However, Gauthier played the spoiler in overtime, netting his seventh goal of the year.

"We got better as the game went on," said head coach Rod Brind'Amour. "It was a sluggish start, first wasn't great, it wasn't poor, just wasn't great. We played pretty well after that. I loved how we fought."

After Anaheim center Nikita Nesterenko found center Jansen Harkins who split three Canes defenders and fired a shot past Canes netminder Pyotr Kochetkov, the whole team went into shutdown mode, clogging up the middle of the ice.

Whether it was finishing checks or blocking shots, Anaheim's physicality made it hard for the Hurricanes to get to the scoring areas, and when they did, they came up empty.

"We were stuck on the outside a little bit too much," said center Jordan Staal. "That's probably one thing we could have [done] a little better in getting in front of his eyes. There were still quite a few good shots with good screens and good tips that didn't go our way."

In the middle frame, the Ducks only tallied three shots on goal as the Canes peppered goaltender Lukas Dostal with shots that he deflected wide. At the rate the Hurricanes were playing when Gauthier scored 1:52 into the third, it looked to be the killing blow.

On a stretch pass, Slavin pushed Gauthier wide, giving him a shallow angle but the 20-year-old wasn't phased and fired a snap shot above the near post shoulder of Kochetkov.

With the five-on-five failing to generate a goal, the Hurricanes looked to the man advantage to bring the game within reach.

Center Sebastian Aho appeared to have got the job done when he tapped in a rebound after establishing a net-front presence. Anaheim wasn't convinced he did it cleanly and successfully challenged with a goaltender interference call that overturned the goal.

The Caniacs unleashed chants of 'refs you suck' and in a "puck don't lie" moment, the Hurricanes did score on the power play with the remaining time.

Center Martin Necas threaded a pass to Aho who in turn threaded a pass to Svechnikov at the back post who got Carolina within striking distance. The momentum had swung and as a result, the Hurricanes kept shooting.

Defenseman Shayne Gostisbehere returned to the lineup and his presence was immediately felt. Although not registering a point on either goal, he was on the ice for both and was a key facilitator of the puck whenever the Hurricanes were up a man.

"He makes great plays, five-on-five and power play," Jarvis said. "So it's always nice when you have a player of that caliber to come back in the lineup and be as effective as he was."

Jarvis, in a move he has flashed before, received a pass from Necas and in one move, turned towards the net, roofing the puck past Dostal to tie it at two.

In the final minute, the Canes had tied it and forced overtime but the overtime point would be all they got. From a similar spot, Gauthier fired a shot along the ice that beat Kochetkov under the left pad in a goal he would like to have back.

Concluding a grueling three games in four days, the Hurricanes get two days off before they resume action on Wednesday at 6 p.m. when they take on the Sabres in Buffalo.

CAROLINA HURRICANES
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The Hockey News

'It Was Unfortunate That We Couldn't Get The Win For Him': Jordan Staal, Jaccob Slavin, Seth Jarvis, Rod Brind'Amour On Eric Staal, Overtime Loss

Ryan Henkel

The Canes lost 3-2 to the Ducks in overtime.

The Carolina Hurricanes battled back from a two-goal deficit in the third-period to force overtime against the Anaheim Ducks, but ultimately fell 3-2 on the night in which they honored former captain Eric Staal.

Andrei Svechnikov and Seth Jarvis both scored for Carolina in extra attacker situations (power play and 6v5), but it was not a game to remember for goaltender Pyotr Kochetkov who allowed two soft goals on just 20 shots, including the OT winner.

After the game, Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour along with Jordan Staal, Jaccob Slavin and Jarvis spoke with the media. Here's what they had to say:

Rod Brind'Amour

On the game:

I thought we got better as the game went on actually. It was a little bit of a sluggish start. Wasn't great. It wasn't poor, it just wasn't great and then I thought we played pretty well after that. I loved how we fought, came back. Got a power play goal taken off the board, came back on the same power play and scored again and then tied it up late. It was a good effort.

On securing at least a point in the standings: I mean, we had our opportunities tonight. A couple goals there that you'd like to have back, but that's hockey. I just liked the way we just dug in and kept going. Wasn't a pretty game necessarily, but I thought we got better as it went along.

On the ceremony: Obviously it was a special night. Too bad it ended this way, but I thought everything about the ceremony was great. Thought he did a good job. Talking to them after, briefly, I think he was happy with it and that's the important thing.

On Shayne Gostisbehere's return helping the power play: It looked a lot different, that's for sure. Had a lot with the way they were killing too and I thought our guys did a nice job of doing what we needed to do based on what they were doing. And the execution was there. Scored a nice goal.

On if it's difficult to keep the team from getting discouraged due to bad calls on the ice: It's not hard. That's your job. You're used to it. It's every night that it's like that. It's like, 'Oh, that's new,' but no. Every night, that's what happens. You have to know it's going to happen and you just can't get frustrated with it.

On if he felt the team spent too much time on the perimeter tonight: At times. They have big D and they're doing their job to not let you get there, but I thought we controlled the game for the most part. We had a few good looks and kind of whiffed or it was just some weird plays. It just wasn't it tonight. I mean, right away in the first period, Neci has a great look, but it goes off [the goalie's stick]. Those are the inches here or there that changes the whole game. I'm going to look at it from the positive side of things. I thought it was a 60-minute effort, a solid game. I loved how we certainly didn't quit and found a way to at least tie it up.

Jordan Staal

On the game:

I thought it wasn't terrible. I thought we were pretty good and definitely gave ourselves enough chances to win that game. Didn't give up a ton, but I thought the game was there. The boys battled back obviously and got a point, but still kind of a kick in the privates at the end, but it is what it is.

On the difficulty getting to the netfront: They're pretty hard man-on-man so they did a good job boxing out. I think we were stuck on the outside a little bit too much. Probably the one thing we could have done a little better and gotten in front of his eyes. Still quite a few good shots, good screens, good tips, it just didn't go our way and didn't go in the net. But I think like I said, there was an opportunity to win that game. Just didn't go our way tonight.

On playing three games in four nights: The boys were grinding. I know I felt the legs a little bit in that first period and then I kind of got into it a little bit and you could tell our game kind of looked like that too. That's kind of how I felt. There's not a ton of opportunities like that ceremony and the boys were willing to be a part of it which I appreciated. It was a really cool moment and the guys really liked it I think. We tried to battle for a win tonight, unfortunately we didn't get it.

On seeing his brother's jersey go up into the rafters: It'll be staring at me for a while. I've said it a ton of times before, it's just a great honor I'm sure and rightfully so. What he was to this organization and what he brought to the Canes fans and just the way he carried himself in this room and just all the positive things he brought here and to the game of hockey in Raleigh. To see his number is just a great honor and I'm just really happy for him.

On the Ducks physicality: I thought they did a good job of finishing their checks. Like I said, I think we had some opportunities we didn't finish and we could have been more in front I think. In the offensive zone, we could have shot a bit more and kind of created a little more havoc. Obviously in

this league, it's always nice to get that fist one and it's always tough to come back. I thought we did a good job of coming back and finding a way to get a point and overtime is what it is.

Jaccob Slavin

On being fifth all-time in franchise history for games played:

I didn't even know that happened. Tonight was about 'Big E' and it was unfortunate that we couldn't get the win for him.

On if he felt the game was a bit difficult having been the third one in four days: No, I wouldn't say so. We had our opportunities to score and their goalie made some big saves. Some lapses, but overall I thought we played a pretty good game. Just a couple of shifts there and a couple of bounces and that's the game. We didn't play bad, but I think we could have been a little bit better.

On the main difference in the game: Just not bearing down on all of our scoring chances. We had a lot of them, so we just have to score a little bit more.

On if there's any solace in at least getting a point tonight: It's always good to get a point, right? Every point matters throughout the season and so props to that 6v5 group at the end there getting that goal at the end there. Jarvy's goal was huge. Every point matters, but it would have been nice to get two.

On the ceremony: It was huge. So well deserved for him. Off the ice, he's such a great person, such a great father, great friend, great teammate and obviously on the ice, his play spoke for itself. So for him to be honored like that and be cemented in Canes history forever is super cool. It means so much to this organization, so much to a lot of people still in this organization, and obviously he was my first captain so it's an honor to see him up there.

