



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • November 24, 2025

The Athletic

NHL weekend rankings: The oncoming holiday tidings of Canadian panic

By: Sean McIndoe

If you're American, this is Thanksgiving week. There's a good chance you're making plans to see friends and family. You might be traveling, in which case we wish you the best of luck with all that. By Thursday, if all goes well, you'll have a belly full of turkey and a full slate of NFL games to doze to.

If you're a Canadian, you're probably busy panicking about your NHL team.

For our purposes, that second group is more interesting than the first. So let's take a quick tour around the country and ask the question: Just how worried should you be right now?

Bonus five seven: Panic rankings for Canadian teams

7. Ottawa Senators: Probably the only team that doesn't really qualify for this exercise. They haven't been great, but they've been good enough to stay near the top of the Atlantic while captain Brady Tkachuk recovered from injury. He could be back this week, so between that and Linus Ullmark's performance trending up in recent games, the vibes are good in Ottawa.

6. Winnipeg Jets: Record-wise, they're doing fine, even as the Colorado Avalanche pull away in a tough Central. But the last week brought two concerning stories: A trade request from a player who was supposed to be part of the long-term plans, and an injury to their most important player. Both situations should be resolved long before the playoffs, but the road might be bumpy for a few weeks. Ah well, as long as none of their Central rivals are suddenly completely unbeatable.

5. Montreal Canadiens: So it turns out they're not going to run away with the Atlantic after all. Not with that goaltending. The question is whether the recent losing streak is this team regressing back to playoff also-ran, or merely a good young team getting some much-needed lessons in handling adversity. Saturday's win was a positive sign, but let's see them do it against a good team.

4. Calgary Flames: It feels weird to have the team that's spent a lot of time dead last in the league only midway down the list, but I think that speaks to the difference between panic and despair. Flames fans should be well onto the acceptance phase of things by now, so the panic here might sound more like, "Wait, are they actually going to sell as hard as they need to, or will they talk themselves into some sort of half-hearted reload instead?"

3. Vancouver Canucks: They're just not very good. Worse, they're in danger of falling out of the playoff race completely.

And if Vancouver fans think they're sick of the Quinn Hughes discourse now, wait until this team is ten points out at the holiday break and facing a second half of treading water at best.

2. Edmonton Oilers: Man, they needed that win on Saturday, even as it didn't really make you feel any better about their issues. We all know a goalie move has to come at some point, and the longer Stan Bowman waits the more the pressure mounts. A playoff miss still seems unlikely. But it's not impossible, and given how disastrous that would be for the franchise, the prospect is terrifying.

1.5 Quebec Nordiques: They don't exist. They haven't existed since 1995. It's becoming increasingly clear they will never exist again. Still, it could be worse, they could be the ...

1. Toronto Maple Leafs: They're under .500, have the worst road record in the league and it seems increasingly clear they're going to miss the playoffs for the first time in a decade. They just got embarrassed by their rivals on "Hockey Night in Canada." The Sabres have now passed them, leaving them in dead last in the East. Everyone's hurt, but they weren't any good when they were healthy. They don't own their own first-round picks for this year or next. The coach may be out of answers and the front office seems completely paralyzed. Other than that, going great.

Wow, that was fun. On to the power rankings, where it will not shock you to learn that it's an all-American top five this week...

Road to the Cup

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

The Flyers moved into a wild-card spot on Saturday. Are they for real? Eh, do you want to know the terrifying truth, or do you want to see them sock three dingers in 26 seconds?

Go back and watch the pass on that second goal. Filthy.

5. Vegas Golden Knights (10-4-7, +8 true goals differential*) – They remain my Pacific pick, although the Ducks are warming up again. The two teams met on Saturday, and it was Mitch Marner's overtime playmaking that decided it.

4. Tampa Bay Lightning (12-7-2, +6) – I've seen enough – welcome back to the top five, Atlantic Division. It had been four weeks away, but the Lightning have done enough despite all their injuries to break the streak.



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3. Dallas Stars (13-5-4, +10) – So apparently Mikko Rantanen is dirty now.

That put him into first place in the league in penalty minutes. Everyone else will get a chance to keep up, though, as Rantanen will sit one game automatically because he's had two game misconducts.

NHLTop NHL Stories

2. Carolina Hurricanes (14-6-2, +13) – The best news for the Hurricanes this week might be the Devils stumbling a bit without Jack Hughes, allowing Carolina to build just a bit of breathing room. Meanwhile, there was buzz during the week about Andrei Svechnikov either asking for a trade or at least indicating he'd be OK with one, but it doesn't sound like that will go anywhere.

1. Colorado Avalanche (16-1-5, +40) – The streak is over! No, not their winning streak, which reached nine with last night's 1-0 win over Chicago. But that close score did snap their streak of five straight wins by exactly three goals. Keep it up with this sort of progress, and somebody will be able to beat these guys by New Year's.

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

Not ranked: Los Angeles Kings – Two things were true about the Kings heading into this season. The first: They'd been a good team for four years in a row, making the playoffs each season while averaging over 100 points. While they'd lost to the Oilers in the first round in each of those years, calling into question the height of their ceiling, they were clearly at least a playoff-caliber team, and were coming off a 2024-25 season that was the best of the bunch.

The second true thing was that it hadn't been good enough to keep Rob Blake employed, and new GM Ken Holland had been pretty unanimously panned for his offseason work. Dom had them dead last on his summer improvement rankings and there wasn't exactly a ton of pushback. And when you combined those offseason reviews with a general sense of fatigue with a team that had delivered the same result four years running, there were more than a few of us who dropped the Kings off our playoff list for this year, making room for one of the younger and/or more interesting teams.

Then the season started, and we all waited to find out what the Kings would be. Good? Bad? Somewhere in the middle?

And now we know the answer: Yes.

They were bad for the first few weeks, winning just one of their first six games. And all the haters were proven right.

Except then they worked their way back up past fake .500, before winning five of six to move into first place in the Pacific. And their loyal fans were vindicated.

Only now they've lost three straight, allowing the Ducks and Knights and even the Kraken to push past them. With the Oilers still lurking and the Sharks surging, the Kings once again look like they might not even be a playoff team. But also, it's three games, and all three were one-goal losses, and they still managed two OTL points, so what are we even doing here?

The answer, unsatisfying as it is, seems to be something like this: The Kings aren't great, but they're not as bad as a lot of us thought, and in a Pacific Division that refuses to follow expectations, that's probably enough to keep them hanging around the race all year long.

(There was some post-goal controversy on that one; the details are here.)

All three California teams are confusing, a problem that Eric tried to help me with in last week's newsletter. (Are you subscribed? You should subscribe.) He had the Kings pegged as a scrappy possession team that was getting good goaltending from Darcy Kuemper, and was banking points by getting to overtime as often as possible. That last part is important, because they're now up to 10 overtime appearances, going 4-6 in the extra frame. It's true the hockey gods hate the loser point, but it's also true that coaches love them, and it's how you can win 10 of 22 games and still be close to .600 in today's NHL.

Great. So are they good or bad or stuck in the middle? It's been all three, at least so far. But if I had to pick an option to ride with, it would be the last one. They're fine, with gusts up to very good. And in this year's Pacific, that's probably enough. Get them into the playoffs, with solid goaltending and a classic last-dance storyline from Anze Kopitar, and who knows what could happen. Especially if they can somehow avoid the Oilers for a change. They'd have a shot. I think. Maybe.

Kings fans, help me out here. Where are we at with this year's edition? Should us sleepy east-coasters be paying more attention, or is the simple "They're OK" answer the right one?

The bottom five

The five teams headed towards dead last and the best lottery odds for Gavin McKenna (we think).

Since this is the section for feeling bad, make sure you don't miss this collection of every team's regrettable trades.

5. Buffalo Sabres (9-9-4, -5) – I can't say I was super close to putting the Leafs or Rangers here. Long-term view, all that stuff. I did think about the Canucks. For now, we'll stick with the Sabres, who looked good yesterday and are making a strong case to escape this section.

4. San Jose Sharks (11-9-3, -4) – I'm not really sure how I feel about this:

3. St. Louis Blues (7-9-6, -21) – Some good stuff from Jeremy this week, with a look at the Blues' new top line and how Jim Montgomery is approaching a losing season.

2. Calgary Flames (8-13-3, -14) – Got to be honest: While the Rantanen hit was ugly, if I'm a Flames fan I sure don't mind seeing Jonathan Huberdeau get in there and drop the gloves. His contract means he'll probably always be open to criticism, but he hasn't checked out.

1. Nashville Predators (6-11-4, -25) – They had almost a week off after being shut out by the Penguins to end their mini-series in Sweden. The result: Another shutout, this time against the Avalanche. When they face the Panthers tonight, it will have been ten days since their last goal.



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Not ranked: Columbus Blue Jackets – They were a great story last year, riding the emotion of the Johnny Gaudreau tragedy and a Norris-worthy breakout from Zach Werenski almost all the way to a playoff spot. That “almost” was the painful twist, with the Blue Jackets eventually ending up two points shy after a late-season losing streak dug a hole that even six straight wins to end the season weren’t enough to climb out of.

The question coming into this year was whether there was a path to improvement. I wasn’t convinced there was, and 70 percent of our staff agreed, but I was hoping I’d be wrong. So far this year, the Blue Jackets are playing to a 93-point pace, which would have been enough last year but may not be this time. But they’ve got points in seven of their last eight, including a tough Saturday loss to the Red Wings that saw Columbus blow a two-goal lead they held midway through the third. They were technically holding down a playoff spot when that game ended (by points but not by percentage), but have since been bumped back out.

All that said, there’s plenty of room for optimism in Columbus. Start with Jet Greaves, the rookie goalie who’s looked the part of an NHL starter. Werenski has shown last year wasn’t a fluke and Kirill Marchenko is on pace for a career year at 25.

And then there’s the guy I mostly wanted to talk about: Adam Fantilli. The No. 3 pick from the 2023 draft hasn’t been

getting the kind of attention names like Connor Bedard, Macklin Celebrini and Leo Carlsson have had this year. And that’s fair, because those guys are out-producing him on teams that are bigger surprises. But you might think that a guy who just turned 21 and already has a 31-goal season under his belt would get a little bit more credit. Maybe his highlight-reel OT winner in Toronto will help in that regard. Maybe it shouldn’t have to.

Aaron Portzline had his quarter-season grades, and they were mostly solid. There have been some rough starts for veterans like Sean Monahan and Boone Jenner, and Kent Johnson and Cole Sillinger are reminding us that even highly drafted prospects can have their ups and downs. But with lots of runway left on the season, some room for improvement is hardly the worst thing in the world.

We may get a good sense of where this team is headed over the next few weeks, as the Blue Jackets play their next nine against Eastern teams, most of whom are right in the middle of the playoff mix. You can’t clinch anything in November, but it’s a chance to make a few statements.

We’ll see where it goes, but don’t sleep on this team. They didn’t get the storybook finish they probably deserved last year, but maybe that was just setting the stage for something bigger.

One trade every NHL team’s fan base would most likely want to undo

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

With the NHL trade deadline a few months away, it’s never too early to start thinking about deals.

The Athletic’s Chris Johnston has us covered about what’s on the radar for this year’s market, but we also wanted to have a look back with you — the fans — as the focus.

With that in mind, we asked our staff for one trade each NHL team’s fan base would most likely want to undo.

Due to their limited trade history, the Seattle Kraken and Utah Mammoth were given some flexibility in their picks for this exercise.

Which other trades would you like to undo? Let us know in the comments below.

Anaheim Ducks

Shea Theodore for the Golden Knights’ agreement to select Clayton Stoner in 2017 Expansion Draft (2017)

Trading Teemu Selanne after multiple 50-goal and 100-point seasons, along with three top-five Hart Trophy finishes, was an option, but the Finnish Flash returned to Anaheim for an

amazing second act. Sacrificing Theodore so the Golden Knights would take Clayton Stoner off their hands in the expansion draft lingers because the offensive blueliner has been a top-four Vegas staple for years. — Eric Stephens

Boston Bruins

Tyler Seguin, Rich Peverley and Ryan Button to the Dallas Stars for Loui Eriksson, Joe Morrow, Reilly Smith and Matt Fraser (2013)

Seguin, 21 at the time, was already a Stanley Cup winner. The year following the trade, he scored 37 goals. He has played in over 1,000 games. Eriksson, meanwhile, scored 22 goals as a first-year Bruin. Smith, Morrow and Fraser, who accompanied Eriksson in the trade, did not become long-term Bruins. — Fluto Shinzawa

Buffalo Sabres

Jack Eichel to Golden Knights for Alex Tuch, Peyton Krebs and 2022 first-round pick and 2023 second-round pick (2021)

There are plenty of candidates for trades Sabres fans would want to reverse, but the Eichel trade carries the most baggage. Eichel was the player who was supposed to help pull the Sabres out of the basement of the league. Instead, he grew tired of losing, the Sabres wouldn’t let him get his preferred neck surgery and he won the Stanley Cup in Vegas instead. Meanwhile, the Sabres’ playoff drought has hit 14 years. The Eichel era should have been different in Buffalo. — Matthew Fairburn

Calgary Flames



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Matthew Tkachuk and 2025 fourth-round pick for Jonathan Huberdeau, MacKenzie Weegar, Cole Schwindt and 2025 first-round pick (2022)

The Flames just haven't been the same since that trade. The haul they returned was solid and could still bear fruit (they used a conditional first on Cullen Potter at the end of the 2025 draft's first round). It hasn't led to any playoff success, however. Meanwhile, Tkachuk won the Stanley Cup twice with the Panthers and has emerged as one of the NHL's most prominent stars. The two franchises went in different directions after that trade. — Julian McKenzie

Carolina Hurricanes

Martin Necas, Jack Drury, 2025 second-round pick and 2026 fourth-round pick for Mikko Rantanen and Taylor Hall in a three-team deal with the Colorado Avalanche and Chicago Blackhawks (2025)

The arrangement was more complex than just those four players, but those were the main pieces. Some fans have seller's remorse for letting Necas go in a trade that didn't lead to Carolina securing a long-term superstar player, but the deal is more layered. Without the Rantanen acquisition, the Hurricanes never would have ended up with Logan Stankoven, Hall or the extra draft picks that helped them afford the K'Andre Miller trade. This one will be judged for a long time. — Cory Lavalette

Chicago Blackhawks

Brandon Saad, Michael Paliotta and Alex Broadhurst for Artem Anisimov, Marko Dano, Corey Tropp, Jeremy Morin and 2016 fourth-round pick (2015)

The Blackhawks' Stanley Cup window arguably closed with this trade. There was no real reason to trade Saad; general manager Stan Bowman just blinked first. Sure, they were tight for cap space, but Saad had no leverage without arbitration rights. He could have sat out without a deal, but he was a young player on a veteran team and would have likely caved. Saad's departure had a greater impact on the Blackhawks than expected, and they never fully recovered. — Scott Powers