Seth Jarvis

On at least getting a point out of the game:

It was a good job by everybody just bearing down and at least scavenging a point out of it, but the whole goal is to always get two points and especially on a night like this. It's a little bit disappointing when you have such a special night honoring someone who meant so much to the organization. So to lose is a little tough.

On the power play answering right back after the overturned goal: Huge. It's been a while for the power so it's nice to get one and hopefully that continues.

On having Shayne Gostisbehere back in the lineup: I mean, he makes great plays at 5v5, power play, so it's always nice when you have a player of that caliber to come back into the lineup and be as effective as he was.

On what the night was like for him: Super cool. That's obviously one of the ultimate goals as a player, for anyone I think, is to have a legacy like that and to affect not only the lives of people in the organization but fans as well. So to see him get honored as much as he should is fun to watch and fun to be a part of.

On dealing with tough calls: I mean, it happens. It's kind of the ups and downs of the season. That'll happen multiple times. Sometimes it will go our way, sometimes it won't. Right now, it seems like a lot of it isn't going our way, but there's nothing you can really do about it other than sticking with it and sticking to our game plan.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • January 12, 2025

3 Takeaways From Ducks' Shocking Upset Over Hurricanes - The Hockey Writers Anaheim Ducks Latest News, Analysis & More

Jordan Reinhardt

Just when you thought the Anaheim Ducks, who were fresh off back-to-back stinkers against the St. Louis Blues (a 6-2 defeat on Jan. 9) and the Philadelphia Flyers (a 6-0 defeat on Jan. 11), might enter a tailspin to start the second half of the season, they pulled a rabbit out of the hat and beat the Carolina Hurricanes 3-2 in overtime Sunday night.

The upset win continued an up-and-down season for Anaheim, whose results and performance through 43 games have painted a perplexing picture of the club and the state of its season. That said, the win will certainly take the edge off a team that still faces three Eastern Conference powerhouses to finish the trip. Here are the key takeaways.

Depth Scoring and Goaltending Gave the Ducks a Chance

The top-six forward unit for this team has had very little to show for itself since Troy Terry exited the lineup prior to the game against the Calgary Flames. While his return remains unclear, the Ducks aren't the same without him, a painful truth that reared its head in a series of losses last week.

More of the same occurred Sunday night, and it was depth players Jansen Harkins, Nikita Nesterenko, and Brian Dumoulin that got the Ducks on the board first. Gauthier would contribute the team's final two goals, but without depth scoring, the Ducks don't jump out to a lead that settles them into the contest. Against a dynamic team like the Hurricanes, it was so critical to get the first goal and put them on their heels.

They also don't win that game if Lukáš Dostál doesn't rebound from his tough outing against the Blues in the fashion that he did. He was stellar in Carolina with 35 saves. The performance pushed his goals-against average (GAA) to 2.89 and his save percentage (SV%) to .910, which sits 15th in the league amongst eligible goaltenders.

Emotional 24 Hours for Gauthier Ends in Stellar Fashion

Cutter Gauthier, less than 24 hours after he was relentlessly booed and heckled by both fans and Flyers players, delivered perhaps the best game of his young career against the Hurricanes. He didn't get a lot of ice time – 12:29 – but he did plenty with it, including an early third-period goal to give the Ducks a 2-0 lead, as well as the game-winner in overtime after the Ducks relinquished the lead late in the final frame.

After picking up a Mason McTavish-tipped stretch pass that gave him the chance to enter the offensive zone with speed, Gauthier absolutely ripped a shot short side to beat goaltender Pyotr Kochetkov. He would beat Kochetkov again in overtime when he accepted a Jackson LaCombe feed from behind their own blue line, skated the puck all the way up ice, side-stepped Hurricanes defenseman Shayne Gostisbehere, and shot the puck against the grain. The largely solo effort was the perfect way for the Ducks, especially Gauthier, to end the weekend after an emotional and intense 24 hours that began with a riled-up Flyers fan base and ended with a silent Hurricanes one. One snipe and one solo rush up ice where he skated left and shot right. Those are what you call goal-scorers' goals. He is at seven on the season and though his average time-on-ice (ATOI) is fairly low, he should get ample opportunity to get to 15 before his rookie season is out.

Jackson LaCombe Is Looking Like the Real Deal

Who had LaCombe on their bingo card as the Ducks' most impressive young defenseman for the 2024-25 season? When you consider he is competing for that honor with Pavel Mintyukov, Olen Zellweger, and formerly Tristan Luneau (now playing for the San Diego Gulls in the American Hockey League), who were expected to command all the attention in that arena, there couldn't have been many. All LaCombe has done in his sophomore season is put up numbers. He collected two huge assists in last night's win and now sits at eight goals and 12 assists in 36 games played. That far and away leads Ducks defensemen; the next closest is Zellweger, who has 12 points total. His 20 points are tied with Gauthier for fourth on the Ducks in team scoring, and his average time-on-ice of 20:08 is second on the team, only behind Jacob Trouba (20:29). Since Dec. 1, he has played less than 19 minutes in a game just twice.

LaCombe's play is speaking for itself, and he is earning every shift he is given by head coach Greg Cronin. He should continue to shine, even if the Ducks are wildly inconsistent offensively and defensively. He easily tops the list of players to be excited about as the Ducks begin the second half of the season.

A Tough Road Trip Continues

The 2024-25 schedule continues to be cruel to the Ducks. Yesterday's win was their seventh game in 12 days to open 2025, which has included two sets of back-to-back contests. It's been a perplexing schedule thus far that will only get more challenging over the next week with the Washington Capitals (Jan. 14), Tampa Bay Lightning (Jan. 16), and reigning Stanley Cup champion Florida Panthers (Jan. 18) to conclude the road trip.

The inconsistencies make the Ducks a bit of an enigma. They put together impressive wins over teams like the Winnipeg Jets, Edmonton Oilers, and New Jersey Devils recently, but got shut out by a Flyers team whose biggest liability is their goaltending. They go to the nation's capital from here and will do their best to keep Alexander Ovechkin from inching closer to the all-time goals record.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • January 12, 2025

Sports Illustrated

Carolina Hurricanes Retire Franchise Icon's Number

Nick Horwat

Eric Staal spent 12 years of his 18-year NHL career with the Carolina Hurricanes, becoming one of the most recognizable names in that franchise's history. A four-time All-Star and a captain for seven seasons in Carolina, the Hurricanes are celebrating Staal as one of the franchise icons by retiring his No. 12.

In a pregame ceremony, the Hurricanes rose Staal's jersey to the rafters at the Lonovo Center, never to be worn again in Carolina.

During his time with the Hurricanes, Staal grew into a leader and legend for the organization. In 909 regular season games played between 2003 and 2016, he scored 322 goals and 453 assists for 775 points, all of which are second in franchise history.

Only Hall of Famer Ron Francis has more goals, assists, and points in Hurricanes history.

During his time in Carolina, the Hurricanes weren't one of the top teams in the NHL, but when they made the Stanley Cup Playoffs, Staal hit new levels. Staal helped lead the Hurricanes in two playoff runs.

The first came in 2006 when the Hurricanes captured the franchise's first Stanley Cup. Staal led the playoffs in scoring with nine goals and 19 assists for 28 total points at the age of 21.

In 2009, the Hurricanes made it all the way to the Eastern Conference Final, before being swept by the Pittsburgh Penguins. In 18 games played that postseason, Staal scored 10 goals and five assists for 15 total points.

Originally a second overall pick of the Hurricanes in 2003, Staal went on to play 18 seasons in the NHL. After the Hurricanes, Staal played with the New York Rangers, Minnesota Wild, Buffalo Sabres, Montreal Canadiens, and the Florida Panthers.

In 1,365 games in the NHL, Staal scored 455 goals and 608 assists for 1,063 total points.

Between the Hurricanes and the Hartford Whalers, only 11 players have donned the No. 12. With Staal's name going to the rafters, he'll be the last.

TODAY'S LINKS

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CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • January 12, 2025

SportScan

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

1335558 Carolina Hurricanes

Hurricanes raise Eric Staal's No. 12 to the rafters, rally for a point against the Ducks

Chip Alexander

Raleigh-The Carolina Hurricanes retired Eric Staal's jersey Sunday, then put him to work.

Staal was the siren sounder at the Lenovo Center as the Canes took the ice to face the Anaheim Ducks. Batting leadoff, with former teammates Mike Commodore and Brandon Sutter to follow on the siren, Staal gave it a long, determined crank.

The Hurricanes tried to give Staal a victory on his big day, rallying in the third period, but the Ducks came away with a 3-2 overtime win on Cutter Gauthier's second goal of the game at 1:52 of the OT.

The Canes (26-15-3) trailed 2-0 in the third and had a goal overturned by a goaltender interference call. But Andrei Svechnikov scored on the power play and Seth Jarvis tied it 2-2 with 56 seconds left in regulation after the Canes pulled goalie Pyotr Kochetkov for a sixth attacker.

"We didn't quit and found a way to tie it up," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "Special night. Too bad it ended this way,"

The Canes players were seated at the bench area during the half-hour pregame ceremony as Staal's No. 12 was raised to the rafters, making it a foursome of retired jerseys. Ron Francis, who wore No. 10, was the first to receive the honor, followed by Glen Wesley's No. 2 and then Brind'Amour's No. 17.

"There's not a lot of ceremonies like that and the boys were willing to be a part of it and I appreciated it," said Canes captain Jordan Staal, Eric's younger brother. "It was a really cool moment and we tried to battle for a win tonight, but unfortunately didn't get it."

At one point during his remarks, Eric Staal glanced behind him at the players, later joking that some probably were saying, "Who is this guy, this old guy? We have to watch this?"

Not that Jarvis felt that way, saying the ceremony was "super cool" and adding, "I think one of my ultimate goals as a player is to have a legacy like that, and to affect not only the lives of the people in the organization but the fans, as well."

Staal, whose legacy includes all of that, had a pertinent point to make to the players, one born of experience.

"Even when it's your sixth game in nine days, and you're sore and tired, there's nothing better than competing with your teammates and being out on this ice in front of these great fans," he said. "Cherish the moments and the memories because it really does go by in a blink of the eye."

Brind'Amour, seated next to team owner Tom Dundon, nodded. He knows.

Brind'Amour was traded to the Canes from Philadelphia in 2000, won a Stanley Cup in 2006, served as captain, retired from playing, had his jersey retired and now is in his seventh season as Carolina's head coach.

A blink of the eye.

For Staal, he said he didn't know where Raleigh was located when he was drafted in 2003. He began his NHL career, won the Stanley Cup in 2006, played 12 seasons and more than 900 games for Carolina and set several franchise records.

After leaving the Canes, he competed for the Cup again with both the Montreal Canadiens and the Florida Panthers, then as the aging veteran center. Finally retiring after the 2022-23 season, his 18th in the NHL, he now lives in Edina, Minnesota, outside Minneapolis.

But like playing with the Canes, Staal cherishes his time in Raleigh. He said he became engaged to his wife, Tanya, in Raleigh. He said it's where they bought their first home and where the couple brought each of their three sons — Parker, Levi and Finley — home from the hospital after being born in Raleigh.

Brind'Amour said Sunday that he had been able to chat with Staal a bit about what to expect in the ceremony, about seeing the jersey number go up.

"It's a lot and I know in talking to Eric he's feeling it a little bit," Brind'Amour said before the ceremony. "There's a lot of nerves, a lot of things. It's a real special day."

Staal handled Sunday's ceremony well, with the grace and poise he often showed on the ice. He thanked his former teammates and coaches, plus so many from the Hurricanes organization who were on hand. Only in mentioning his family did he tear up a little.

"I didn't know what to expect," Staal said after the ceremony. "I remember as a player being through some of these ceremonies and moments. But when it's really focused on you, it's kind of a weird feeling. It's such a team sport and a collective thing that when you have a night where it's totally narrowed in on you, it's a little different.

"But it's special, too, to have an opportunity and a platform to speak some truth about people that mean a lot to you, and that's what I was excited to do. I tried to speak the right words that came from the heart and enjoy the moment."

Staal's parents, Henry and Linda, were there for the big moment. Next to them were two of Staal's brothers, Marc and Jordan. The youngest brother, Jared, is coaching the Savannah Ghost Pirates in the ECHL and was unable to make the ceremony.

Growing up in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the four Staal brothers were super-competitive with one another — forget the hockey part; their pillow fights were said to be pretty savage. Linda Staal often had to be the "referee" and keep the boys in line, and Eric's mention of his mom Sunday caused him to lose his voice for a moment.

Soon after, No. 12 was slowly raised as Eric, Tanya and the kids beamed.

"It'll be staring at me for a while," Jordan Staal mused after the game. "It's a great honor for sure and rightfully so for what he was for this organization and what he brought to Raleigh and Canes fans, and the way he carried himself in this room."

Eric Staal, now 40, was asked how he spends his time in retirement. He smiled.

"Lots of Saturdays in a row," he said, sounding the common retirement refrain.

Staal said he helps coach two of his sons in hockey after picking them up from school, grinning and saying: “When I’m coaching they probably don’t want me around sometimes..”

News Observer LOADED: 01.13.2025

1335559 Carolina Hurricanes

Eric Staal arrived at a franchise with no history, and helped make some worth celebrating

Robert Willett

Raleigh-As a player, Eric Staal didn’t have to sit through many of the ceremonies like the one celebrating his career Sunday afternoon. The Carolina Hurricanes didn’t have a Hall of Fame. There wasn’t a long list of former greats waiting patiently for their moment of honor.

There were two in his early years, both in seasons more memorable for other, ensuing events: Ron Francis’ No. 10 was retired in 2006, during Staal’s second NHL season, and Glen Wesley’s No. 2 in 2009. Staal is a big reason those seasons leap so quickly to mind.

What happened in 2006, when Staal led the NHL in postseason scoring after the franchise’s (still) only 100-point regular season, before setting up Justin Williams for the empty-net goal that secured the Stanley Cup, remains the high point of both the Hurricanes’ existence and Staal’s career.

Three years later, the Hurricanes’ playoff run expired in the conference finals, but not before Staal scored one of the great goals in franchise history to eliminate the New Jersey Devils. Those good times, Staal said Sunday, far outweigh any of the leaner years that followed in his mind.

Jordan Staal greets his brother Eric Staal as he arrives to have his jersey retired by the Carolina Hurricanes on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C.

Jordan Staal greets his brother Eric Staal as he arrives to have his jersey retired by the Carolina Hurricanes on Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C. Robert Willett rwillett@newsobserver.com

Here we are 15 years later, a different Staal brother wearing the C, and the good moments Eric Staal was a part of remain the best moments. A night like this, when Staal’s No. 12 joined those of Francis and Wesley and Rod Brind’Amour in retirement, is nothing new for the current players. They’ve done it before, even if they may not always know exactly why.

“It’s a little different, that routine of having to sit through a ceremony,” Staal said. “A couple of those guys are young guys. ‘Who is this guy? We have to watch this?’”

To celebrate history, you have to make history.

Staal arrived at a franchise with almost none. He became its first homegrown superstar, part of moments so powerful even a snippet of “The Rising” summons old emotion. The parade of former teammates who greeted him on the ice Sunday, men easily recognized by their nicknames joined him in creating a legacy worth recognizing.

Wardo and Willy. Stiller and Whit. Heddy and Juice. Rudy and Rosey and the Robe. And so on.

Some of them are already in the Hurricanes’ nascent Hall of Fame. Others will join Staal soon enough.

“It’s not new,” said Brind’Amour, the current coach and former Staal teammate who preceded him as captain. “We have a history now. We have players like that we can celebrate that have had great, great careers. I think that says a lot about what’s going on here, and he was a huge part of establishing that and the culture and everything we talk about being a Carolina Hurricane.”

When Staal left in 2016, the Hurricanes were in shambles: Underfunded, poorly coached, caught in a repeat cycle of incomplete rebuilding. What’s happened since, with younger brother Jordan captaining a consistently competitive contender in front of sellout crowds, is proof what Staal helped build was never dead, merely dormant.