Colorado Avalanche

Chris Drury and Stephane Yelle for Derek Morris, Dean McAmmond and Jeff Shantz (2002)

In his first four seasons, Drury racked up 85 goals and 137 assists, won the Calder Trophy, and scored 11 goals on the way to winning the Stanley Cup in 2001. Then Colorado traded him and Yelle to Calgary for Morris, McAmmond and Shantz. Morris scored only 17 goals in two seasons for Colorado, while McAmmond played in only 41 games, and Shantz scored three goals in his lone season with the club. It was about as bad a trade as you can make. — Jesse Granger

Columbus Blue Jackets

Jake Voracek, 2011 first and third-round picks for Jeff Carter (2011)

The Blue Jackets were desperate — desperate! — to find a center who could play with Rick Nash, and they hoped Carter was the answer. He wasn't, and he didn't want to be, either. Carter never clicked with Nash, pouted constantly and was

traded the following February. Worse, the Blue Jackets gave up Voracek, a highly skilled winger who played over 1,000 games and scored more than 800 points. There were two draft picks in the trade, too, and Philly turned them into Sean Couturier and Nick Cousins. — Aaron Portzline

Dallas Stars

The No. 28 pick in 2003 for Nos. 36 and 54 from the Anaheim Ducks (2003)

I'm guessing most Dallas fans would most want to undo the Luka Dončić or Micah Parsons trades. I'd also be curious to know how many Stars fans lament the Jarome Iginla for Joe Nieuwendyk deal, even though Nieuwendyk led them to a championship. However, a truly lopsided one was a draft-day deal with Anaheim, which saw the Stars trade out of the first round. That pick became Corey Perry. The two seconds Dallas got (Vojtech Polak and B.J. Crombeen) played a combined 28 games for Dallas. — Mark Lazerus

Detroit Red Wings

Sébastien Piché and 2012 first-round pick (that became Andrei Vasilevskiy) for Kyle Quincey (2012)

In 2012, the Red Wings were solidly in their "win-now" era, so you can understand them being willing to move first-round picks. To be fair, they did extend Quincey twice, so it didn't turn out to be a pure rental. The problem is that the 2012 first-round pick they dealt (along with minor-leaguer Piché) for Quincey went on to become Vasilevskiy, the best goaltender of a generation. Meanwhile, the Red Wings have been searching for a long-term answer in goal for a decade. — Max Bultman

Edmonton Oilers

2015 first- and second-round picks for Griffin Reinhart (2015)

This is the worst trade in the Connor McDavid era. The Oilers sent two high picks to the Islanders for Reinhart, a defenseman selected fourth in 2012 and someone the organization knew well because he'd captained the local WHL Oil Kings. Reinhart played just 29 games for the Oilers and was selected by Vegas in the 2017 expansion draft. The Isles nabbed Mathew Barzal at 16. Kyle Connor, Thomas Chabot, Joel Eriksson Ek, Brock Boeser, Travis Konecny and Jack Roslovic were still available, too. — Daniel Nugent-Bowman

Florida Panthers

Roberto Luongo, Lukas Krajicek and 2006 sixth-round pick for Todd Bertuzzi, Bryan Allen and Alex Auld (2006)

It all worked out in the end, with Luongo rejoining the Panthers in an executive role in time for them to win a couple of championships. However, this Mike Keenan trade 19 years ago was a real head scratcher, subtracting a franchise goaltender for what amounted to spare parts. Bertuzzi ended up getting hurt and playing just seven games for the Panthers, and Allen and Auld didn't amount to much. — James Mirtle

Los Angeles Kings

Butch Goring for Billy Harris and Dave Lewis (1980)

While Goring is remembered for being the final piece to constructing the New York Islanders dynasty, what gets



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forgotten is that he was a fantastic two-way center for L.A. in most of his 11 seasons. Harris scored 184 goals for New York but wasn't the same player with the Kings, while Lewis was a serviceable defenseman. — Eric Stephens

Minnesota Wild

Brent Burns and 2012 second-round pick for Devin Setoguchi, Charlie Coyle and 2011 first-round pick (2011)

There are so many Wild trades to choose from, with a particular runner-up being the deal to send Alex Tuch to Vegas to "protect" unprotected players in the Golden Knights' expansion draft. In 2011, Burns was a budding star coming up on a payday, and it was the same summer the Wild planned on twin \$98 million contracts for Zach Parise and Ryan Suter. Burns would become a Norris Trophy winner, a star offensive defenseman and a future Hall of Famer. Had Zack Phillips, whom the Wild took with the pick they got in the deal, amounted to anything, this trade would be a little more digestible. — Michael Russo

Montreal Canadiens

Patrick Roy and Mike Keane for Andrei Kovalenko, Martin Rucinsky and Jocelyn Thibault (1995)

This is not a particularly hard choice. The Roy trade set the franchise back for at least a decade, and perhaps even more. This was always seen as a side effect of then-team president Ronald Corey's decision to fire coach Jacques Demers and general manager Serge Savard and replace them with Mario Tremblay and Réjean Houle, but the reality is that Savard was already contemplating trading Roy. The Canadiens simply had to get a higher-quality return. — Arpon Basu

Nashville Predators

Mikael Granlund for Kevin Fiala (2019)

The Preds needed center help at the time and were in go-for-it mode under general manager David Poile, who admitted he was trading away a significant talent. They went on to lose to the Stars in the first round and still haven't won a playoff series since 2018. Fiala has been close to a point-a-game player in Minnesota and Los Angeles, and was the rare case of good Preds scouting at forward. — Joe Rexrode

New Jersey Devils

Vladimir Malakhov and 2007 first-round pick for Alexander Korolyuk and Jim Fahey (2006)

The Malakhov to San Jose trade was a cap dump for the Devils to get under the cap ceiling. They had to attach a conditional first to make the deal happen, and that pick ended up being David Perron, who has played nearly 1,200 NHL games and won a Stanley Cup. In return, New Jersey got Fahey, who played a whopping total of 13 games for the organization, and Korolyuk, who never suited up for the Devils. — Peter Baugh

New York Islanders

Devon Toews for 2021 and 2022 second-round picks (2020)

Toews became the best version of himself in Colorado, but he still showed a ton of promise on Long Island. He may not have been a prolific scorer with the Islanders — that just isn't his game — but he was a puck-moving presence, with a

strong defensive acumen. The team may have been in a cap crunch at the time, but 1) his contract ended up being reasonable and 2) that wasn't the player to make a casualty. Teams can only hope to draft players of his caliber. — Shayna Goldman

New York Rangers

Rick Middleton for Ken Hodge (1976)

Younger fans will point to recent trades, such as the 2018 deal that sent Ryan McDonagh and J.T. Miller to the Tampa Bay Lightning for a package that amounted to very little or the 2021 exchange that shipped Pavel Buchnevich to the St. Louis Blues and left a void at top-line RW that still hasn't been properly filled. However, old-timers will rightly contend that the 1976 trade is the clear choice. Middleton, a 22-year-old future Hall of Famer, would rack up 898 points (402 goals and 496 assists) over 12 seasons with the Bruins. Hodge was almost a decade older and well past his prime. The hope was he'd rekindle chemistry with longtime linemate Phil Esposito, but he would last only 96 games with the Rangers before being relegated to the AHL. — Vincent Z. Mercogliano

Ottawa Senators

Mark Stone and Tobias Lindberg for Oscar Lindberg, Erik Brannstrom and 2020 second-round pick (2019)

The Senators don't have anything from that return helping them in their current era. Not even the 2020 second-round pick, which turned into Egor Sokolov. Stone wasn't interested in staying in Ottawa as it was in the midst of a rebuild, which led to him being on the market; albeit only a limited number of teams expressed interest as Stone eyed a move to Vegas. Stone eventually got his Cup ring with the Golden Knights during the 2023 Cup final win over Florida. — Julian McKenzie

Philadelphia Flyers

Sergei Bobrovsky for 2012 second-round pick and 2012 and 2013 fourth-round picks (2012)

It's a good candidate for the worst trade in Flyers history, particularly now that Bobrovsky has led the Panthers to back-to-back Stanley Cup championships and is a strong Hall of Fame candidate, too. Just as bad was the reason they did it: to sign Ilya Bryzgalov to a disastrous, long-term deal that they ended up buying out. The Flyers are still paying Bryzgalov until the summer of 2027. — Kevin Kurz

Pittsburgh Penguins

Ian Cole, Filip Gustavsson, 2018 first-round draft pick and 2019 third-round pick for Derick Brassard, Vincent Dunn and 2018 third-round pick (2018)

Jim Rutherford made many, many deals that helped the Penguins win championships, but he made a mistake in 2018 when he gave up Cole, Gustavsson and two picks for Brassard. The Penguins needed a third-line center in their quest to three-peat. It was a role that Brassard never embraced. — Josh Yohe

San Jose Sharks

Andrei Nazarov and 1998 first-round pick for Bryan Marchment, David Shaw and 1998 first-round pick (1998)



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In this March 1998 deal, the Sharks allowed the Lightning to swap first-round picks. That meant Tampa Bay ended up with the No. 1 pick (a pick San Jose had received from Florida in a trade the year before) and drafted franchise icon Vincent Lecavalier. Marchment, an often-suspended defenseman, played six seasons in San Jose. The Sharks did draft Brad Stuart at No. 3, the pick they got from Tampa Bay, and Stuart played parts of six solid seasons before becoming part of their greatest trade, for Joe Thornton. — Eric Stephens

Seattle Kraken

The expansion draft (2021)

The Kraken's limited trade history is mostly filled with wins, or, at the very least, trades in which they received meaningful draft pick compensation for players who don't especially move the needle. When they've bought on the trade market — Tomas Tatar, Jaycob Megna — the prices have been modest. What Kraken fans should really regret, however, is how the organization lacked creativity in its approach to the expansion draft. It's something from which the club is still recovering. — Thomas Drance

St. Louis Blues

Zack Bolduc for Logan Mailloux (2025)

When the Blues sent Bolduc to the Canadiens for Mailloux, there was a lot of second-guessing from fans. Bolduc, 22, was coming off a 19-goal season, while Mailloux, 22, spent 2024-25 in the AHL. That second-guessing has turned into frustration as Bolduc got off to a good start while Mailloux struggled. Fans say they understand that it takes longer for a defenseman to develop, but with Mailloux being re-assigned to the AHL recently, many wish the Blues had a do-over. — Jeremy Rutherford

Tampa Bay Lightning

Mikhail Sergachev for J.J. Moser, Conor Geekie, 2024 seventh-round pick and 2025 second-round pick (2024)

The Lightning needed to move Sergachev to open up cap space, which allowed the team to bring Ryan McDonagh back. Moser and Geekie were both solid adds for Tampa Bay, too. The thing is, this blue line craves someone with Sergachev's ceiling: a top-pair defenseman with puck-moving ability. It would really help to have that skill with Victor Hedman in the top four, considering some of the two-way shortcomings of this defensive group. — Shayna Goldman

Toronto Maple Leafs

Nazem Kadri, Calle Rosen and 2020 third-round pick for Alex Kerfoot, Tyson Barrie and 2020 sixth-round pick (2019)

Kadri was coming off his second straight suspension in the playoffs when the Leafs dealt him to Colorado. There was frustration there, certainly. The Leafs also had problems on defense and thought they could solve it with Barrie while replacing Kadri at the same time. It didn't work. Barrie wasn't a good fit, and while Kerfoot proved malleable, he was not a full-time center. The Leafs missed Kadri and what could have been a dominant 1-2-3 down the middle with Auston Matthews and John Tavares. — Jonas Siegel

Utah Mammoth/Arizona Coyotes

Danny Briere and 2004 third-round pick for Chris Gratton and 2004 fourth-round pick (2003)

The Coyotes soured on Briere in a down year and shipped him to the Sabres for Gratton at the 2003 trade deadline. Gratton only stayed for one underwhelming year in Phoenix. Briere, meanwhile, immediately became one of the Sabres' top scorers, including a career-best 95 points in the 2006-07 season. To make matters worse, the third-round pick the Coyotes sent became Andrej Sekera, who carved out a strong 842-game NHL career. — Harman Dayal

Vancouver Canucks

Cam Neely for Barry Pederson and 1987 first-round pick (1986)

Vancouver signed Pederson to a contract that carried compensation (think of it as being similar to an offer sheet, but it was a different era) and negotiated a trade that sent struggling young forward Neely and an additional first-round pick to the Bruins in exchange for the talented, oft-injured Pederson. Neely, who grew up in British Columbia, became a Hall of Fame-level power forward in Boston. Pederson had one decent year in Vancouver, but never moved the needle. — Thomas Drance

Vegas Golden Knights

Nick Suzuki, Tomas Tatar and 2019 second-round pick for Max Pacioretty (2018)

Before the 2018-19 season, the Golden Knights sent Suzuki, Tatar and a second-round pick to acquire Pacioretty from Montreal. Pacioretty actually did quite well in Vegas, leading the team in goals (32) and points (66) in 2019-20. He had 194 points in 224 games with the Golden Knights before he was eventually traded to Carolina for nothing in return. Suzuki, however, has flourished into an outstanding playmaking centerman and obviously has many more years of high-end hockey left. — Jesse Granger

Washington Capitals

Filip Forsberg for Martin Erat and Michael Latta (2013)

With apologies to both Caps trades involving Jaromír Jágr, this is an easy one. Erat was supposed to at least provide short-term help; he wound up scoring twice in 62 games. Forsberg, a first-round pick the year before, has scored ... slightly more for the Preds. — Sean Gentile

Winnipeg Jets

2026 second-round pick and 2027 fourth-round pick for Luke Schenn (2025)

It is to Winnipeg's credit that this is such a tough choice. In 2020, subscribers picked Brendan Lemieux, a 2019 first-round pick and a conditional fourth-round pick for Kevin Hayes, who failed to recreate Paul Stastny's impact as a rental. Lemieux peaked at 18 points in an NHL season and now plays in Davos, though. A 2024 third-round pick and a 2025 second-round pick for Tyler Toffoli aged poorly (he didn't want to be in Winnipeg), but Toffoli was a plus player who scored seven goals in 18 games. The Jets paid nearly that much for third-pairing defenseman Luke Schenn. — Murat Ates



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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NHL Power Rankings: Playing 'red flag, green flag' after a quarter of the season

By: Dom Luszczyzyn, Sean Gentille

At some point on Thursday night, the NHL officially finished the first quarter of its schedule. We're not going to say "quarter pole," because it's a horse-racing term that almost never is used correctly.

In any case, Power Rankings HQ is marking the occasion with a simple game of "green flag, red flag." There are (generally) real reasons for optimism for every team and, of course, real reasons for pessimism.

Also, as was the case last week, there's pure chaos in the middle of the list.

1. Colorado Avalanche, 14-1-5

Last week: 1

Sean: 1

Dom: 1

Green flag: (Almost) everything!