“You’d think I would hold a little bit (of a grudge), because you’re right, all those things did happen,” Staal said. “When I was here, I wanted that to be the case. I wanted us to be a contender, adding guys at the deadline and spending to the cap. But it just wasn’t what we were. So when I left and was somewhere else and seeing them where they are now, I was pumped. One, because my brother’s here, for one reason. But that wouldn’t have been the only one.“

Robert Willett rwillett@newsobserver.com

It’s easy to traffic in nostalgia when ticket sales are sluggish or success on the ice seems distant. That’s not the case for the Hurricanes right now. Whatever they were when Staal was here, they have evolved into something new and stronger. The highs may not be as high yet, but there are none of the lows Staal so often endured.

So honoring Staal on Sunday was no desperate grab at past glory; it’s a reinforcement of how the Hurricanes got here. Who and what they are today is inextricably linked to what they were. That didn’t exist when Staal arrived.

He helped create it. He made history.

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1335560 Carolina Hurricanes

Hurricanes rally, but Gauthier’s two goals spoil Eric Staal Night in Ducks overtime win

Carolina honored Eric Staal before the game by retiring his No. 12

Cory Lavalette

RALEIGH — On the night the Hurricanes retired the No. 12 of Eric Staal, the opening 47 minutes of their game against the visiting Ducks on Sunday looked a lot like the end of the former captain’s tenure in Raleigh, with Carolina unable to score and Anaheim building a two-goal lead.

The final 13 minutes of regulation, however, were like some of Staal’s greatest moments shown on the video board during his retirement ceremony before the game.

Carolina got a power play goal just before the midway point of the third and then scored with the goalie pulled with under a minute to play in regulation to earn a point before losing in overtime on rookie Cutter Gauthier’s second goal of the night in a 3-2 loss.

“The game was there,” Hurricanes captain Jordan Staal said, “and the boys battled back and ground out a point. But still kind of a kick in the privates at the end.”

Gauthier entered the Carolina zone at 3-on-3 and shot from the left faceoff circle, scoring past a drifting Pyotr Kochetkov to give the visiting Ducks a win. It was the second of three goals on the night that Kochetkov looked out of sorts allowing.

“There’s a couple goals there you’d probably like to have back, but that’s hockey,” Hurricanes coach Rod Brind’Amour said.

The Hurricanes were fortunate to earn a point after trailing 2-0 in the third period.

Carolina got within one on its first full power play of the game — though it had to score twice to make it count.

After Sebastian Aho’s goal was called off following a challenge for goaltender interference, Aho set up Andrei Svechnikov for a back door tap-in at 7:48 of the third for his 15th goal of the season to make it 2-1.

Then, with Kochetkov on for an extra attacker, Seth Jarvis missed on a wide-open chance off a Svechnikov feed but made amends with 56 seconds left, spinning and shooting into the far corner over the glove of Ducks goalie Lukas Dostal (35 saves) to tie the game 2-2.

“It was a good job by everybody just bearing down and at least scavenging a point out of it, but the whole goal is always to get two points,” Jarvis said. “Especially on a night like this, it’s a little bit disappointing when you have such a special night and honoring someone that meant so much to this organization, to lose is a little tough.”

Despite playing their third game in four nights, the Hurricanes got off to a strong start that was squandered because of a blown coverage that handed the Ducks a 1-0 lead after 20 minutes.

Just before the midway point of the opening period, Nikita Nesterenko collected the puck on the left boards and centered a pass in between four Carolina players to a slashing Jansen Harkins, who shot from the hash marks over the blocker of Kochetkov (18 saves) to give Anaheim the early lead.

After a second period without any scoring, the Ducks doubled their lead on the second shift of the third.

Gauthier drove wide on Carolina defenseman Jaccob Slavin and lifted a shot over the shoulder of Kochetkov at 1:18 of the third.

The Ducks effectively kept Carolina from around Dostal’s crease, and the Czech netminder — who won a World Championship last summer playing on his national team with Martin Necas — outplayed Kochetkov.

Dostal’s best save of the game came just five minutes in when he lunged for a Necas shot and got a piece of the puck with the shaft of his stick.

“Those are the inches here or there that just change the whole game,” Brind’Amour said.

Still, the Hurricanes managed to bank five of six points in their three-games-in-four-days stretch to keep pace in the Metropolitan Division.

“I love how we fought, came back,” Brind’Amour said. “Get a power play goal, get it taken off the board, come back on the same power play, score again, and then tie it up late. That’s a good effort.”

Notes: Ducks center Isac Lundestrom won 12 of 14 faceoffs. … Svechnikov’s goal extended his point streak to six games. … Necas had two assists for his first multipoint game since Dec. 5. … Aho’s assist ended a three-game point drought. … Gauthier had the first two-goal game of his career.

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1335556 Buffalo Sabres

Mike Harrington: A mentally soft team with no answers is all that's in Sabres' dressing room

Mike Harrington

The answer is not in the room. No matter how many times Terry Pegula and Kevyn Adams might try to convince themselves. We’ve known that for a good long while. Why do they refuse to see it? Why don’t they get some different players in that room?

Only because his football team had a playoff game here Sunday did the owner grace us with his presence at KeyBank Center on Saturday. At least it was a well-timed appearance: He got the full effect of the sinking SS Sabre, circa 2025.

What exactly is inside the Sabres’ dressing room? The most mentally soft team we have ever had the misfortune to watch.

As the Sabres were tanking a decade ago − when Pegula and management wanted them to lose − they had a group of players with little talent, but a lot of gumption to push through games when no one thought they could.

Now, the Sabres are desperate to make the playoffs and have a bunch of multimillionaires on the ice who are supposed to take them there. But like the billionaire in the owner’s suite, it seems as though the only thing they’re good at is counting the change in their bank accounts.

In a season full of mind-numbing defeats, a 6-2 loss to the Seattle Kraken takes the cake on the absurdity scale.

No, I didn’t forget about that pair of comical collapses against Colorado. The Avalanche have a lineup that includes three pure superstars, are 2½ years removed from winning the Stanley Cup and would surprise no one by competing for another one in a few months. They had a lot to do with those games.

The Kraken stink. We’re talking the scent of spoiled fish from the Emerald City’s famous Pike Place Market.

They hit town 2-8-1 in their last 11 games and with just six goals in their previous three. And the Sabres skated circles around them in the first period Saturday, too. At one point, the shot attempts were 24-2.

The Sabres led 2-0 after the first period and still had that advantage more than 12½ minutes into the second. And then it happened.

St. Joe’s product Dennis Gilbert made a bad turnover up the middle, and Seattle’s Ryker Evans took a Chandler Stephenson pass and leaked a shot through Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen to get the Kraken on the board.

So the other team scores. So what? It’s hockey. Goals happen. Why does this team collapse at the first sign of the other team pushing back? Where’s the response?

The Sabres had gone 102 minutes over three games without giving up a goal, and Luukkonen was more than halfway to his second straight shutout.

Then they gave up three goals in a span of 2:18, and five goals − yes, five − in a span of 12:38.

“We’ve seen it too many times this year. We give up one, and then it’s just a disaster,” Dylan Cozens said. “They get another and then another. I don’t know why it keeps happening but we’ve got to figure it out.”

Something tells me this group won’t figure out.

The Sabres score first all the time, with Saturday marking 26 of 43 games where they took the 1-0 lead. Most teams win 75% to 80% of the time when they do that. This club? Just 12 wins in those 26 games.

This is six losses when taking a multiple-goal lead. And get this one: The Sabres are 2-5-3 when tied through two periods. They’ve gotten only seven out of 20 points in those spots, when the game is up for grabs and the mentally tougher team can grind out notches in the standings.

The Sabres are mentally scarred by all the comebacks against them. There’s no fixing that. They could have been five points out of a playoff spot with this win, but who’s kidding whom here?

“I think once we get up, we start thinking about how we can blow this game,” Cozens said in a stark admission. “If they get one, we start getting nervous about giving up another one and giving the game away.”

So how do you get a group of guys to be mentally tougher?

“That’s a great question,” said a disgusted coach Lindy Ruff, who properly used the word “embarrassing” to describe this one. “It’s believing in how you got there. You’ve got to continue to play the same way. There’s a discipline in that.”

The Sabres are 1-6 against the Kraken since they entered the NHL in 2021. Seattle is 4-0 in its history in Buffalo − outscoring the Sabres 22-11. Mind blowing.

The Sabres worked hard and looked great in the first period. And then it all went away. Too many passes, not enough net drive, not enough strong wall play. Lots of perimeter offense. And they played an entire game with one blocked shot! That tells you something about their engagement level.

“It’s nice to be on the outside. It’s calm, relaxing, but you get nothing from it,” captain Rasmus Dahlin said. “You can’t be comfortable. It’s that simple.”

The Sabres’ next game is here Wednesday night against Carolina − and the Hurricanes have won 16 of the last 19 meetings against Buffalo. It’s a TNT game, as the Sabres get the national television call so frequently that it’s just a notch down from the networks’ love of the woeful Chicago Blackhawks.

There’s some warped civic duty involved for us in watching these games. Why would anyone in any other city want to watch this team play?

Buffalo News LOADED: 01.13.2025

1335643 Websites

The Athletic / PWHL sets U.S. attendance record in Denver as part of Takeover Tour

By Hailey Salvian

The Professional Women’s Hockey League neutral-site game in Denver between the Minnesota Frost and Montreal Victoire has broken the record for attendance at a pro women’s hockey game in the United States.

The league had previously set the record at a neutral-site game between Ottawa and Boston in Detroit (13,736) last season. But Sunday night’s draw of 14,018 fans at Denver’s Ball Arena — home of the NHL’s Colorado Avalanche and NBA’s Denver Nuggets — is now the largest crowd to watch a pro women’s hockey game in the U.S.

Minnesota beat Montreal 4-2 in regulation and has taken back the No. 1 spot in league standings. Defender Maggie Flaherty scored the game winner, while defender Sophie Jaques — in her first game since Dec. 19 — led the way with a goal and an assist. Minnesota’s starting goalie Maddie Rooney made 21 saves in her league-leading fifth victory of the year.

The PWHL, which launched in January 2024, currently has teams in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Boston, Minnesota and New York, but played in Denver as part of the league’s nine-game “Takeover Tour” across North America. The first leg of the tour — in Seattle, Vancouver and Denver — drew a total of 45,664 fans in three games.

Wednesday night’s sold-out crowd in Vancouver (19,038) was the highest attendance figure of the 2024-25 season and the third-largest crowd in PWHL history.

Back in October, Amy Scheer, the PWHL’s senior vice president of business operations, announced the league is preparing for potential expansion and could add up to two teams as early as the 2025-26 season.

League executives have been tight-lipped about where teams could land but have said they will be examining everything from market size, the fan base, youth hockey participation, facilities and the economic opportunities in each market. The “Takeover Tour” games could prove to be critical auditions for potential expansion cities.

“This whole tour is about learning,” Jayna Hefford, the PWHL’s senior vice president of hockey operations, said in Vancouver. “Learning different markets, and fan bases, and buildings and the support that we have.”

The Athletic LOADED: 01.13.2025

1335636 Vegas Golden Knights

3 takeaways from Knights’ win: Dorofeyev steps up with Eichel out

Danny Webster

5-6 minutes 13/01/2025

The Golden Knights have depended on their veteran locker room to help them bounce back from losses.

Another benefit to having all that experience is that older players can push younger ones through slumps.

It sure seemed to work for Pavel Dorofeyev on Sunday night. The 24-year-old right wing, after going through one of the longest dry spells of his young NHL career, broke through with two power-play goals and an assist to help the Knights defeat the Minnesota Wild 4-1 at T-Mobile Arena.

Dorofeyev has a team-high 16 goals after his second three-point game of the season.

“He’s a great player,” center Tomas Hertl said. “He’s got a great shot, he can hold the puck and make plays.”

Dorofeyev exceeded expectations early this season with 12 goals his first 23 games.

The reserved Russian forward then discovered what a scoring drought looks like. He went 11 games without a goal from Nov. 29 to Dec. 23.

Some of his struggles can be explained by the fact that left wing Victor Olofsson returned from a sprained ankle Nov. 30 and took Dorofeyev’s spot on the top power-play unit. Five of Dorofeyev’s first 12 goals came on the man advantage.

He’s since gotten going again. Dorofeyev scored Dec. 27 against San Jose, then again Jan. 2 against Philadelphia. Sunday, with the Knights missing leading scorer Jack Eichel due to an illness, Dorofeyev stepped up when his team needed him to.

Coach Bruce Cassidy flipped Dorofeyev and Olofsson for a second-period power-play and Dorofeyev responded by beating Wild goaltender Filip Gustavsson 5:21 into the frame. Cassidy called it a “gut instinct” to make the switch, and it worked.

Dorofeyev added his second power-play goal with 2:12 remaining in the third to put the Knights up 4-1.

“He’s played that position when Olofsson was out, so to me, they’re very interchangeable,” Cassidy said. “I just felt like, ‘Let’s give Pav a shot. Our power play has been good, not great.’ That’s all it was. Good for him.”

Captain Mark Stone finished with two assists. Hertl added a goal and an assist for the Knights (29-11-3), who were playing on consecutive nights after losing 2-1 to the New York Rangers on Saturday.

Goaltender Adin Hill made 15 saves.

Dorofeyev joined linemate Hertl with a team-high five shots on goal.

Time will tell if it’s a sign of things to come. The Knights got a tired Minnesota team (27-13-4) that was also playing on consecutive nights after beating the Sharks on Saturday.

Dorofeyev has a group of teammates that have been through what he’s gone through. Everyone has had slumps, Hertl said. Dorofeyev stayed with it and was rewarded.

“If you have the chances and the looks and you play hard, (the goals) will eventually come,” Hertl said. “He’s played hard.”

Here are three takeaways from the win:

1. Kolesar answers the bell

The Knights took a 2-1 lead 4:09 into the third period when right wing Keegan Kolesar scored his career-high 10th goal of the season .

It wasn't just a much-needed goal to take the lead. It was the Knights' first goal at five-on-five in 213:11.

Kolesar stood out in other ways as well. He fought Wild left wing Marcus Foligno for the second time in a month. The two scrapped Dec. 15 in Minnesota after Foligno hit left wing Ivan Barbashev, who missed the Knights' next 10 games with an upper-body injury.

This time Foligno sought retribution after Kolesar checked rookie defenseman David Jiricek into the boards in the first period. Kolesar said it was inadvertent, claiming he tried to shield Jiricek after the 21-year-old toe-picked.

Foligno didn't see it that way.

"He gave me (a fight), so it was only right to give one back," Kolesar said.

2. Roy returns

Center Nicolas Roy returned Sunday after missing 11 games with an upper-body injury.

He centered the third line with Kolesar and left wing Brett Howden and picked up a secondary assist on Kolesar's game-winning goal.

"It felt like a long time there watching the boys," Roy said. "It's nice to be back, for sure."

3. Fleury acknowledged

Former Knights goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury was the Wild's backup Sunday in what could be his final appearance at T-Mobile Arena.

Fleury, who played with the Knights the franchise's first four seasons and won the Vezina Trophy in 2021, was recognized during a timeout in the first period. Fans gave him a standing ovation. They also chanted his name at times throughout the night.

Fleury, 40, has said this season, his 21st in the NHL, will be his last.

"It was only four years, but I felt like we went through a lot in those four years," Fleury said before the game. "To start from scratch with the team, and go to the (2018 Stanley Cup Final) and things like that, I'll always keep great memories from my time here."

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1335637 Vegas Golden Knights

Golden Knights snap losing skid in win over Wild

Jack Williams

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End of game: Golden Knights snap losing skid in win over Wild

The Vegas Golden Knights scored their first even-strength goals in four games, helping them to a 4-1 win over the Minnesota Wild on Sunday.

Tied at one entering the third period, Keegan Kolesar found the back of the net for his 10th goal of the season to put the Golden Knights up, 2-1. He backhanded the rebound off a Zach Whitecloud shot into the net.

On the Golden Knights' third goal of the game, Tomas Hertl didn't get enough on his original shot but got the puck back and scored on the second opportunity for a 3-1 lead. Later on, Zach Bogosian was called for delay of game and Pavel Dorofeyev scored his second goal of the game to extend the lead to 4-1. He finished the night with three points, his first multi-point game since Nov. 29.