In a league where 27 teams feel interchangeably mid, the Avalanche stand alone as The True Good Team. They're an absolute wagon at five-on-five and it's amazing that this deep into November, they've lost just once in regulation.

Red flag: The power play

We're tight on bad things to say about this team because, really, there is only one: Colorado's bafflingly bad power play. It boggles the mind that a unit with this much talent not only can't score, but isn't even getting chances that it bears repeating daily until it's fixed.

2. Carolina Hurricanes, 13-5-2

Last week: 4

Sean: 2

Dom: 2

Green flag: Shayne Gostisbehere is nasty

Guess who leads the NHL with an average Game Score of 2.58? Gostisbehere didn't get there by offense alone, either — his actual and expected goal shares are both well into the 70s, and he has the lowest expected goals against/per 60 in the league among defensemen.

Red flag: The end of Selke Staal?

Since 2017-18, the Hurricanes have been outscored with Staal on the ice just once. They're in a 10-9 deficit there at the moment, and his expected goal share (51.5) would be his worst since 2020-21.

3. Dallas Stars, 13-5-3

Last week: 2

Sean: 4

Dom: 3

Green flag: Miro Heiskanen, Norris finalist?

It's almost strange that a player so good and so respected has never come all that close to winning the Norris. If he keeps this up, that'll change. He's providing his typically high-end play in monster minutes, including 28:13 on Thursday, and his production is up: He's fifth among defensemen with 19 points, and his 2.13 points/60 is nearly a full point above last season.

Red flag: Thomas Harley

A week-to-week injury is never good news, but it might serve as some sort of explanation for Harley's play in his first 18 games: Dallas was outscored 15-9 with him on the ice, and his expected goal share was about 42 percent.

4. Anaheim Ducks, 13-7-1

Last week: 5

Sean: 3

Dom: 4

Green flag: Jacob Trouba being worth every penny

We don't know what's gotten into Trouba, but he continues to be one of the brightest spots on Anaheim's blue line. A late-career renaissance like this is a nice bonus for a team on the rise.

Red flag: Pavel Mintyukov not progressing

Two straight healthy scratches and reports about trade demands if he doesn't play have put Mintyukov's name top of mind for the week. By Net Rating, his minus-2.2 is last among Ducks defensemen and one of the worst in the league. After a decent rookie season, it's been disappointing to not see him take the leap.

5. New Jersey Devils, 13-6-1

Last week: 3

Sean: 5

Dom: 6

Green flag: Jake Allen

Historically, Allen is at his best when he's pushing the starter. As soon as he's anointed the starter, everything goes awry. For now, the starter is still Jacob Markstrom, and so that means the Devils are getting peak Allen, whose .917 is third among goalies that have played 10 or more games.

Red flag: Jacob Markstrom

Aside from all the injuries, New Jersey's biggest issue right now is that the starter it just signed to an extension doesn't look like a starter anymore. Thank god for Allen or this team would not be so comfy near the top of the East.

6. Vegas Golden Knights, 10-4-6

Last week: 9

Sean: 6

Dom: 5



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Green flag: Shea Theodore doing his best Miro Heiskanen impression

He may not be getting as many points as he usually does, but the smooth-skating Theodore has been cooking defensively. He's got some eye-opening defensive numbers in tough minutes.

Red flag: The bottom six is getting crushed

One of the things we loved about Vegas going into the season was that they added a superstar to an already deep forward group. Mitch Marner has held up his end with the team's top six stars, but the rest of the lineup is having a tough time. Without Jack Eichel or Tomas Hertl on the ice this year, Vegas is getting outscored 18-9 with a 44 percent xG.

7. Winnipeg Jets, 12-7-0

Last week: 11

Sean: 7

Dom: 8

Green flag: The blue line getting healthy

A lot of people were bemoaning Winnipeg's underlying numbers to start the season, but since Dylan Samberg returned, the Jets are right at 50 percent xG. More importantly, their usually strong defensive numbers are back to normal.

Red flag: The third pair

What Samberg's lengthy absence exposed is just how bad Winnipeg's third pair is. Logan Stanley, Luke Schenn, Haydn Fleury, Colin Miller are a tough combination of bad options.

8. Tampa Bay Lightning, 11-7-2

Last week: 10

Sean: 10

Dom: 7

Green flag: Surviving injuries on defense

We're still not sure who Charle-Edouard D'astous is, but he's currently playing top-four minutes with Erik Cernak while Darren Raddysh lines up next to J.J. Moser. It's rough without Victor Hedman and Ryan McDonagh, but the Lightning are finding ways to manage and that bodes well for when they do get healthy.

Red flag: They keep galaxy-braining the power play

Enough is enough. Just put Brandon Hagel on PP1. Oliver Bjorkstrand has one goal in 19 games, the top unit is worse with him on it and the man advantage has been a major weak spot. Don't overthink it, Coop! Stop trying to make Bjorkstrand happen, it's not going to happen!

9. New York Islanders, 12-7-2

Last week: 22

Sean: 8

Dom: 10

Green flag: Bo Horvat has been one of the NHL's best players

Horvat isn't just tied for second in the league in goals, with 14 — he's carrying around an average Game Score of 1.7, comfortably in the top 10, and a Net Rating higher than Connor McDavid and Macklin Celebrini, among many others. That'll keep him in the Olympic discussion.

Red flag: Alex Romanov has been one of the NHL's worst players

Down at the absolute bottom of the Net Rating list is Romanov, with a minus-6.6. Mix that in with the upper-body injury he sustained when Mikko Rantanen drove him into the net, and it's tough not to feel bad for the guy.

10. Florida Panthers, 11-8-1

Last week: 13

Sean: 11

Dom: 9

Green flag: Brad Marchand is still elite

Marchand's last season in Boston was tougher than usual to watch at times and he looked a step behind at 4 Nations. Forgive anyone who thought the end was near because Marchand certainly made it seem that way.

Then the playoffs happened and Marchand looked like his old self again, completely rejuvenated. And that doesn't look like it was a one-off either. With 13 goals and 23 points in 18 games, Marchand has been Florida's top offensive catalyst.

Red flag: Sergei Bobrovsky

Life would be a lot easier for the Barkov-less and Tkachuk-less Panthers if their franchise goalie could carry the load for a little bit. Sergei Bobrovsky was sporting an .881 and a bottom 10 spot in GSAX going into Thursday's game, where he pitched a shutout. More of that, please.

11. Los Angeles Kings, 10-6-5

Last week: 7

Sean: 9

Dom: 12

Green flag: Succession

What we needed to see this season: Quinton Byfield and Brandt Clarke showing progression toward franchise status.

What we're getting: Exactly that. Byfield and Clarke have arguably been two of the Kings' most impactful players in the first quarter.

Red flag: Short-handed goals against

The Kings are one of the rare teams that use a 5F power play and they're seeing the risks of that through the first 20 games with 2.1 short-handed goals against per 60 — third worst in the league. The worst part is they're not even seeing the offensive benefit and currently rank 23rd in power-play goals per 60.

12. Washington Capitals, 11-8-2

Last week: 24

Sean: 12

Dom: 11



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Green flag: They're one of the best five-on-five teams in the league

Only the Avs have outscored opponents more dramatically at five-on-five than the Caps (50-30). Their expected goal share is top five, as well.

Red flag: They have some of the worst combined special teams in the league

Unfortunately for Washington, the entire game is not played at five-on-five. Even after a two-goal night on Thursday, their power play is near the bottom of the league in actual and expected goals per 60. Their penalty kill is, too.

13. Ottawa Senators, 10-6-4

Last week: 8

Sean: 15

Dom: 13

Green flag: Team defense

No team in the league allows fewer expected goals at five-on-five than Ottawa (2.17). Seven individual players are sub-2.00, including Jake Sanderson and Shane Pinto.

Red flag: Linus Ullmark

In terms of actual goals against, though, Ottawa is all the way down at 19th (2.53). Blame their .893 team save percentage for that. Basically, blame Ullmark, who's allowed nearly five goals more than expected at five-on-five and 7.5 overall.

14. Detroit Red Wings, 12-8-1

Last week: 15

Sean: 14

Dom: 14

Green flag: The Core Four™

Going into Thursday's games, Detroit's Core Four™ of Dylan Larkin, Lucas Raymond, Alex DeBrincat and Moritz Seider carried a combined plus-20 Net Rating. All four land in the league's top 40. Hooray!

Red flag: The Other 18™

The rest of the skaters combine for a minus-17 Net Rating. Boo! That's the second-largest gap in the league behind only Edmonton.

15. Pittsburgh Penguins, 10-5-4

Last week: 16

Sean: 13

Dom: 17

Green flag: Erik Karlsson has learned how to defend

Hands up if you expected Karlsson to be carrying a higher Defensive Rating (plus-1.4) than Ryan McDonagh and Travis Sanheim. Pittsburgh has outscored opponents 14-9 with him on the ice.

Red flag: Penalty differential

No team has spent less time on the power play, which has undermined a unit that is scoring more actual goals per 60 (13.0) and generating more expected (12.1) than anybody in the league.

16. Utah Mammoth, 10-8-3

Last week: 6

Sean: 17

Dom: 15

Green flag: Their penalty kill

Only six teams allow fewer shorthanded goals than the Mammoth (5.62 per 60), and just one has been better at suppressing quality chances (6.9 expected goals per 60).

Red flag: Mediocrity from Mikhail Sergachev

If you're optimistic about the Mammoth, some of that hinges on Sergachev playing like a No. 1 defenseman — and that hasn't been the case so far. Utah is getting outscored 18-13 with him on the ice at five-on-five, and his expected goal share isn't much better.

17. Philadelphia Flyers, 10-6-3

Last week: 17

Sean: 18

Dom: 16

Green flag: Christian Dvorak has worked out nicely

In terms of five-on-five points-per-60, Christian Dvorak's career high is 1.97 back in 2021-22. He's at 2.46 for the year so far. That's a great start and some surprisingly nice bang-for-their-buck from the Flyers.

Red flag: Matvei Michkov has been Tocchet'd

Clayton Keller and Elias Pettersson, meet Matvei Michkov.

18. Chicago Blackhawks, 10-6-4

Last week: 23

Sean: 16

Dom: 21

Green flag: Spencer Knight — Olympian

Get this guy to Milan, he's earned it. His 19.7 goals saved above expected is downright Hellebuyckian

Red flag: The ol' 105 PDO

No one wants to be the fun police for a hockey team emerging from the abyss. If someone tries to "Well, actually" you that the version of Connor Bedard scoring at a 125-point pace is actually bad, pay them no mind.

But if the bar has been raised toward discussing Chicago as an actual playoff threat this season, the team's sky-high PDO is the unfortunate elephant in the room. The Blackhawks have banked enough points early to make some noise, but if they want staying power, they'll need to start consistently controlling play to a better degree. The Bedard-Knight connection should get them a better goal differential than expected — just not to the current degree.



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19. Seattle Kraken, 10-5-5

Last week: 19

Sean: 20

Dom: 19

Green flag: Matt Murray is back

It's been a long road back to relevancy for Matt Murray, who played just two games last season, but his first five for the Kraken have felt revelatory. He looks like his old self again with a .924 save percentage and 5.6 goals saved. If the Kraken play their cards right, they might be able to get a first-round pick out of Edmonton.

Red flag: Worst xG in the league

No one really wants to believe in the Kraken with their whole chest, even if Seattle is currently third in the Pacific based on points percentage. No team gets out-chanced more than the Kraken and that's the reddest of all red flags on the list. Don't buy their record.

20. Minnesota Wild, 10-7-4

Last week: 26

Sean: 19

Dom: 20

Green flag: Jesper Wallstedt

Wallstedt just went nearly three hours' worth of game time without allowing a goal, pushing his save percentage up to .926 and GSAX up to nearly four. That's the sort of play that made Wallstedt a top prospect before a messy 2024-25 AHL season.

Red flag: They already paid Filip Gustavsson

There's nothing wrong with having multiple options in net, and Gustavsson has been better than his .897 save percentage indicates, but that five-year, \$34 million contract he signed all the way back in October might come back to haunt Minnesota.

21. Columbus Blue Jackets, 11-8-2

Last week: 21

Sean: 21

Dom: 19

Green flag: Zach Werenski looks Norris-caliber again

In case you were on the fence about Werenski's place in the elite defenseman hierarchy, he's putting on another Norris-worthy season with the Blue Jackets. Werenski probably won't catch Cale Makar, but he's playing big minutes, scoring a bunch and absolutely tilting the ice at five-on-five. His impact on xG and goals is among the league's very best.

Red flag: The regression boys

Last season, Kent Johnson's on-ice shooting percentage of 13.2 percent was the fourth-highest in the league. Sean Monahan's 12.0 percent was 17th. Both have struggled to score out of the gate and not getting those same bounces is a big reason why. Johnson, in particular, ranks last on the Blue Jackets at 6.9 percent.

22. Montreal Canadiens, 10-7-3

Last week: 12

Sean: 22

Dom: 22

Green flag: Overtime magic

The Canadiens have played eight overtime games this season, won five and taken two more to the shootout. Given the state of the Eastern Conference, an extra point here or there could be the difference between a wild-card spot and a lottery slot.

Red flag: Sam Montembeault's timing

Goaltender volatility can work against a team in both directions; back in 2022-23, Montembeault was too good, racking up 17 GSAX in a tank season for the Canadiens and wrecking their chances at drafting Connor Bedard. Now, after two more solid seasons and with his team fully in "win-now" mode, Montembeault has been brutal (.852 save percentage, minus-8.4 GSAX)

23. San Jose Sharks, 10-8-3

Last week: 25

Sean: 25

Dom: 23

Green flag: Yaroslav Askarov is becoming elite

After a very weak start to the season, Askarov has put on a show in November. Going into Thursday, he had six straight games saving more goals than expected, culminating in 13.9 goals saved and a .959 save percentage. That's stupid good.

Red flag: The John Klingberg and Nick Leddy experience

One reason Askarov has saved so many goals above expected is that the Sharks allow so many expected goals against. Not to point fingers, but maybe adding two veterans who have a history of doing exactly that was not the best move.

24. Edmonton Oilers, 9-9-5

Last week: 18

Sean: 25

Dom: 24

Green flag: They still have two MVPs

A ho-hum start for Edmonton's big guns still means that one (Connor McDavid) is 10th among forwards in Net Rating and the other (Leon Draisaitl) is 16th.

Red flag: They still don't have much else

Overall, the Oilers are bottom 10 in expected and actual goals at five-on-five. A poor supporting cast at forward? Who could've seen this coming? Jack Roslovic is third on the team in goals, and he signed about 15 minutes before the season began.

25. New York Rangers, 10-10-2

Last week: 14



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Sean: 24

Dom: 26

Green flag: Their ability to defend

No team allows fewer goals at five-on-five than the Rangers (1.77 per 60). They're tied for second-best in expected goals against, too (2.25 per 60). How is this team 26th in points percentage?