Adin Hill picked up the win, making 15 saves on 16 shots. The Golden Knights outshot the Wild, 36-16.

Vegas improves to 29-11-3 on the year. It goes on the road Tuesday to face the Nashville Predators at 5 p.m.

End of second period: Dorofeyev gets Golden Knights on board, ties game against Wild

Pavel Dorofeyev converts on the power play to get the Vegas Golden Knights on the board. They are tied with the Minnesota Wild, 1-1.

Devin Shore was called for tripping on Zach Whitecloud, and just four seconds into the Golden Knights' power play, Jake Middleton was called for a delay of the game, giving Vegas a 5-on-3 opportunity.

In the dying seconds of the power play, Mark Stone found Pavel Dorofeyev wide open in the middle of the slot for the goal. He is now tied with Ivan Barbashev and Brett Howden for the team lead in goals with 15.

The Wild briefly went on the power play after Barbashev was called for slashing, but nothing came of it. Vegas turned up the intensity in the second period, outshooting Minnesota 17-6. It now has a 26-13 shooting edge in the game.

End of first period: Hartman puts Wild ahead of Golden Knights

Ryan Hartman scores off a Brayden McNabb turnover to put the Minnesota Wild ahead of the Vegas Golden Knights, 1-0, at the end of the first period.

McNabb failed to secure the puck on the boards, high in the Golden Knights zone, and Hartman took the puck off him. He sprung a 2-on-1 and eventually beat Adin Hill for the first goal of the game.

It's been a bit of a chippy game. Keegan Kolesar delivered a heavy hit on David Jiricek, who was slow to get up and eventually headed back to the locker room for evaluation from a trainer. In response to the hit, Marcus Foligno fought Kolesar.

The Golden Knights did get a chance on the power play, as Yakov Trenin was called for cross-checking Zach Whitecloud, but they were unable to convert. Vegas has a 9-7 shot advantage over Minnesota.

Former Golden Knight and current Wild goalie Marc-Andre Fleury was honored during a media timeout. While he isn't playing tonight, this will be his final game at T-Mobile Arena, retiring at the end of this season.

This could be the last we see of Marc-Andre Fleury at T-Mobile Arena.

Fleury, the first player picked by Vegas in the 2017 expansion draft and one of the franchise's most beloved figures, returns tonight with the Minnesota Wild. Game is at 5 p.m.

He likely won't play because he was in net for Minnesota on Saturday in San Jose. Still, a warm reception is expected.

Fleury announced in April 2024 that this would be the final season of his 22-year career.

Fleury won 117 games as a Golden Knight over four seasons, guiding Vegas to the 2018 Stanley Cup Final in its inaugural campaign in paving the way for the city to fall in love with the new franchise. He also won the Vezina Trophy as the league's top goalie in 2021.

It will be a quick turnaround for the Golden Knights, who on Saturday dropped their second straight game with a 2-1 loss to the Rangers. The results could be the product of poor luck as the Golden Knights have managed just one goal on 60 shot attempts over the past two games.

In pregame, it was announced that Jack Eichel will miss tonight's game due to illness. It's the first game he's missed this season. Nicolas Roy, who has missed the last 11 games, returns to the lineup, giving the Golden Knights 12 forwards for the game.

The Wild, who are without Kirill Kaprizov and five other players, have still won five of their last six. They're coming off a 3-1 win over the San Jose Sharks on Saturday, where Mats Zuccarello recorded a goal and two assists.

Players to watch

Golden Knights: Mark Stone (forward) 28 games played, 12 goals, 24 assists, 36 points; Ivan Barbashev (forward) 32 games played, 15 goals, 15 assists, 30 points.

Minnesota: Marco Rossi (center) 43 games played, 16 goals, 22 assists, 38 points; Matt Boldy (forward) 43 games played, 16 goals, 21 assists,

37 points; Mats Zuccarello (forward) 30 games played, 11 goals, 19 assists, 30 points.

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1335635 Vegas Golden Knights

Graney: Bond between Knights fans, Fleury unbreakable years later

Ed Graney

January 12, 2025

He remembers the first game. The unfathomable sadness that defined it. The instant connection between a town and a team. He remembers all of it.

“Everybody in the building, on the team, around the city, stuck together during those tough times,” Marc-Andre Fleury said. “Those were some crazy times. But I think the bright side that year was the playoff run to a (Stanley Cup) Final against Washington.

“The journey to get there was a lot of fun.”

Fleury skated across the T-Mobile Arena ice for perhaps the final time Sunday night. The former Golden Knight goaltender, now with the Minnesota Wild, has said he will retire at season’s end.

Who knows. The Wild and Knights are both headed toward the playoffs. Who knows if they won’t eventually be matched up against each other. Who knows if we won’t see Fleury here again.

He didn’t play in Minnesota’s 4-1 loss against the Knights. Fleury was instead in net for a 3-1 victory at San Jose on Saturday, when he made 36 saves against the Sharks.

Face of franchise

But Fleury spoke before Sunday’s game about his four years in Las Vegas. About being the face of an expansion franchise that began play in 2017 around the same time a city had its collective hearts ripped apart by the shooting at the Route 91 Harvest festival.

It started a relationship between Fleury and a fan base that arguably has no equal in Las Vegas sports history. Folks loved the team and became wholly invested in him. They followed and cheered his every save to amazing levels.

Knights general manager Kelly McCrimmon called Fleury the most popular player he had ever seen in sports the day Fleury was traded to the Chicago Blackhawks in 2021.

“Just the way the (fans) welcomed myself and my family,” Fleury said. “Nobody really knew how hockey would do here in Vegas. Obviously, (Knights owner) Mr. (Bill) Foley had a great vision. From that first practice on, the rink was always full. People turning out every night, every game. It was a lot of fun to start at the bottom and be part of those teams.

“There were a lot of questions. Would we win many games? Are people going to like it? But things turned out great for the organization. A lot of players want to come play here. You see how successful they’ve been.”

The Knights at some point should retire his jersey. Shouldn’t even be a question. He meant that much to the beginning of all this. He played a major part in the formation of a hockey culture in Las Vegas in just four years.

“I have great memories of this place,” Fleury said. “When my career was going down a bit in Pittsburgh and I wasn’t playing as many games, this team gave me a second chance. I’ll always have good memories of it.”

And now he can see the end, perhaps a final deep playoff run ahead, a Hall of Fame career that will have included his time in Las Vegas. A time unparalleled when it comes to how a community responded to him. How it adored him.

But that was then. This is now.

And he’s happy at age 40. He’s content with how things have gone.

‘Very fortunate’

“It’s never easy to change teams and start somewhere else,” Fleury said. “I have been lucky to have kept playing this long. I found a great organization (in Minnesota) and (get) to play with great teammates. We love Minnesota. Great place to live and raise kids.

“I feel very fortunate.”

And yes, Las Vegas was fortunate to have him.

He skated off the ice during warmups Sunday to what was once a familiar chant around these parts:

Fleury! Fleury! Fleury!

The same occurred when he was introduced during the first period. When he stood and pounded his chest and waved to the crowd. The chant rained down again as the game’s final seconds ticked away.

They still hold signs in his honor. Still wear his jersey.

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1335638 Vegas Golden Knights

With Retiring Fleury Back In Vegas, VGK Play Strong Game In 4-1 Win Over Minnesota Before Announced 17,929 Sunday – LVSportsBiz

Alan Snel

4-5 minutes 13/01/2025

LAS VEGAS, Nevada — Marc-Andre Fleury made life fun in Las Vegas where he led a bunch of Misfits to an unlikely journey to the National Hockey League’s Stanley Cup Final in the 2017-18 season.

Back in the Vegas Golden Knights’ early days, the team had a donut promotion with Krispy Kreme that involved fans at VGK home games where if the Knights shut out the opponent fans would get a free dozen donuts.

After Fleury whitewashed a few foes at T-Mobile Arena, I joked with Fleury that he was making people fat in Las Vegas.

“They don’t have to eat all 12 donuts,” Fleury cracked to me.

At 40 years old, Fleury is calling it quits at the end of the 2024-25 season. He’s the backup to Filip Gustavsson and both are having nice seasons as the Minnesota Wild have 58 points entering tonight’s game with the Golden Knights.

The VGK sit atop the Pacific Division with 59 points, with Winnipeg having the most points in the conference with 61.

The Vegas Golden Knights said goodbye to Flower with a nice scoreboard tribute midway through period one.

In June 2017, Fleury was the biggest name player plucked by the Golden Knights from the other NHL teams in the expansion draft here at T-Mobile Arena. When I covered the expansion draft, I decided to walk behind the scrum at the Fleury expansion draft presser to get a wider picture. Here it is:

Golden Knights Bill Foley snagged his first big catch — Marc-Andre Fleury

Less than four months later, a gunman massacred 58 people at a country music festival on the Strip Oct. 1, 2017 and the Golden Knights helped locals cope with this county’s deadliest mass shooting.

I recall that two days later on Oct. 3, 2017 the Golden Knights were at a blood donation center on Charleston Boulevard in the west valley. A woman named Courtney Oldenburg who was at the Route 91 Harvest

country music festival with her boyfriend heard the rapid-fire pop-pop-pop of assault rifle bullets flying by her when she tried to figure out where the gunfire was coming from.

You can't talk about Fleury without his famed "Superman" save against Toronto in Nov. 2019.

The VGK marketing folks used the save to create a giveaway of a Fleury figure in the superman flying position at a game.

Fleury did not play tonight.

And Minnesota took a 1-0 lead in the first period on a goal by Ryan Hartman, who fired the puck past VGK goalie Adin Hill on a two-on-one break.

In period two, Pavel Dorofeyev scored his 15th on a wicked wrister to lock the game at one apiece.

And in period three, Keegan Kolesar picked up loose change in front of the Minnesota and backhanded a goal for a VGK 2-1 lead.

Tomas Hertl added a five-on-five goal later in the third period to salt away the win with the 3-1 lead. Hertl then did some nice work along the boards, feeding Mark Stone who set up Dorofeyev for his team-leading 16th goal of the season.

LVSportsBiz.com LOADED: 01.13.2025

1335644 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Merilainen impresses in home debut, leads Senators past Stars

Staff Report

Canadian Press

At 186 pounds, Leevi Merilainen may not be the most physically imposing goalie, but his recent composure and poise have provided the Ottawa Senators with plenty of confidence.

The quiet Finnish goaltender has been a pleasant surprise for the Senators (21-18-3) as they look to stay the course while starter Linus Ullmark remains sidelined with a back injury.

Merilainen is 4-2-0 through six games, with a .913 save percentage. Sunday, the 22-year-old was instrumental in leading the Senators to a 3-2 win over the red-hot Dallas Stars.

The Stars (27-14-1) came in riding a seven-game winning streak and Merilainen held them off for most of the game. Evgenii Dadonov was able to make it a one-goal game scoring a power-play goal with 52.7 seconds remaining.

The night before, Merilainen posted a 29-save performance in a 5-0 win against Pittsburgh for his first career shutout and was given the back-to-back assignment for his efforts. This marked Merilainen's first home game and he was asked how it felt to play in front of the home fans.

"Almost even better to finally play at home and get a win here," he said. "Of course, the fans were on our side so that's one thing that, yeah, that was fun."

The Senators have been getting solid contributions from the players they've needed to lean on from the American Hockey League while they deal with injuries.

"I've got to give those guys credit," said Ottawa coach Travis Green. "They've all come in and done a great job for us. You learn as you go along, as a coach that you've got to put some faith in the players that are coming up, and we've tried to do that.

"Give them minutes when you deserve it. They've done a good job."

Matthew Highmore's early third-period goal proved to be the winner. Highmore was recalled from the AHL's Belleville Senators on Friday.

"Yeah, listen, all I want to do is help the team and be part of wins. Big win for the group tonight," said Highmore. "A lot of fun out there."

The goal was Highmore's first since April 21, 2022, when he was a member of the Vancouver Canucks.

Highmore has seen firsthand what Merilainen is capable of with the two of them playing for the AHL Belleville Senators.

"Leevi has been tremendous," said Highmore. "From the time that I met him last year in Belleville, until, you know, the last two games up here with him, he's been a spectacular rock back there, and just a guy that competes really hard and really happy to see his success.

"When you know him, his demeanour is really calm. He's a confident guy, believes in himself and I think that shows."

Both teams were playing the back half of back-to-backs and while the Stars got the early jump with Jason Robertson opening the scoring early in the first, the Senators seemed to get better as the game progressed.

"I liked our first period," said Stars coach Pete DeBoer. "Thought we played really well. I thought they upped their intensity and physicality in the second, and I thought we didn't go with them."

Josh Norris of the Senators tied the game early in the second taking a pass from Drake Batherson and scoring from mid-air for his first in six games. Ottawa took the lead 39 seconds later when Casey DeSmith was caught out of position providing Tim Stutzle lots of room for his 14th of the season. DeSmith made 25 saves.

"They came out playing better than we did," said Dallas forward Wyatt Johnson. "A little bit of everything; winning more battles, some turnovers for us. Such a hard league to win in and you need to show up every period, especially the starts of periods because that's when you can really grab momentum.

"You've got to be able to bring it for a full 60 minutes pretty much to win."

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1335645 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Pettersson's Selke-worthy performance helps resilient Canucks stun Leafs

Iain MacIntyre

TORONTO — On one of his finest shifts this season, Elias Pettersson barely got out of his own zone.

It was in the third period Saturday night with the Vancouver Canucks, against all expectations, leading the Toronto Maple Leafs 3-0. On one of his many shifts against the Leafs' top line, Pettersson sprawled to smother a scoring chance from Matthew Knies, peeled back into the slot to block Phillippe Myers' point shot, and then followed the puck behind the net and won a battle against Mitch Marner.

And on his next shift, Pettersson anticipated a backdoor feed to Knies and got his stick in the passing lane to take away a likely goal.

"He was amazing," Canucks captain Quinn Hughes said. "A couple guys on the bench were yelling 'Selke!' after one of the shifts in the third."

One of those guys was winger Kiefer Sherwood.

"I said it to Petey, 'That's a Selke kind of game,'" Sherwood said. "That one shift in the third, he's blocking shots and defending... stuff that doesn't show up on the stat sheet. But that leads to winning hockey."

Asked if he heard his teammates' calls for the Selke Trophy, handed to the league's top defensive forward, to be awarded on Jan. 11, Pettersson said: "Well, it's the first time I've heard it this year."

It's possible Pettersson's remark was accidental self-deprecation. But hopefully, he meant to poke fun at himself because it would demonstrate, also, his awareness that what the National Hockey League's fifth-highest paid player has offered the Canucks this season has not been good enough.

Pettersson had perhaps his best game on Saturday, and all he finished with on the scoresheet was one assist and five shot blocks in 16:08 of playing time. But from start to finish, Pettersson was fully engaged, intense and competitive.

It's what teams need from their leaders. And it epitomized the Canucks on a night when you'd have stuffed your retirement fund had you wagered on a 3-0 road win for Vancouver.

After not nearly enough drive in Friday's 2-0 loss to the Carolina Hurricanes, when the Canucks registered just 15 shots on target and their top players lost their matchups, a freak snowstorm shut down Raleigh-Durham airport and grounded the team's post-game charter. Vancouver players did not arrive at their Toronto hotel until about 1 p.m. on Saturday.

The Leafs, 17-7 at home this season and just off a five-game winning streak, did not play Friday and were waiting for the Canucks.

But it was Vancouver which drove play early on, getting a deflection goal from Brock Boeser 31 seconds into the contest and outshooting Toronto 9-4 in the first 10 minutes.

Hughes scored for the Canucks on a point shot late in the second period, and Sherwood made it 3-0 just 47 seconds into the third with one of his lightning-strike releases from the slot after a pretty setup from Hughes, who was dominant.

The Canucks held the Leafs to 20 shots, and Vancouver goalie Kevin Lankinen needed to make only a few big saves for the shutout.

"It's funny what the mind can do when you have to dig in a little deeper," Sherwood said. "We committed to defence. I think our defending has been really good the last little bit. We just haven't produced as much (offensively) as we would have liked.