Red flag: Their ability to score

That's how. They're middle-of-the-pack in expected goals percentage and fifth from the bottom in goals per 60. J.T. Miller, phantom backcheck aside, embodies their issues — he's been solid defensively but has generated next to nothing with the puck.

26. Toronto Maple Leafs, 9-9-3

Last week: 29

Sean: 26

Dom: 25

Green flag: The big bad Leafs have the league's best hit differential

For all the people who have demanded the Leafs get more truculence, belligerence and pugnacity, it's time to soak up this moment: You did it! No team wins the hit battle every night better than the Leafs, who have delivered 142 more hits than they've taken this year. Congratulations!

Red flag: How they spent Mitch Marner's \$11 million of cap space

For all the people who have said that "cap space" was a better asset than Marner's last contract, well, you're getting an expensive lesson as to why that was always a fantasy. The Leafs are paying Matias Maccelli, Nicolas Roy, Dakota Joshua and Scott Laughton a combined total of \$11.2 million this year. And it's going great!

27. Boston Bruins, 12-10-0

Last week: 20

Sean: 27

Dom: 27

Green flag: Jeremy Swayman is back

After a lost season, Swayman has reverted to form. He's fifth in the league with 12.5 goals saved above expected and has generally looked like the guy Boston thought they were signing to a long-term, big-money deal.

Red flag: Marat Khusnutdinov is their 1C

Injuries to Elias Lindholm and Casey Mittelstadt have wreaked havoc on Boston's shaky-on-a-good-day center depth chart. That means Khusnutdinov — who has 22 points in 108 NHL games — is centering David Pastrnak and Morgan Geekie. He's been OK thus far, but yikes.

28. Vancouver Canucks, 9-11-2

Last week: 28

Sean: 28

Dom: 28

Green flag: Elias Pettersson

We're going to say this gently: Pettersson, with 20 points in 22 games, is showing some positive signs. With three more five-on-five goals, he'll tie his total from last season. Faint praise, perhaps, but it counts for something. Harman Dayal has more on the topic.

Red flag: Worst expected goals allowed in the league

Vancouver is allowing 3.33 expected goals against per 60, nearly a full goal worse than last season. The Tyler Myers-Marcus Pettersson pair (38 percent expected goal share, 3.57 xGA per 60) has a lot to do with that.

29. St. Louis Blues, 6-9-6

Last week: 27

Sean: 30

Dom: 29

Green flag: They're almost last in the West

The Blues have the rest of the league right where they want them!

Red flag: Canadian superstar goaltender Jordan Binnington

Does Canada have a goaltending problem, or does Canada have an identifying good goaltending problem? Anyways, here's Jordan "last in GSAX" Binnington being described as a lock for Team Canada — he's earned it!

30. Calgary Flames, 6-13-3

Last week: 32

Sean: 29

Dom: 30

Green flag: They're somehow an OK five-on-five team

The Flames are seventh in the league in expected goal share (53.7). That obviously hasn't led to much, thanks to a terminal lack of finishing talent and mediocre goaltending, but ... it counts for something.

Red flag: Matt Coronato is struggling after signing a big deal

Coronato has been good in November — he's got a team-leading eight points and 39 shots in that stretch — but he's still got plenty of ground to make up, especially after signing a seven-year deal with a \$6.5 million cap hit over the summer.

31. Buffalo Sabres, 7-9-4

Last week: 30

Sean: 31

Dom: 31

Green flag: Tage Thompson looks better

After scoring six goals in his first 16 games, Thompson has found the net in four straight, though one came in a catastrophic loss to the Flames. If the Sabres stop their season from going off the rails, they'll need Thompson to keep that up.



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Red flag: Owen Power has not taken any meaningful steps

In fact, he might have regressed. Power is producing less (1.05 points per 60, down from 1.43) and putting up worse defensive results — the Sabres have been outscored 16-10 with him on the ice. Stagnation from an important young player in Buffalo? Shocking.

32. Nashville Predators, 6-10-4

Last week: 31

Sean: 32

Dom: 32

Green flag: Roman Josi returned to practice on Thursday

It's hard to find many green flags in Nashville these days, so I guess we have to go to the injury report. Roman Josi might

be back soon, which could move the Predators up from their current 66-point pace to a 75-point pace.

Red flag: Everyone Barry Trotz has thrown big money at over the last two years

Over the last two years, Trotz has given out \$192 million in contracts to Steven Stamkos, Jonathan Marchessault, Brady Skjei, Nicolas Hague and Juuse Saros. Let's check in!

Stamkos has five points in 20 games. Marchessault has six points in 17 games. Skjei is getting outscored 17-11 with the worst xG on the team. Hague is getting outscored 13-6 with the second-worst xG on the team. Saros is 35th in GSAx, while the star prospect they traded to make room to pay for his 30s is seventh.

Not great!

Will any Carolina Hurricanes be considered for NHL awards this season?

By: Cory Lavalette

RALEIGH, N.C. — The NHL's regular season is 25 percent over, and the story of the campaign is coming into focus.

The league's young stars are offering a glimpse of the latest changing of the guard; the Colorado Avalanche are a wagon; all the pending free agents are being signed; and players should probably start eating at home because they're not safe at restaurants or cookouts.

Also coming into focus are the NHL's awards races, and since the Carolina Hurricanes are near the top of the league standings, they should have some players getting consideration. But will they? Here's a look at each of the major awards and which Carolina players could be on the short list to win.

Hart Trophy

The Hurricanes are a win-by-committee team, and entering Friday's game in Winnipeg, they did not have a player on an 82-point pace. With former winners such as Nathan MacKinnon and Connor McDavid residing near the top of the scoring race, the chances of a Carolina player unseating one of them — or one of rising stars such as Macklin Celebrini and Connor Bedard shockingly dragging their team into the playoffs — are slim.

Sebastian Aho and Seth Jarvis, who is trending toward his first 40-goal season, have the best chance, but neither has reached a level that seriously warrants MVP consideration at this point.

Hart Trophy chances: Slim to none

Vezina Trophy

Carolina has employed an even 1A/1B rotation whenever possible in recent seasons, and the addition of Brendan Bussi has further diluted the chance of one goalie being handed the reins.

Entering the season, the best odds would have gone to Frederik Andersen, who — if (big if) healthy — has the

experience, skill and track record to put together a dominant season. He finished fourth in Vezina voting in 2022, his first season in Carolina.

However, the 2025-26 season has been shaky for Andersen so far. He's lost more games than he's won (5-4-2) and has a save percentage of .883.

Enter Pyotr Kochetkov, who has won all four of his starts after missing nearly four weeks to start the season with an injury. He has a .926 save percentage, a 1.70 goals-against average and one shutout (and was seconds away from a second). The two keys for Kochetkov have always been consistency and staying healthy.

Andersen's mediocre play opens the door for Kochetkov to seize the No. 1 job, which would come with plenty of wins given the Hurricanes' status as one of the NHL's top teams.

Coach Rod Brind'Amour has expressed in the past a desire for a true No. 1 goalie, but Kochetkov already missed nearly a month and has never played more than 47 games.

Five goalies already have four times as many games played as him, and the Hurricanes' philosophy of rotating their starts in recent years makes it unlikely Kochetkov will get the 50-ish starts and 35 to 40 wins needed to make a case for the Vezina.

Vezina Trophy chances: Possible to unlikely.

Norris Trophy

Jacob Slavin has received Norris Trophy votes in nine straight seasons but has already missed 18 games this season (and counting). And this won't be the season that voters pick the league's best defensive defenseman as the NHL's top defenseman.

There's also the matter of Cale Makar, who is not only making a case for his third Norris but is on track to get Hart Trophy consideration.

But hear me out: Shayne Gostisbehere.



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Is the suggestion a pipe dream? Yes, but let's look back at 2022-23. When Erik Karlsson ran away with the voting after that season, many acknowledged his defensive shortcomings but said a 100-point defenseman could not be denied the Norris.

Gostisbehere has dug himself a hole due to two injuries that cost him eight games, but consider this: He has 13 points in 11 games, and two of them have been on the power play. If Gostisbehere can stay healthy and somehow remain a point-per-game player outside the power play, that would give him 74 points. Tack on his two power-play points, and he's up to 76.

Consider also that Gostisbehere finished last season with 23 power-play points on the league's 25th-ranked power play. The Hurricanes' power play has been even worse this season (tied for last), but should Carolina figure it out, there's a chance Gostisbehere will push for 20-something points with the man advantage.

This is an everything-goes-right situation — and probably would also mean that Makar either drastically drops off or gets injured — but it's one worth floating given the Karlsson precedent. If Gostisbehere somehow found his way to 100 points, it would be one of the most surprising seasons in a long time.

Norris Trophy chances: Unlikely to slim

Selke Trophy

Carolina is regarded as one of the best defensive teams, and while the team's goals against are in the low 20s in the league, the Hurricanes are still in the top 10 in shot suppression.

They have three players who regularly get Selke votes: Jordan Staal, Jarvis and Aho.

Staal finished 11th in voting last season after being the runner-up the season before. The long-term injury to Florida's Aleksander Barkov opens the door for Staal again. The biggest knock on Staal's candidacy has always been that he doesn't produce enough points, but through 20 games, he's trending toward a 20-goal season, which would be his first in more than a decade.

His underlying numbers while drawing the toughest defensive assignments most nights remain sparkling, even at age 37, and he's still one of the league's best faceoff men.

The other problem for Staal is Carolina's penalty kill. The barrage of injuries to the defense — including being without Slavin most of the season — has the Hurricanes hovering around the middle of the league on the PK after being near the top in every year of the Brind'Amour era. I'd still expect the penalty kill to finish near the top of the league when all is said and done, and that will erase one argument against giving Staal the long-deserved award.

Staal could also see some vote splitting, should Jarvis and Aho land on plenty of ballots. Jarvis finished 12th, just behind Staal, in last year's voting, and Aho was 20th and has received votes in each of the previous five seasons.

Jarvis certainly has the offense box checked, so if he continues to be a threat short-handed and Carolina's PK moves back up the league rankings, he will get plenty of consideration. Aho will get some votes as well, and the Hurricanes may collectively have enough votes to win the Selke this season, but no player will get the award.

Selke Trophy chances: Possible

Calder Trophy

The Hurricanes have already played five rookies this season — only the New York Rangers and Chicago Blackhawks, with six, have used more — but none has been as impactful as Alexander Nikishin.

Nikishin has logged just under 20 minutes per game, behind only the New York Islanders' Matthew Schaeffer among rookies, and he's been handed a bigger role because of Carolina's blue-line injuries. While Schaeffer and Montreal's Ivan Demidov lead the rookies in scoring, Nikishin's eight even-strength points match Schaeffer and are one behind Demidov, a forward.

Anaheim's Beckett Sennecke and Montreal's Oliver Kapanen are also off to good starts, but Nikishin's impact is perhaps only rivaled by Schaeffer and Demidov among skaters.

Nikishin is in the top five in the entire league in plus/minus at plus-14 and ranks sixth in hits among NHL defensemen, and he's also playing more than 100 seconds per game on the PK.

Carolina doesn't want to overload Nikishin too early in his career, which is why he's been used sparingly on the power play. He already has one of the league's heaviest shots, so once the Hurricanes' defense gets healthy and he's given more opportunity on the PP, he probably will start scoring more frequently.

As for his Calder odds this season, Schaeffer is the front-runner due to his goals and points as an 18-year-old, but Nikishin's game is understandably more complete given his KHL experience. If Schaeffer, like Lane Hutson a year ago, continues to pile up points, he'll be tough to beat, but Nikishin is definitely in this race.

Calder Trophy chances: Finalist, and maybe more, within reach

Lady Byng Trophy

I'm on the record that Slavin should win this award every year. No player better exemplifies gentlemanly play, both in his ability to stay out of the penalty box despite playing the opposition's best every night and in the respect he shows foes and officials between the whistles and after.

Missing at least a quarter of the season will hurt his odds, and some voters seem set on not voting for him for some reason. Even if Slavin only plays half the season, he deserves votes, but he may be hard-pressed to get his third Lady Byng and match Red Kelly for the most by a defenseman.

Jarvis is also a dark-horse candidate.

Lady Byng Trophy chances: Possible



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Recap: 'Flat' Canes Fall In Buffalo

By: Peter Dewar & Walt Ruff

BUFFALO, N.Y. - The Carolina Hurricanes closed out a four-game road trip with a 4-1 loss to the Buffalo Sabres at KeyBank Center on Sunday.

In a first period marred by penalties, each side traded power-play goals en route to a 1-1 tie after 20 minutes. Alex Tuch opened the scoring at 5:51, but Shayne Gostisbehere had an answer for Carolina just under 10 minutes later, taking advantage of a rebound and a wide-open net as Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen was preoccupied with traffic at the side of the net.

After the special teams show, however, two even-strength goals in the second period gave the Sabres substantial separation in the tight-checking tilt. A more Hurricanes-like showing ensued in the third - Carolina outshot Buffalo 13-4 and controlled play in the offensive zone for the majority of the frame - but the visitors couldn't find the goal they needed to spark a comeback, and a late empty-netter sealed Buffalo's victory.

Frederik Andersen finished with 17 saves on 20 shots in his 12th appearance of the season.

CAR at BUF | Recap

Stats & Standouts

Forward Andrei Svechnikov skated in his 500th NHL game on Sunday. With 376 career points, the 25-year-old boasts the fourth-highest point total through 500 games among players who began their career with the Hurricanes franchise, trailing Ron Francis (569), Sebastian Aho (456) and Eric Staal (452).

Defenseman Shayne Gostisbehere scored on the power play, recording his fifth game with a point in his last seven outings (1G, 6A). With his goal, Carolina has struck on the power play in back-to-back games for the second time this season.

Captain Jordan Staal did not play today due to illness.

Back-to-back games with a power play goal for the club.

That's a praiseworthy effort from Seth Jarvis, not just for getting the initial chance while falling, but also for going from his backside to jumping out of the way a second later.
pic.twitter.com/ZzXRlrHR3e

— Walt Ruff (@WaltRuff) November 23, 2025

They Said It...

Rod Brind'Amour after the contest...

"I'll try to keep it PG here... not very good. It was one of those afternoons where you could feel right from the start that we were just flat. We've got guys, who, and no excuses, it's part of the schedule of a long road trip, are fighting the flu bug a little bit here. The energy was just so dead, and we played like it."

Shayne Gostisbehere expressing similar thoughts...

"It's tough when you come out a little flat and give them some goals. It was a pretty rough second (period) for us, but we came out for the third to give it a push. It was kind of a wasted effort in the sense that we need to do that from the start, not just in the third. (We've got to) stop putting ourselves in a hole and giving them some easy ones... Not the best ending (to the road trip). We obviously want to have our best every night and obviously we didn't have it. It kind of felt like we were just trying to get home. Roddy's been saying that it was kind of a wasted effort in our sense. We might as well show up if we're going to be there. It's a hard league and they're playing good hockey over there."