"We needed this. We kind of needed a statement win to get our mojo back and kind of turn our season around. There's a lot of noise out there, but if we can just continue to do our business, focus on our process and our identity, we're a good team in here. We know that, and things will turn over time."

This was Game 42 for the Canucks, the start of their second half after a tumultuous first half marked by injuries, absences and melodrama.

Saturday's game showed what the Canucks still possess after all those swells and crashing waves.

"It was a whirlwind 24 hours here," veteran defenceman Tyler Myers said. "Guys stepped up tonight. It was a huge win for the group, coming on a back-to-back with a crazy travel day. It seemed like a lot of guys were going tonight and playing the right way. We played real simple, and I think it provided more opportunities for us. I think we have to realize that going forward, and try and bring that more consistently."

Asked about Pettersson, Myers said: "He battled. It was very noticeable. He was very engaged, and it's great to see. When he plays like that... that's why he's one of the top players."

"He was dialed," Boeser added. "That's the Petey we know, blocking shots and making plays and looking confident out there. When he's playing confident, he's one helluva player."

The Canucks' performance came after coach Rick Tocchet said in his pre-game media availability that the team needed more from its top forwards: Pettersson, Boeser and J.T. Miller.

"I mean, they know it," Tocchet said after the game. "They know that for us to be successful. . . they're going to have to score some goals for us. But also, like, I think they're happy because we played a smart game. We got timely goals. But I think they all played good defence, too."

Pettersson skated with Jake DeBrusk and Boeser, who was redeployed from Miller's line. Nils Hoglander returned to the lineup and skated with Miller and Conor Garland, while rookie Jonathan Lekkerimaki was dropped to the fourth line and looked comfortable playing with Teddy Blueger and Phil Di Giuseppe.

Guillaume Brisebois also got back into the lineup on defence, replacing Vincent Desharnais.

The overall effect was a feeling of freshness among the Canucks, who played with far more energy on the second night than they did the first of their difficult back-to-back.

As Tocchet described, "guys had a little juice."

"Listen, the last couple years, it's a resilient group," the coach said. "It takes a lot of punches, and it gets back up. So this is one of those times we got back up."

Now, they need to stay on their feet.

With four points from four games on the road, the Canucks' formidable five-game trip ends Tuesday against the Winnipeg Jets.

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1335646 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / 'We need more life': Comfortable Maple Leafs shut out by Canucks

Luke Fox

TORONTO — The Toronto Maple Leafs have learned how to be comfortable being comfortable.

A season-best five-game win streak and a promotion to the Atlantic Division penthouse has afforded the team the luxury of easing off the gas, safe in the knowledge that the playoffs are a given and they'll get back to playing urgent, inspired hockey some other day.

Because they certainly didn't bother matching the intensity or desperation of their opponent, the Vancouver Canucks, whose delayed and de-iced plane touched down at YYZ just five hours before puck drop and still looked very much like the more rested and in-sync squad in Saturday's 3-0 road shutout.

"Outworked us, outcompeted us, and that's why they won," said Toronto's no-nonsense Chris Tanev. "We need to play our game better. That's why we lost.

"We're not connected as five. We're not helping support each other, and that's where they took advantage of us and scored some goals."

If the Maple Leafs appeared disconnected on a lacklustre night the boo birds swirled for the final four minutes before the merciful end buzzer, they also sounded disconnected postgame.

While Tanev wasn't mining for moral victories or polishing off tiny positives, the long-serving members of Toronto's core were less critical.

Mitch Marner on the Leafs' effort: "I liked it. I mean, I thought we played well. I really did. I think just last couple games we've been giving up plays to teams that aren't missing on them."

"If you look at the score afterwards, it doesn't look that good," added Morgan Rielly, a minus-8 over his past eight games. "But, you know, it's a close game."

And captain Auston Matthews: "I thought we had chances. Just couldn't capitalize. And I just thought we couldn't really get momentum on our side. A lot of one-and-done. Just felt a little bit disconnected for most of the game."

The travel-weary visitors simply wanted and needed — and, thus, deserved — the two points more.

Here's a damning stat, and a reason to justify boos: The Canucks won 66.7 per cent of puck battles, according to Sportlogiq, despite leading from the first shot of the game.

"I don't think we won any of the rebound battles," Leafs coach Craig Berube noted.

Here's another ugly stat: The Maple Leafs were the only team that went on the power-play Saturday. Thrice, in fact. Yet the total shots on Toronto's man-advantage were even, 2-2.

In 2025, Toronto's $52-million power-play packs all the inspiration of an Oasis reunion concert.

"There's a lot of movement. A lot of nothing going on, I guess. And I just think we can do a better job of simplifying it," Matthews said. "More shots to the net, and then letting things open up from there."

"Power play's gotta be way better," Marner agreed.

The Maple Leafs don't generate enough at even-strength to go deep with an 19th-ranked power play that dusts off pucks like old narratives.

And while Berube is quick to make small tweaks (changing the point man, flipping to five forwards), he continues to place his trust and his ice time in the Core Four to figure it out.

What does the coach want to see from that top unit?

"Shooting the puck. Moving it quick. Like, crisp pace. Attacking. Shooting at the net," Berube said. "That gives you a momentum, for sure."

This week's challenge is for the coach shake his stars out of this midseason malaise, a dip that should look eerily familiar to Toronto's loyal fan base.

Berube at least sensed this coming. He wasn't thrilled with a couple closer-than-necessary wins over the rebuilding Flyers.

Nor was he pleased with the tempo of Saturday's morning skate, after giving his skaters a break from practice to enjoy a fun day off during the mentors' trip.

"Let's f----- go!" Berube growled as the Leafs ran through their pre-loss drills.

We imagine the coach expressing a similar sentiment during intermission — and at Monday's practice.

"I didn't think we had enough pace in the game or played with enough energy. Maybe it's travel or whatever," Berube said.

"We need more life and energy."

For Tanev, a first-year Leaf offering a refreshing perspective, the result reflects the performance.

It's that simple.

"Look at the score clock at the end of the night, and you lose 3-0," Tanev said. "Obviously, it's not how we want to play."

Fox's Fast Five

• A box brimming with Börje Salming's friends and family members journeyed over from Sweden for the game. Maybe let them stick around for the Stars on Tuesday so they can celebrate a goal?

• Dennis Hildeby got the nod in net Saturday in the wake of a shaky outing in Carolina for Joseph Woll, who will be back in the crease Tuesday.

"Wollsy's played a lot," Berube noted.

The start was the first from either third-stringer, Hildeby or Matt Murray, that didn't occur on a back-to-back.

He could've used some run support.

• A wrench got tossed into the Canucks' travel plans when snowfall prevented their plane from flying to Toronto on Friday night following their 2-0 defeat to the Hurricanes. They scrambled to make puck drop on game day.

"It's just weird. You get up at 9 and you don't get into Toronto until 2. It's only like an hour flight, but it's a lot of de-icing. It took a while to get in from [the airport]. We had a police escort, but it wasn't fast today," coach Rick Tocchet said. "It was wild."

With extra time on their hands, Tocchet and fellow ex-Coyote Conor Garland reminisced over the time Arizona got stuck on a tarmac until 5 a.m. before eventually taking off for St. Louis. They shutout the Blues 4-0 on minimal rest.

"You can overcome stuff," Tocchet said. "I know it was a tough day, but you can't use excuses."

• The absence of Jake McCabe, who missed a third straight game following his tough fight with Garnet Hathaway, is being felt. The shutdown defenceman did resume skating Saturday, though.

No timeline is set for his return.

"We'll see how it keeps going, but he feels good and he's doing well," Berube says. "That's the best update I can give you."

The coach is also hopeful Anthony Stolarz (knee) can resume skating on his own this week. Stolarz was originally given a timeline of four to six weeks to return. We've passed the four-week mark.

• Here's ex-Canuck and current Maple Leaf Oliver Ekman-Larsson on playing for a couple intense Canadian cities:

"Two markets that are very passionate about hockey. But that's what you want. You want people to care. You want people to care about what you do and have a lot of passion. So, in that way, it's pretty similar. But obviously, I don't think it gets much better than Toronto."

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