Rod Brind'Amour on finally putting a bow on the week-long road trip...

"Today was what was ahead of us, and we didn't answer the bell, so that's frustrating. But yeah, we did play some good hockey on this trip, for sure. Now, we've got to regroup."

Projected Lineup: November 23 at Buffalo

By: Peter Dewar & Walt Ruff

BUFFALO, N.Y. - The Carolina Hurricanes will aim to stretch their point streak (3-0-2) to six games as they take on the Buffalo Sabres in a matinee matchup at KeyBank Center.

Coming off a sturdy 4-3 win in Winnipeg on Friday, the Canes are expected to roll out largely the same lineup that toppled the Jets two nights ago. The only question mark remains on defense - now with seven healthy bodies in the mix, who gets the night off? Alexander Nikishin was the odd



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man out on Friday, but the 24-year-old is healthy and is an option for Rod Brind'Amour should he elect to rotate his blue line corps.

Brind'Amour did not confirm tonight's starting netminder in his pregame availability. Pyotr Kochetkov was scheduled to start on Friday in Winnipeg, but after "not feeling right" at morning skate, the Canes turned to Brandon Bussi for the eventual win over the Jets.

With Bussi moving to 5-1 through his first NHL starts, that means that this afternoon will likely feature either Frederik Andersen or Kochetkov between the pipes. Andersen's last appearance was on Wednesday in Minnesota, a shootout loss. Kochetkov was spectacular on Monday in Boston, coming within 10 seconds of his second shutout in four starts.

Tonight's Projected Lineup...

Forwards

Svechnikov - Aho - Jarvis

Ehlers - Stankoven - Blake

Carrier - Staal - Martinook

Hall - Jankowski - Robinson

Preview: November 23 at Buffalo

By: Walt Ruff & Peter Dewar

Canes arrive 7-1-2 in their last 10 games

BUFFALO, N.Y. - The Carolina Hurricanes close out a four-game road trip on Sunday, facing the Buffalo Sabres at KeyBank Center.

When: Sunday, Nov. 23

Puck Drop: 1:00 p.m. ET

Watch: FanDuel Sports Network South, FanDuel Sports Network App, NHL Network | [Learn More](#)

Listen: 99.9 The Fan, Hurricanes App

Canes Record: 14-5-2 (30 Points, 1st - Metropolitan Division)

Canes Last Game: 4-3 Win over the Winnipeg Jets on Friday, Nov. 21

Sabres Record: 8-9-4 (20 Points, 8th - Atlantic Division)

Sabres Last Game: 9-3 Win over the Chicago Blackhawks on Friday, Nov. 21

Last Time Out...

Jordan Staal scored twice, Seth Jarvis struck shorthanded, and an Andrei Svechnikov third-period power play goal led the Canes to a 4-3 win in Winnipeg on Friday night.

Defense

Gostisbehere - Walker

Miller - Chatfield

Nikishin/Reilly - Nystrom

Starting Goaltender

TBD

Injuries

Jesper Kotkaniemi (Ankle Injury | No Timetable For Return)

Charles Alexis Legault (Hand Injury | Out 3-4 Months From Nov. 11)

Jacob Slavin (Lower-Body Injury | "Out For A While" as of Oct. 14)

Scratches

TBD

PP1: Aho, Ehlers, Jarvis, and Svechnikov with Gostisbehere

PP2: Blake, Hall, and Stankoven with Miller and Walker

Nikolaj Ehlers had an assist in his first game against the Jets since signing with Carolina, and Jalen Chatfield returned to the lineup after missing seven games with a concussion.

Brandon Bussi made 24 saves, improving to 5-1 through his first six NHL starts.

500 For Svech...

Forward Andrei Svechnikov is set to skate in his 500th NHL game this afternoon. Picked second overall in the 2018 draft, his selection was the first in the era of Tom Dundon as Hurricanes owner and serves as a moment some point to when things began to change for the organization. The team went into the draft lottery with the 11th-best odds to pick first overall, and had just a 9.8% chance to move into the top three, but the ping pong balls were in their favor, allowing them to take the Russian forward after the Sabres had picked Rasmus Dahlin.

Svechnikov will become just the third player from the draft class to reach the milestone, joining the aforementioned Dahlin (527) and Brady Tkachuk (515). His 159 goals rank second in the group, trailing only Tkachuk, and his 377 points sit fourth, behind Quinn Hughes (429) and Tkachuk (407).

He also owns the fourth-highest point total in franchise history prior to his 500th career game, behind Ron Francis (568), Sebastian Aho (456), and Eric Staal (451).

In Net...

Pyotr Kochetkov was scheduled to start on Friday in Winnipeg, but after "not feeling right" at morning skate, the Canes turned to Brandon Bussi for the eventual win over the



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Jets. With Bussi moving to 5-1 through his first NHL starts, that means that this afternoon will likely feature either Frederik Andersen or Kochetkov between the pipes.

Andersen's last appearance was on Wednesday in Minnesota, a shootout loss. Kochetkov was spectacular on Monday in Boston, coming within 10 seconds of his second shutout in four starts.

On The Other Side...

Winners of three of their last four, the Sabres made a statement on Friday night, scoring nine against the Blackhawks. A welcome performance for a team that has struggled to start the season, forward Alex Tuch led the way with four assists.

Some of Buffalo's biggest struggles thus far have come in the faceoff dot, checking in at a league-low 43.3% win rate. They also allow an average of 31.5 shots per game, tied for the most in the NHL.

But at the end of the day, the Sabres still have high-end talent at the top of their lineup, led by Tage Thompson. His 82 shots this season rank sixth among all NHL skaters, and he paces the roster with 20 points in 21 games.

Injury Updates...

Forward Jesperi Kotkaniemi left the game on Nov. 14 with a lower-body concern. Rod Brind'Amour said on Nov. 15 that the injury is not considered long-term.

Defenseman Charles Alexis Legault suffered a cut to his hand via a skate blade on Nov. 9 and underwent surgery to repair lacerated tendons on Nov. 10. He is expected to miss three to four months.

Defenseman Jaccob Slavin (lower-body injury) will be "out for a while," as of Oct. 14. He was placed on IR on Oct. 21 and, as of Oct. 27, was "still a ways away" from returning.

Recap: Staal Strikes Twice As Canes Ground Jets

By: Peter Dewar & Walt Ruff

WINNIPEG, Man. - A two-goal night for the captain helped propel the Carolina Hurricanes back into the win column with a 4-3 victory over the Winnipeg Jets at Canada Life Centre. The Canes have now recorded a point in five straight games (3-0-2).

After a slow start hampered them in Minnesota on Wednesday, the Canes needed just 16 seconds to get on the board on Friday, as Jordan Staal snapped a shot past Eric Comrie to open the scoring. Despite Carolina taking early control, though, the Jets were able to answer with a pair of goals separated by just under six minutes to exit the first period up by one.

Undeterred, Carolina responded with two more tallies of its own in the middle frame. Staal's second of the night evened things up at 3:08, deflecting home Jalen Chatfield's shot-pass and giving No. 5 an assist in his first game back from injury. Winnipeg product Seth Jarvis then lifted the Hurricanes to their second lead of the night three minutes later, once again converting defense to offense while shorthanded alongside Sebastian Aho, whose breakaway bid left a loose puck in front for Jarvis to put home.

With momentum and a new lead in hand, Carolina stretched its advantage to two 3:19 into the third as former Jet Nikolaj Ehlers fired a perfect seam pass to Andrei Svechnikov for a one-time blast and a power-play goal. Winnipeg cut the lead to one just over a minute later, but came no closer as the Canes closed out the win.

Brandon Bussi picked up his fifth win in six career starts with 24 saves on 27 shots.

Stats & Standouts

Forward Jordan Staal scored 16 seconds into Friday's contest, matching the third-fastest goal to start a road game in Hurricanes team history (since relocation). Staal also owns the record for scoring in that scenario with his marker 12 seconds into Carolina's win over LA on Oct. 18 of this year.

With those two tucks, Staal is just the second player in franchise history to score a goal within the opening 20 seconds of a game multiple times in a season. The only other player to do so is Hartford's Doug Sulliman in 1982-83.

Forward Nikolaj Ehlers tallied an assist, cementing his eighth outing with a point in his last nine games. Since posting his first point on Oct. 20, Ehlers' 14 points in 16 games are tied with Sebastian Aho for the most among Hurricanes in that span.

Forward Seth Jarvis scored the 10th shorthanded goal of his career, becoming the fifth player in franchise history to reach that benchmark alongside Sebastian Aho (20), Eric Staal (16), Dave Tippett (11) and Rod Brind'Amour (10).

Forward Sebastian Aho notched two assists for his team-leading fifth multi-point performance of the season. Aho leads the team with 21 points (8G, 13A) in 21 games on the year.

Defenseman K'Andre Miller also logged a pair of helpers for his fourth multi-point outing in just 15 games as a Hurricane, trailing only Aho in that category.

Defenseman Jalen Chatfield skated in his first game since sustaining an injury on Nov. 6 against Minnesota. Chatfield logged 21:34 and recorded an assist after missing the last seven games.

The Hurricanes are the first Eastern Conference team to reach 30 points in 2025-26. Their 14 wins are tied for the third-most in franchise history through the first 21 games of a season, trailing only the 15 achieved in 2021-22 and 2024-25.

They Said It...

Rod Brind'Amour on the victory...

"I liked the game. I thought we were good all night. Obviously, we had a couple of gaffes - one was a bad line change, one was kind of a weird turnover that ends up in your net - but other than that, I thought we were pretty solid



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all night. We had a couple of big plays, Jordo keeps leading the way. That line, especially, (was great). Overall, I thought it was a great effort from all 20 guys."

Jordan Staal after the win...

"Everyone chipped in in all the aspects. Power play with a massive goal, PK was great, Bussi played good, D-core was solid, and we had goals throughout the lineup. It was a full team effort, and we need everyone if we want to win against teams like that. I thought everyone played really well."

Rod Brind'Amour following Jordan Staal's second multi-goal game of the season...

"With him, he could score every night. If you watch him, he gets opportunities every night like that. You know how it goes, sometimes they go in, sometimes they don't. But he's always around it. Tonight, the first one was a great goal. Normally, you see him get more like the other ones, a tip in front, or some sort of goal around the net, but he was obviously our best player tonight."

Andrei Svechnikov discussing Nikolaj Ehlers, who had the primary assist on his third-period game-winner...

"(He's) one of the best passers in the league. You've just always kind of got to expect it and get open. He's always going to find you."

Projected Lineup: November 21 at Winnipeg

By: Walt Ruff & Peter Dewar

WINNIPEG, Man. - The Carolina Hurricanes are hoping to have Jalen Chatfield back in their lineup on Friday when they take on the Winnipeg Jets.

Sidelined since taking a hit to the head on Nov. 6, the defenseman has missed seven games after playing in each of the club's first 13. This morning, he was back alongside K'Andre Miller, occupying the same spot he was in before having to come out,

If Chatfield plays, it has not yet been determined who would come out of the lineup to make room.

Behind the cast of skaters, Brandon Bussi will make his first start since Nov. 9. Collecting four wins in his first five NHL starts, the Canes have had to manage a three-goalie rotation as of late, but after five games, the rookie is set to take his turn once again.

Tonight's Projected Lineup...

Forwards

Svechnikov - Aho - Jarvis

Ehlers - Stankoven - Blake

Carrier - Staal - Martinook

Hall - Jankowski - Robinson

Brandon Bussi on settling into the game after Winnipeg's two-goal first period...

"Just move on to the next shot. They're good players and they're going to make good plays. I honestly just trust what I do well in games. I felt good. I felt like I was going to make the next save, and it felt good to help out in whatever way I could."

Rod Brind'Amour when asked about Brandon Bussi's night...

"He didn't have a lot of work in the first two periods. A couple of weird bounces that there was nothing he could do about (on Winnipeg's first two goals). You're going to need some saves, that's just how it's going to happen. They put their little push on at the end, two or three Grade A opportunities on their best players' stick, that's when you need a goalie to make a difference, and he did."

Jordan Staal as the team moves on to Buffalo to close out the road trip...

"It's a mental grind, especially the last game of the road trip. You're just kind of itching to get home. It's about being a professional... and showing up ready to work. I think the boys will be ready in Buffalo."

Defense

Gostisbehere - Walker

Miller - Chatfield

Nikishin/Reilly - Nystrom

Starting Goaltender

Bussi

Injuries

Jalen Chatfield (Concussion | Day-To-Day)

Jesper Kotkaniemi (Ankle Injury | No Timetable For Return)

Charles Alexis Legault (Hand Injury | Out 3-4 Months From Nov. 11)

Jacob Slavin (Lower-Body Injury | "Out For A While" as of Oct. 14)

Scratches

TBD

PP1: Aho, Ehlers, Jarvis, and Svechnikov with Gostisbehere

PP2: Blake, Hall, and Stankoven with Miller and Walker



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Luukkonen makes 29 saves, Sabres defeat Hurricanes

By: Heather Engel

Thompson extends goal streak to 6; Staal misses game for Carolina with illness

BUFFALO -- Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen made 29 saves for the Buffalo Sabres in a 4-1 win against the Carolina Hurricanes at KeyBank Center on Sunday.

Luukkonen started and won for the second straight game (also a 9-3 win against the Chicago Blackhawks on Friday) after making just one appearance in Buffalo's previous six games.

"When your name gets called you have to be ready for it," Luukkonen said. "I think the team has been playing well in front of me, so it feels good to kind of help the team win, too.

"It's not always optimal [to wait for a start], but sometimes you have to work through it, and we've been having two other goalies that have been playing well, so you have to do your thing every day as well as you can and be ready when your name is called."

Tage Thompson extended his goal streak to six games, and Ryan McLeod had two assists for the Sabres (9-9-4), who have won four of their past five.

"It's going to be hard games. This has to be our minimum," Buffalo captain Rasmus Dahlin said. "This is how we have to play every night. It's competing, it's skating, it's doing the little things right, work for the team. That's got to be our bare minimum. Then we can improve some other things."

Shayne Gostisbehere scored, and Frederik Andersen made 17 saves for the Hurricanes (14-6-2), who had their five-game point streak end (3-0-2).

Carolina played without captain Jordan Staal because of an illness.

"I'll try to keep it PG here, not very good," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "I could feel right from the start we were just flat. No excuses, part of that schedule, long road trip, fighting the flu bug a little here. The energy was just so dead, and we played like it."

Alex Tuch gave Buffalo a 1-0 lead on a power play at 5:51 of the first period. He was uncovered at the back door and

received a pass from McLeod through the slot, which he buried into a wide-open net.

Gostisbehere's power-play goal tied it 1-1 at 14:36. With a scramble at the crease and Luukkonen out of position, Mattias Samuelsson's clearing attempt went to Gostisbehere, who scored from the left face-off circle.

"Just executing, getting pucks to the net, and good things will happen," Gostisbehere said.

Jack Quinn put the Sabres ahead 2-1 at 3:55 of the second period when he took a pass from McLeod at the front of the net and directed it under the crossbar.

Beck Malenstyn pushed the lead to 3-1 with a highlight-reel individual effort at 18:36. He took a backhand feed from Tyson Kozak, then deked and jumped around Hurricanes center Sebastian Aho before putting a wrist shot under Andersen's arm.

"I don't think it's successfully worked for me for about 10 years since juniors, so I've kept it in the back pocket just in case," a laughing Malenstyn said.

Thompson scored for an NHL career-high sixth straight game with an empty-net goal at 19:38 of the third period for the 4-1 final. He has 12 goals in 22 games.

"I thought tonight [Luukkonen] really played great," Buffalo coach Lindy Ruff said. "That second and third [periods], couple big opportunities. First, I thought we could've put the game away in the second period with all the opportunities we had. We didn't. We kind of let them hang around. But I thought when we gave up some good looks -- and they're a good team -- he made the save that we needed."

The Hurricanes outshot the Sabres 13-4 in the third period.

"It was a pretty rough second for us, but come the third, give it a push, kind of a wasted effort in the sense that we need to do that from the start, not just in the third," Gostisbehere said. "Just stop putting ourselves in a hole, giving them some easy ones."

NOTES: Andrei Svechnikov played in his 500th NHL game. The forward had five shots on goal in 19:35 of ice time. ... Buffalo forward Zach Benson played 16:56 and had an assist in his return to the lineup after missing 10 games with a lower-body injury.



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AP ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beck Malenstyn's spectacular goal helps Sabres beat East-leading Hurricanes 4-1

By: JOE YERDON

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Beck Malenstyn scored a spectacular goal, Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen made 28 saves and the Buffalo Sabres beat the Eastern Conference-leading Carolina Hurricanes 4-1 on Sunday.

Malenstyn took a touch pass from Tyson Kozak, made a sweet move to his right to slip past Sebastian Aho and easily beat Frederik Andersen to make it 3-1 with 1:24 left in the second period.

Alex Tuch, Jack Quinn and Tage Thompson also scored for the Sabres, who have won four of five. Ryan McLeod had two assists, and Luukkonen got his second straight victory.

Shayne Gostisbehere scored and Andersen made 17 saves for the Hurricanes, who lost in regulation for the first time since Nov. 11.

Tuch opened the scoring on the power play in the first period. Gostisbehere made it 1-1 later in the first, also on the power play.

Quinn gave the Sabres a 2-1 lead early in the second. Thompson's empty-netter extended his goal streak to six games.

Hurricanes captain Jordan Staal missed the game because of illness.

Jordan Staal scores twice in Hurricanes' 4-3 victory over Jets | AP News

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP) — Jordan Staal scored twice and the Carolina Hurricanes beat Winnipeg 4-3 on Friday night in the Jets' first game since learning star goalie Connor Hellebuyck will be sidelined four to six weeks.

Hellebuyck will have arthroscopic surgery for a knee problem dating to training camp. Eric Comrie made 24 saves against the Hurricanes.

Seth Jarvis scored short-handed for Carolina and Andrei Svechnikov added a goal. Backup goalie Brandon Bussi stopped 24 shots. The Hurricanes are 3-0-2 in their last five games, scoring three or more goals in each game.

Gabriel Vilardi scored twice and defenseman Josh Morrissey added a goal for Winnipeg, extending his points streak to seven games.

Staal scored 16 seconds into the game, making a move to get around defenseman Dylan Samberg and firing the puck past Comrie on the stick side.

Morrissey tied it at 3:45, followed by Vilardi's power-play marker at 9:28 after a Carolina turnover.

Staal notched his second of the game when he got his stick on Jalen Chatfield's point shot at 3:08 of the second. Jarvis scored his 11th goal the season at 6:31.

Svechnikov stretched the lead to 4-2 three minutes into the third and Vilardi made it a one-goal game 54 seconds later.

The Jets played a video tribute in the first period for Carolina forward Nikolaj Ehlers, who played 674 games for Winnipeg before signing with the Hurricanes in the off-season.

Ehlers sent a no-look pass across the front of the net for Svechnikov, who beat Comrie at 3:19 of the third for a 4-2 cushion.



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SPORTSNET™

Hurricanes defeat Hellebuyck-less Jets on night of Ehlers' return to Winnipeg

By: Canadian Press

When Eric Comrie got scored on 16 seconds into Friday's game against the Carolina Hurricanes, Jets head coach Scott Arniel wasn't upset.

Comrie was replacing star netminder Connor Hellebuyck, whom the team said Friday was undergoing arthroscopic surgery for a knee problem dating back to training camp. He's expected to be out four to six weeks.

The former backup made 24 saves in the 4-3 loss to the Hurricanes.

"Obviously, we got caught right off the bat there on a transition play," Arniel said. "Yeah, I felt for him right away but then he settled in.

"He made some big stops in the first there and then on the penalty kill he had to make a couple of really big stops."

Gabriel Vilardi scored twice and defenceman Josh Morrissey added a goal for Winnipeg (12-8-0), extending his point streak to seven games with four goals and seven assists.

Jordan Staal had a pair of goals and Seth Jarvis scored shorthanded for Carolina (14-5-2). K'Andre Miller and Sebastian Aho each contributed a pair of assists and backup netminder Brandon Bussi stopped 24 shots.

Arniel said Comrie was "rock solid" and "his consistent self" despite the errors made in front of him.

"It's not a situation where we ask (Comrie) to stop 40 (shots)," Arniel said. "We need to play better in front of him. A couple of mistakes we made are things that we need to clean up for him."

Staal scored 16 seconds into the game, making a move to get around Jets defencemen Dylan Samberg and firing the puck past Comrie on the stick side.

Winnipeg defenceman Dylan DeMelo later batted a puck out of the air after it hit Comrie's pad in the opening frame.

What did Comrie say to him?

"He was saying, 'Nice save.' I was saying, 'It's the least I can do for all the times you've saved my back,'" DeMelo said. "Yeah, desperation play and I was lucky to hit it pretty flush."

Comrie is now 4-2-0 this season. He's being backed up by Thomas Milic.

The team wants to play well in front of all its goalies, but Comrie is a special teammate, DeMelo said.

"On and off the ice, he's one of our, if not our hardest worker on our team..." DeMelo said.

"A charismatic guy, fun energy, so when he's in the pipes we want to play hard obviously for all our goalies, but when he's in the net he just brings so much energy to this group and he's such a vital part of it."

Since Winnipeg's defence wanted to help Comrie out, Morrissey provided the first goal at 3:44 of the opening period to tie it up. Vilardi's power-play marker at 9:28 came after a Carolina turnover.

Vilardi said the team's drive doesn't change with Comrie in net.

"(Comrie) comes out with the same mindset every day, so we come out with the same mindset every day," Vilardi said. "He's playing more now, obviously, but he's up for that challenge."

Staal notched his second of the game when he got his stick on Jalen Chatfield's point shot at 3:08 of the second period.

Jarvis scored his 11th goal of the season at 6:31, and Svechnikov stretched the lead to 4-2 three minutes into the third. Vilardi made it a one-goal game 54 seconds later.

Miller was called for high-sticking Vilardi with 52 seconds left in the game, and Comrie was pulled for the extra attacker, but no equalizer was scored.

"We're a group that we're going to play right down to the whistle," DeMelo said. "Six-on-four, you can't ask for more."

HELLO OLD FRIEND

The Jets played a video tribute in the first period for Carolina forward Nikolaj Ehlers, who played 674 games for Winnipeg before signing with the Hurricanes in the off-season.

Ehlers skated away from the Carolina bench and clapped his gloves for the cheering second sellout crowd of the season at Canada Life Centre.

He later assisted on Svechnikov's goal after sending him a no-look pass across the front of the net.

"(He's) one of the best passers in this league," Svechnikov said. "You've just kind of always have to expect it and get open, and he'll always find you."



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Today's top games to watch, best bets, odds: Pivotal ACC football showdown, NBA and more

By: Josh Nagel

Florida State and NC State both started their respective football seasons with lofty expectations. Now, they are fighting just to receive a bowl bid, but one of them will be guaranteed this modest milestone when the clubs meet Friday night. Kickoff is set for 8 p.m. ET from Carter-Finley Stadium in the nationally televised contest.

The Seminoles (5-5) dominated Week 1 headlines following their 31-17 upset of Alabama as two-touchdown underdogs. The victory soothed memories of their miserable two-win campaign a year ago and sparked hopes of a potential run to the ACC title and a playoff berth. However, that opening-week victory remains the highlight of their season. A double-overtime loss to Virginia launched a four-game skid that rock-bottomed into a 20-13 loss to downtrodden Stanford as a nearly three-touchdown favorite. The Seminoles have managed to win two of their past three but still sit behind the Cardinal in the ACC standings.

Conversely, the Wolfpack (5-5) emerged as an early-season ACC dark horse behind victories over East Carolina, Virginia and Wake Forest. Those wins aged well, considering those three clubs now have a combined record of 23-8. But NC State's season hasn't progressed the same way as its fallen opponents. The Wolfpack have lost three of their past four games by an average of nearly 29 points per contents and are coming off a 41-7 drubbing at the hands of Miami.

Even so, their lone victory in that span came in a 48-36 upset of previously undefeated Georgia Tech in which they racked up 583 yards of total offense. The performance served as a reminder of this team's impressive ceiling, though its floor is equal parts confounding.

The Seminoles are 6.5-point favorites and the over/under for total points scored is 59.5 in the latest college football odds for Florida State vs. NC State.

In addition to the CFB contest, we'll preview NBA and NHL matchups. The following is a snapshot of what to watch for Friday, Nov. 21. All times Eastern.

CFB best bets today, where to watch

Florida State at NC State

Time: 8 p.m. | Location: Raleigh, NC | TV: ESPN | Stream: Fubo (Try for free)

SportsLine picks -- Model: Under 59.5 points

The SportsLine Projection model offers a strong play on the Under in this matchup, a position that could be considered contrarian given the profiles of these clubs. The Wolfpack

and Seminoles average more than 66 points per game combined and are averaging 45 points per game across their last four combined victories. Even so, the model's 10,000-game simulation is projecting an average final score of 30-25 in favor of Florida State. This data results in a slight lean toward the home underdog with the points but a strong play on the Under 59.5 points. The model sees the Under hitting 61% of the time, a stark contrast to the implied sportsbook odds of 52%.

More CFB best bets

CFB expert Bruce Marshall's top Week 13 CFB plays

NHL best bets today, where to watch

Hurricanes at Jets

Time: 8 p.m. | Location: Winnipeg | TV: ESPN+ | Stream: Fubo (Try for free)

SportsLine picks -- Model: Jets +127

Following an offensive funk in which they scored just two goals combined in three games, all losses, the Jets have bounced back with a recent offensive surge. They have scored 17 goals across their last four contests, and the SportsLine Projection Model sees them keeping up the production Friday night. The Hurricanes are 7-3-1 away from their home ice but are coming off a 4-3 loss to Minnesota in the second of a four-game road swing. The model sees the Jets winning outright 63% of the time, suggesting it believes the wrong team is favored. The lucrative plus-money payout for the home underdog has prompted a rare A-rated model selection on Winnipeg.

NBA best bets today, where to watch

Nuggets at Rockets

Time: 9:30 p.m. | Location: Houston | TV: Prime Video | Stream: Fubo (Try for free)

SportsLine picks -- Model: Over 234.5 points

The Rockets are slight favorites to win their sixth consecutive game in this showdown of Western Conference stalwarts that are both off to a sizzling start. The Nuggets have won eight of their past nine and have scored at least 122 in each of their past five outings. Both clubs are in the top six in the NBA in scoring defense, but the model sees their offensive prowess prevailing in this matchup. The model's 10,000-game simulation is projecting an average of 241 points, sending this contest Over the total about 58% of the time. Stephen Oh, the man behind the SportsLine ProjectionModel, is targeting Aaron Gordon's assists prop line of 1.5, seeing value on this line.



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SB NATION
CANES COUNTRY

Canes Fall 4-1 in Buffalo

By: Evan Davis

A 1:00 PM start, no Jordan Staal, and an adjusted 11/7 lineup were not a recipe for success Sunday afternoon.

The Carolina Hurricanes fell to Buffalo 4-1 to close out their road trip.

The Canes did not start on time and seemed to be chasing their game all afternoon. Defensive breakdowns and poor positioning were the themes of the loss. Buffalo's speed, a key factor from the game preview, was on display. The Sabres forced the Hurricanes to chase, and turnovers in the defensive and neutral zone led to chances on the rush.

Alex Tuch, one of the players to watch, scored a power play goal to give Buffalo the early lead.

It was almost a 2-0 game, but the Sabres were called for goaltender interference.

The good news from today's game is that, for the second straight game, the Canes scored a power play goal.

The passing was excellent, and the Canes capitalized on a Sabres defenseman interfering with his own goalie. Shayne Gostisbehere's unassisted tally would end up as the lone goal for Carolina.

The Hurricanes had just 18 shot attempts in the first period and went 10 minutes until their first shot on goal.

Buffalo's transition game and passing led to their second period goal. The Sabres had great puck movement, and Sean Walker was slow to cover the slot.

The Canes had a couple of great chances on their second period power play, but could not convert.

The Sabres went ahead by two with just under two to play in the second, and did so off another rush. Once he was launched into the Carolina end from a great pinch and pass in the neutral zone, Beck Malenstyn made a great individual move, sidestepping Sebastian Aho to end up one-on-one with Frederik Andersen.

Carolina had better pressure in the third but was unable to capitalize on their chances.

With just under three minutes to go, Carolina pulled Andersen. The Canes had four good chances in the minute after pulling their goalie, but the bounces did not go Carolina's way.

Head coach Rod Brind'Amour called a timeout with 35 seconds left, but just 14 seconds later, Buffalo sealed it with an empty netter.

Buffalo goaltender Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen was the best player in the third, turning away all 13 shots and 29 of 30 on the day.

The team flies home to Raleigh today and will host the New York Rangers on Wednesday.

First Period

Alex Tuch (8), PPG; R. McLeod (7), J. Doan (8)

Shayne Gostisbehere (2), PPG; Unassisted

Second Period

Jack Quinn (5); R. McLeod (8), J. Zucker (6)

Beck Malenstyn (2); T. Kozak (2), P. Krebs (6)

Third Period

Tage Thompson (12), EN; Z. Benson (9)

Carolina takes on Buffalo in a Sunday Matinee

By: Evan Davis

The Carolina Hurricanes wrap up their four-game road trip this afternoon in Buffalo. The Canes have earned points in five straight games and are looking to extend their lead atop the Eastern Conference.

The Sabres are last in the East and have struggled to find consistent play this season.

Buffalo put themselves in a hole to start the season with a three-game losing streak. The Sabres put together a seven-game points streak to get above the .500 mark by the beginning of November.

A four-game losing streak followed that, and once again, Buffalo is behind all the teams in the East. One of those losses during that skid was a 6-3 Carolina win in Raleigh.



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The Sabres have won three of the last four and had an offensive explosion Friday night against Chicago. Buffalo won 9-3, matching the highest goal total in the NHL this season.

Today's matinee features a clash of styles between Carolina's structured system and Buffalo's rush offense.

According to NHL Edge tracking data for the 2025-26 season, the Sabres rank in the top 15 league-wide for "Speed Bursts over 20 mph" and "22+ mph bursts." This team speed is important to keep in mind when the Carolina defenders pinch at the blue line. The Canes must ensure they have the coverage to limit odd-man rushes.

All eyes are on Alex Tuch and Tage Thompson. These players lead the Sabres with 20 points each. Tuch fuels the rush offense while Thompson is the finisher.

BUFFALO, NEW YORK - NOVEMBER 17: Tage Thompson #72 of the Buffalo Sabres celebrates after scoring an empty net goal during the third period of the NHL game against the Edmonton Oilers at KeyBank Center on November 17, 2025 in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo won, 5-1. (Photo by Joe Hrycyk/Getty Images)

If Tuch cheats high in the defensive zone and creates a gap, trailers like Thompson, Josh Doan, or JJ Peterka can fill the high slot. If a turnover is created, the Sabres are off to the races.

Thompson, Buffalo's leading goal scorer, has to be the focus of Carolina's defense. Thompson is on a five-game goal streak, and does it a few ways. He is fast, physical, and creates a lot of chances for himself and others. Thompson transitions the puck like a winger despite playing center. According to NHL Edge data, Thompson ranks in the 90th percentile for speed bursts over 20 mph this season.

Thompson ranks seventh in the NHL in shots, and a lot of those have come off the rush. Because he enters the zone with so much speed, Thompson often stops up or curls just inside the blue line at the top of the circles. He can also stretch the defense due to his success around the circles.

A massive contradiction defines the Sabres' defense: they have the league's best penalty kill, yet they are one of the worst teams at preventing goals at five-on-five.

Buffalo's goaltenders have been their best penalty killers. Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen, Alex Lyon, and Colten Ellis have combined for a .952 save percentage on the kill.

However, Buffalo has allowed 52 five-on-five goals this season, fourth worst in the league.

Buffalo ranks 21st in suppressing High-Danger Chances Against (HDCA), and the defensive heatmap shows that vulnerability in the mid-range slot.

Despite his offensive capabilities, captain Rasmus Dahlin has struggled on the defensive end. His Expected Goals For Percentage (xGF%) at five-on-five is at 44.7 percent, which is not what a team needs for a top-pair defenseman.

DETROIT, MICHIGAN - NOVEMBER 15: Rasmus Dahlin #26 of the Buffalo Sabres shoots the puck against the Detroit Red Wings during the second period at Little Caesars Arena on November 15, 2025 in Detroit, Michigan. (Photo by Dave Reginek/NHLI via Getty Images)

Dahlin, Owen Power, and Bowen Byram are elite skaters that aggressively close gaps. However, when they miss or get caught chasing, they leave the high slot wide open.

Look for the Hurricanes to work the puck low to high, and hopefully the forwards can slip behind the defense into that soft middle.

Carolina wins by turning the game into a half-court grind, pinning Buffalo deep, and pummeling the slot until the Sabres' defense breaks down.

Sabres projected lineup

Josh Doan -- Tage Thompson -- Alex Tuch

Jason Zucker -- Ryan McLeod -- Jack Quinn

Isak Rosen -- Tyson Kozak -- Noah Ostlund

Jordan Greenway -- Peyton Krebs -- Beck Malenstyn

Mattias Samuelsson -- Rasmus Dahlin

Bowen Byram -- Conor Timmins

Jacob Bryson -- Owen Power

Colten Ellis

Alex Lyon

Scratched: Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen, Josh Dunne, Zach Metsa

Injured: Michael Kesselring (lower body), Jiri Kulich (blood clot), Zach Benson (lower body), Justin Danforth (lower body), Josh Norris (upper body)

Andrei Svechnikov was a major story last night on the NHL wire. Hockey Night in Canada reported that he was open to trade during his early-season struggles. Those rumors may have been overblown or just seen as posturing by his camp. Svech seems to be over the hump and will skate in his 500th NHL game today.

Pyotr Kochetkov was slated to start on Friday but did not feel well enough. Expect him between the pipes this afternoon.

Sebastian Aho had a goal and an assist in the first game between these teams this season. He has 31 points in 23 career games against Buffalo.

Hurricanes projected lineup

Andrei Svechnikov -- Sebastian Aho -- Seth Jarvis

Nikolaj Ehlers -- Logan Stankoven -- Jackson Blake

William Carrier -- Jordan Staal -- Jordan Martinook

Taylor Hall -- Mark Jankowski -- Eric Robinson

Shayne Gostisbehere -- Sean Walker

K'Andre Miller -- Jalen Chatfield

Mike Reilly -- Joel Nystrom

Pyotr Kochetkov

Frederik Andersen

Scratched: Alexander Nikishin, Brandon Bussi

Injured: Jaccob Slavin (lower body), Charles Alexis Legault (hand), Jesperi Kotkaniemi (lower body)



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Here's how to check out the action:

Time: 1:00 PM ET

Location: KeyBank Center, Buffalo, NY

TV: FanDuel Sports Network with Mike Maniscalco, play-by-play; Tripp Tracy, color analyst; Shane Willis, analyst; Hannah Yates, rinkside.

Radio: 99.9 The Fan FM

Line: ML: CAR -192; PL: CAR -1.5 +130

“Ride Captain Ride” - Hurricanes 4, Jets 3

By: Bob Wage

Team Captain, Jordan Staal scored twice and Brandon Bussi held the fort in goal to lead the Carolina Hurricanes to a 4-3 win over the Winnipeg Jets on Friday night.

The win improves the team's record to 14-5-2 and keeps them at first in the Metropolitan Division and Eastern Conference.

Staal is riding a hot streak as he scored just 16 seconds into the game, the second time this season he scored on his first shift of the game.

After the Jets tied the score and then went on to take a 2-1 lead, Staal scored again three minutes into the second period on a sniped shot from the slot area.

With the score tied 2-2, Jarvis and Aho combined for another shorthanded goal to make it 3-2, Canes.

Aho sprinted ahead on a breakaway but Eric Comrie stopped the 5-hole attempt. Jarvis was there to clean it up though for his 11th goal of the season.

It was the 10th career shorthanded tally of his career.

Early in the third period, Andrei Svechnikov blasted in a one-timer off a ridiculous pass by Nikolaj Ehlers, to give the Hurricanes a much needed insurance goal and a 4-2 lead.

The powerplay goal moved the Canes to 31st in the league with the man advantage, one spot ahead of Calgary.

The Jets would score again to make it 4-3, but Bussi played very well down the stretch to earn the 5th win of his NHL career.

He improved his stats to 5-1-0 with a GAA of 2.67 and a SV% of .896.

According to the broadcast, Brind'Amour said he wanted to go with Pyotr Kochetkov in net, but the Russian said he was not feeling well.

In a surprising move to most observers, the coach scratched Alexander Nikishin for this game. Tripp Tracy said that it could just be a scratch for rest, and not for a specific negative reason.

Still, Nikishin has the best plus/minus on the team, has more points than most other blueliners, (without benefit of powerplay time), and he leads the team with 50 hits and is second in blocked shots with 28.

The coach was not asked about the benching after the game.

Next up will be an afternoon affair in Buffalo on Sunday.

Interesting video captured here where Lowry ragdolls two Canes.

Hurricanes @ Jets - Preview and Game Thread

By: Bob Wage

Nikolaj Ehlers returns to whence he came on Friday night as the Carolina Hurricanes, (13-5-2) travel to Winnipeg to take on the Jets, (12-7-0). Game time is set for 8 P.M. Eastern and the game will be back on FanDuel Sports along with homeboys, Tripp Tracy and Mike Maniscalco.

Ehlers was originally drafted by the Jets and has only played for that franchise before being signed by Carolina this offseason. Look for a nice video tribute for him.

The big news out of Winnipeg this morning is that star goaltender, Connor Hellebuyck will be out and will undergo minor knee surgery.

Expect Eric Comrie to take his place between the pipes tonight. Comrie is no slouch and is boasting a 4-1-0 record with a SV% of .908 and a GAA of 2.60.

The Jets are led by Mark Scheifele who has 11 goals and 27 points in his 19 games played this season.

Josh Morrissey is their standout on the blueline.

The former Thrashers have won two games in a row and they are 6-4-0 in their last 10 games.

The Canes are coming off an overtime loss in Minnesota. They have posted a 6-2-2 record in their last 10 and now sit at first place in the Metropolitan Division.

I would expect Pyotr Kochetkov to be in goal for Carolina tonight. Kochetkov has been hot since returning from injury and has a 4-0-0 record with a SV% of .926 and GAA of 1.70.

But I suppose there is always a chance that coach could go with Brandon Bussi.

The Canes are led by Sebastian Aho who has 8 goals and 19 points in 20 games this season.

Aho is followed closely by Seth Jarvis who has 10 goals and 17 points.

Rookie, Alexander Nikishin continues to lead the team in plus/minus with a (plus) +14.

Look for the same lines as the Hurricanes posted on Wednesday night, although this is always subject to change.



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Jarvis - Aho - Svechnikov

Blake - Stankoven - Ehlers

Martinook - Staal - Carrier

Hall - Jankowski - Robinson

There has been no official word yet from the team about the return of injured players, Jalen Chatfield and Jesperi Kotkaniemi, but Chatfield has been skating with the team and could return to action tonight.

Notes:

Score another win for Carolina's scouting staff. One of their second round picks, Charlie Cerrato, is tearing it up in the NCAA. He is currently third in the NCAA with 20 points in 14 games.

The team recently posted an update on prospects.

Finally, fans of former Carolina first round pick Haydn Fleury might be able to see him tonight. He is scoreless in 15 games for Winnipeg.



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Canes hold off Jets for 4-3 win in Winnipeg

By: Ayden Lamb

Canes forward Jordan Staal celebrates forward Teuvo Teravainen's goal 18:31 into the first period at PNC Arena on Sunday March 4. Staal also scored in in a 3-2 loss to the Winnipeg Jets Sunday.

Canes forward Jordan Staal celebrates forward Teuvo Teravainen's goal 18:31 into the first period at PNC Arena on Sunday March 4. Staal also scored in in a 3-2 loss to the Winnipeg Jets Sunday.

With the help of center Jordan Staal's two goals, the Carolina Hurricanes overcame a first-period deficit to defeat the Winnipeg Jets 4-3.

Staal opened up the game by scoring just 16 seconds into the contest. This marked Staal's second-fastest goal of the season as he scored just 12 seconds into the Canes' contest versus the Kings a month ago, making him the second player in franchise history to have two goals in under 20 seconds in the same season.

The Hurricanes (14-5-2) took advantage of the Jets' (12-8-0) new netminder after finding out star netminder, Connor Hellebuyck, would miss at least a month due to an injury dating back to training camp.

After a quick 1-0 deficit, the Jets strung together two of their own goals in the first period to take the lead, putting the Canes down 2-1.

The first came when the Jets caught the Canes changing lines, which led to defenseman Josh Morrissey capitalizing on the opportunity. The next goal was aided by a power play, along with the Canes turning the puck over in the neutral zone due to a deflected pass, allowing center Cole Perfetti to set up center Gabriel Vilardi for an easy man-advantage goal.

In the second period, the Canes took charge, finding the back of the net twice while also having a clean sheet on the other side with a shutout for the period. Staal tied the game at two apiece with his second goal of the night, a quick redirection off the pass from defenseman Jalen Chatfield in his first game back from injury.

Center Seth Jarvis scored one in the second period during a Jets power play. Center Sebastian Aho intercepted a pass, leading to a blocked shot and an open net for Jarvis.

The Hurricanes also capitalized on a power play of their own. With the numbers advantage, winger Nikolaj Ehlers — who spent 10 years with Winnipeg — sent a pass across the ice, which led to an easy goal for winger Andrei Svechnikov.

The Jets brought it back to a one-score game after another goal from Vilardi, not even a minute after Svechnikov's goal. But the Hurricanes defense took over to close out the game, securing a key road win.

Next up, the Hurricanes will head to face the Buffalo Sabers at KeyBank Center on Nov. 23. Puck drop is set for 1 p.m.



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Sports Illustrated

NHL Best Bets Today (Predictions for Wild-Penguins, Hurricanes-Jets, Bruins-Kings)

By: Ryan Gilbert

We have a four-game slate in the NHL to open up the weekend on Friday night.

The Pittsburgh Penguins are back from Sweden to host the Minnesota Wild in one of the early games, while the Boston Bruins visit the Los Angeles Kings to close things out at 10:30 p.m. ET.

My best bets for Friday night are looking at a pair of low-scoring games and the Bruins as road underdogs.

Let's get right into the best bets – and their odds at the best betting sites – for Friday, Nov. 21.

Odds via DraftKings Sportsbook

Minnesota Wild vs. Pittsburgh Penguins UNDER 5.5 (+114)

The Penguins split the Global Series with the Predators in Sweden with a combined seven goals in the two games. Pittsburgh has now gone under the total in four straight games and six of its last nine, and the Wild have been trending that way as well.

Minnesota's last game against the Hurricanes ended up going over, but there were just three goals in the first two periods and it was 3-2 until Carolina tied it in the final minutes. The Wild went under the total in their previous four games, including three with three goals or fewer.

The Penguins beat the Wild 4-1 – including an empty netter – in Minnesota last month, and I see a similarly low-scoring contest tonight.

Carolina Hurricanes vs. Winnipeg Jets UNDER 6.5 (-135)

The Jets returned from a long road trip with a 5-2 win over Columbus last time out, and Carolina played in that aforementioned overtime game against the Wild. However, while both of these teams have trended to the over this season, they're typically sides that play lower-scoring hockey.

Both the Hurricanes and Jets are usually able to limit the opposition's chances, and I'm expecting a grind-it-out battle in Winnipeg on Friday night. Reigning Hart Trophy winner Connor Hellebuyck (8-6-0, 2.51 GAA, .912 SV%) should be between the pipes for the Jets, and Pyotr Kochetkov (4-0-0, 1.70 GAA, .926 SV%) for the Hurricanes.

Boston Bruins (+160) at Los Angeles Kings

I'm going back to the Bruins as road underdogs once again on Friday night. They battled back in Anaheim before falling 4-3, and now face off against a Kings team that played in San Jose last night.

Los Angeles lost the final two games of its road trip after winning the first four, and the Kings have been awful at home this season at 1-4-2.

The Bruins haven't been great on the road at 4-6-0 compared to 8-4-0 at home, but this is just too high of a price for Boston against a tired Kings team without Drew Doughty.



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The Hockey News

Andrei Svechnikov To Play In Career Game 500

By: Ryan Henkel

Svechnikov hits a significant milestone, showcasing his impact as a scorer and playmaker for the Hurricanes over five hundred games.

Carolina Hurricanes forward Andrei Svechnikov will play in his 500th career game tonight against the Buffalo Sabres.

The 2018 second overall pick was a big part of the Hurricanes turn around in that 2018-19 season when they ended their decade long playoff drought and he continues to be an important part of the team today.

"We've watched him grow up," said Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour, who became the team's head coach the same year Svechnikov was drafted. "A special kind of bond I think we have. I was here when he first got here and seen him grow."

The 25-year-old Russian winger has collected 158 goals and 376 points throughout the regular season, the fourth most by a Hurricanes player in their first 500 games.

@WaltRuff

With 376 points in 499 games, he owns the fourth-highest point total in franchise history before his 500th career game, behind only Ron Francis (568), Sebastian Aho (456), and Eric Staal (451).

He's also tied for tenth in franchise history for assists and seventh for game-winning goals with 29.

The talented forward brings a creative offensive game as he can both be a playmaker and score some pretty nice goals.

I mean, who could forget him scoring the NHL's first ever lacrosse move?

Svech has also been a steady playoff performer as well, with 23 goals and 48 points in 66 career postseason games, and led the team in scoring in the most recent run.

As a rookie, Svechnikov scored 20 goals, all at even strength, and he's reached that 20-goal marker in five of his first seven seasons.

He's a physical beast who's laid his fair share of big hits and currently sits fourth in team history in hits with 995.

The power forward has had his fair share of injury struggles though and had some ups and downs in terms of consistency, but when he's on his game, there's very few players more impactful.

"I think he's really starting to come into his own now this year, the way I've seen it the last 10 games or so," Brind'Amour said. "He is a very impactful player. He knows he can dominate the game. The confidence with that, he just has to keep being consistent with it and that's where he's fought it a little bit. It's not about scoring every night, it's about being impactful and that's the kind of player he is."

Congrats to Svech on the milestone!

Carolina Hurricanes @ Buffalo Sabres: Lineups, Game Preview and How to Watch

By: Ryan Henkel

Canes aim for road trip finale, but Sabres' explosive offense could create a volatile matinee matchup. Watch for key lineup changes.

What - Game 22 (14-5-2)

When - 1 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 23

Where - KeyBank Center; Buffalo, NY

How to Watch - NHL Network, FanDuel Sports Network South, Sportsnet1, MSG-B

The Carolina Hurricanes will look to cap off of their four-game road trip on a high note as they take on the Buffalo Sabres in a matinee showdown.

The Canes, who have points in five straight games, are coming off of a 4-3 win over the Winnipeg Jets on Friday.

Jordan Staal scored twice, Seth Jarvis scored shorthanded and the power play finally connected again as Andrei Svechnikov slammed home a Nikolaj Ehlers cross-ice feed.

The one big question mark heading in is the status of rookie defenseman Alexander Nikishin, who wound up being a healthy scratch for the first time this season in Winnipeg.

Buffalo enters this afternoon's contest having dismantled the Chicago Blackhawks 9-3 on Friday.

The Sabres have struggled with injuries and consistency this season, which has been like so many other seasons, but they're still a team capable of exploding for quick goals, much like the Hurricanes saw last time these two teams met.



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Streaks

Sebastian Aho (1g, 2a), Nikolaj Ehlers (2a), Seth Jarvis (1g, 1a) and Andrei Svechnikov (1g, 1a) have points in back-to-back games.

Milestone Watch

Andrei Svechnikov will play in his 500th career game tonight in Buffalo.

Sebastian Aho is two games away from 700 career games played.

Jordan Martinook is three goals shy of 100 career goals.

Game Notes

Carolina is 1-0-0 against Buffalo this season, having won 6-3 on Nov. 8 in Raleigh.

Sebastian Aho (17g, 31pts in 23gp) and Andrei Svechnikov (3g, 16pts in 15gp) are point-per-game players for their career against the Sabres.

Key Matchups

Projected Starting Goalies

Pyotr Kochetkov: 4-0-0; 0.926 Sv%; 1.70 GAA

Alex Lyon: 3-5-3; 0.907 Sv%; 3.07 GAA

Leading Scorers

Goals - Seth Jarvis (11) / Tage Thompson (11)

Points - Sebastian Aho (21) / Tage Thompson & Alex Tuch (20)

Power Play

Carolina - 13.6% (31st)

Buffalo - 17.5% (22nd)

Penalty Kill

Carolina - 78.8% (21st)

Buffalo - 88.5% (1st)

Hurricanes Projected Lineup

Andrei Svechnikov - Sebastian Aho - Seth Jarvis

Nikolaj Ehlers - Logan Stankoven - Jackson Blake

William Carrier - Jordan Staal - Jordan Martinook

Taylor Hall - Mark Jankowski - Eric Robinson

K'Andre Miller - Jalen Chatfield

Shayne Gostisbehere - Sean Walker

Alexander Nikishin - Joel Nystrom

Pyotr Kochetkov

Frederik Andersen

Injuries and Scratches: Mike Reilly, Brandon Bussi, Jesperi Kotkaniemi (LBI), Jaccob Slavin (LBI)

Sabres Projected Lineup

Josh Doan - Tage Thompson - Alex Tuch

Jason Zucker - Ryan McLeod - Jack Quinn

Tyson Kozak - Noah Ostlund - Isak Rosen

Jordan Greenway - Peyton Krebs - Beck Malenstyn

Mattias Samuelsson - Rasmus Dahlin

Owen Power - Jacob Bryson

Bowen Byram - Conor Timmins

Alex Lyon

Colton Ellis

Injuries and Scratches: Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen, Josh Dunne, Zach Benson (LBI), Justin Danforth (LBI), Michael Kesselring (LBI), Jiri Kulich (ear), Josh Norris (UBI)

Seth Jarvis Continuing To Climb Franchise Record Book

By: Ryan Henkel

Seth Jarvis has rapidly ascended the franchise ranks and just last night tied a legend. His historic scoring pace suggests more records are within reach.

Seth Jarvis is truly a special player.

The 23-year-old forward is only just getting into his fifth career season, but he's already been making his marks all over the record books.

Seth Jarvis' case for Team Canada

Last night, against his hometown Winnipeg Jets, the Carolina Hurricanes star scored his 10th career shorthanded goal and moved into a tie for fourth all-time in franchise history for shorthanded tallies.

And tie is actually with Jarvis' current head coach Rod Brind'Amour, who scored 10 shorthanded goals for the franchise across his 10 seasons in Carolina.

But Jarvis did it in 369 fewer games.

He now only trails Dave Tippett (11), Eric Staal (16) and teammate Sebastian Aho (20) for the top spots in the record books.

Last season, he also tied the franchise record for most shorthanded goals in a season (5) with former Cane and current Buffalo Sabres general manager Kevyn Adams.

The high-energy forward is such a tremendous player and plays such a strong two-way game and I think he has a real shot of holding a few records before his time in the league is done.



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'We Were Good All Night': Rod Brind'Amour, Jordan Staal, Andrei Svechnikov, Brandon Bussi On Win In Winnipeg

By: Ryan Henkel

Brind'Amour praises Staal's leadership and Bussi's crucial saves after a hard-fought Winnipeg victory, extending their point streak.

The Carolina Hurricanes pulled off a 4-3 win over the Winnipeg Jets to extend their point streak to five games and remain on top of the Eastern Conference.

Jordan Staal scored twice, Seth Jarvis netted one shorthanded and Andrei Svechnikov picked up the final one on the power play.

After the game, Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour, along with Staal, Svechnikov and goaltender Brandon Bussi spoke with the media in Winnipeg. Here's what they had to say:

A decade of memories as Ehlers returns to Winnipeg. The Danish winger reflects on his time with the Jets as he now faces his former teammates as an opponent.

Rod Brind'Amour

On the game: I liked the game. I thought we were good all night. Obviously we had a couple gaffes. One was a bad line change, one was obviously kind of a weird turnover that winds up in your net, but other than that, I thought we were pretty solid all night. A couple of big plays. Obviously Jordo leading the way and that line especially. Overall, I thought it was a great effort.

On the Staal line: They just do it right and it's shift after shift. It's tough to play against and that's the key. It allows the other guys to do their thing. Can't say enough about the guy to be honest. He's our leader for a reason and he makes it, certainly my job, easy.

On the power play: We were good. The first two, we didn't score, but tons of chances. Had the opportunities, just didn't cash in. Then made a nice adjustment between periods and they were looking for the seam and we hit it. Good to see that. Obviously we needed that as they kind of scored on the next shift to cancel it out, but at the end of the day, it was a good special teams effort. I thought that other than that one little gaffe, the penalty kill was great, especially at the end. It was a very good team effort.

On Staal's scoring streak: Well, with him, he could score every night. Because if you watch him, he gets opportunities every night like that. You know how it goes though. Sometimes it goes in, sometimes they don't. But he's always around it. But tonight obviously the first one was a great goal. Normally you see him get more like the other one with a tip in front or some type of go around the net. But he was obviously our best player tonight.

On Brandon Bussi: He didn't have a lot of work in the first two periods and then some weird bounces where there was nothing he could do. But you're gonna need some saves. It's just how it's going to happen and they put their little push on at the end and had two or three really good grade-A opportunities on their best player's stick. That's when you need a goalie to make a difference and he did.

On Nikolaj Ehlers: I thought he was really good tonight. He made a lot of real subtle, high-end plays that create offense, we just didn't cash in. Obviously on the one goal, he did make a great pass though. He was great tonight.

Jordan Staal

On his quick scoring: I've had maybe one or two that early... actually, my LA goal one was pretty quick. So I had one this year. We want to have great starts and so that's always nice. Good feeling.

On the odd-man chances Winnipeg was getting in the third period: I messed up on the one and then obviously Key fanned on it a little bit and I got a little horny playing D there. I guess I should stay as a forward, but they did a good job of capitalizing on that mistake and then they got some momentum off of that. But I thought the boys held them off and the power play had a big goal for us. It hasn't always been going for us, so that was huge for everyone. Just staying strong in the third and Bussi held the fort.

Andrei Svechnikov

On the power play: There was great movement for us and we just tried to put the pucks in the net and get the retrievals. Obviously on that goal, [Nikolaj Ehlers] made an unbelievable play and I just had to finish it.

On Ehlers' playmaking ability: One of the best passers in this league. You just have to always expect it and get open and he always will find you.

On the game: It's definitely not easy when you're playing the third game on a road trip, but we came out, played hard and thank God we were successful today.

On if he has to stay ready for the no-look passes from Ehlers: We actually watched the video on that one and Roddy actually told us that seam pass could be open there. There were a couple times where he was passing to me and I wasn't expecting it, so like I said, you have to expect it always. He can pass it from everywhere, so you have to expect it.

Brandon Bussi

On staying sharp despite not having much game action: It's just about working on things in practice. Taking extra shots when you can. I've been playing for a long time, just have to stay ready.

On the game: Personally, I felt really good tonight. Obviously we had a really good start. The fact they got two in the first kind of slowed down some of our momentum. So I have to find a way to at least keep one out to keep us going, but overall, I thought it was a good night for us.

On moving past early goals against: Just have to move on to the next shot. They're good players and they're going to make good plays. Honestly, I just trust what I do well in games. I felt good, felt like I was gonna make the next save and felt good to help out whatever way I could.



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Ehlers Welcomed Back To Winnipeg With Standing Ovation; Reflects On Time With Organization

By: Ryan Henkel

A decade of memories as Ehlers returns to Winnipeg. The Danish winger reflects on his time with the Jets as he now faces his former teammates as an opponent.

Nikolaj Ehlers was a big piece of the Winnipeg Jets, spending his first 10 NHL seasons with the organization.

The 2014 ninth-overall pick scored 225 goals and registered 520 points in 674 games with the Jets.

However, Ehlers decided to depart the city this summer, signing a six-year, \$51 million deal to become a Carolina Hurricane and tonight, he returns to Winnipeg for the first time ever as an opposing player.

"It's no secret that it's pretty cool to be back," Ehlers told the media in Winnipeg. "Exciting and definitely one I was looking forward to. But, also getting a little nervous here."

While Ehlers stated that he felt it was just time to move on when he made the decision to leave, the one thing that Ehlers has always wanted to make clear was how much he enjoyed his time in the city.

"I loved it here," Ehlers said. "I loved the guys here, the organization is fantastic, the people around the team, the fans that we had here, it was great. I had 10 fantastic years here and again, it's the place that I lived the longest in my whole life. So it still feels like home."

While the fans received him well, Ehlers was a bit worried about the kind of reception that he'd get.

"I don't know, to be honest. Everybody has their own opinions and feelings. All I can say is that I spent 10 years here and I loved it. So obviously I'm hoping for something and you can guess yourself for what that is. But it's been

nice to be back and see the guys and all the people around. It's special."

The one thing Ehlers wasn't worried about though, was the reactions from his former teammates, who the Danish forward had dinner with on Thursday.

"They're gonna be talking and I think it's gonna be pretty funny at times, for sure," Ehlers said. "But again, there's not one guy on that team that I don't like. I know what some of the guys are gonna try to do and it's gonna be more fun than anything."

Ehlers even said that Jets defenseman Neal Pionk texted him a few days earlier to offer him his first fight as a Carolina Hurricane.

It's one thing to talk about and anticipate what the moment will be like, but for Ehlers, I'm sure it was certainly an emotional moment lining up and facing down his old brothers in his old home.

"Everybody's different and everybody's gonna react a little different to games like this and I have no idea how it's going to be for me," Ehlers said Friday morning. "It's still going to be a battle out there for two points, but I think the first few shifts are gonna be just worrying about passing it to the right guy."

"I can relate to it, because I know it's tough," said Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour. "This is going to be a tough night for him. It's special, but it's going to be really hard to play against all your buddies that you went to battle with for 10 years. Coming into the rink and going to the visiting locker room, and then lining up against them. That's all hard. I think it's going to be a pretty special moment, I'd expect, but it's going to be hard to play this game, for sure."

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1369306 Carolina Hurricanes

Jordan Staal Showing His Value to the Hurricanes With Recent Scoring Run

November 23, 2025

by Zach Martin

The Carolina Hurricanes are currently 2-0-1 on their four-game road trip, with their last stop coming on Sunday night (Nov. 23) against the Buffalo Sabres. They're currently on a five-game point streak, dating back to their 4-3 overtime win over the Vancouver Canucks (Nov. 14). During this stretch of games, captain Jordan Staal has been on a scoring run that's been huge for the Hurricanes, especially over the last four games. How much of this scoring run has impacted the team over that time?

Not Stalling Out

Since Nov. 15, Staal has been putting up goals in a four-game run that head coach Rod Brind'Amour could appreciate from the captain. He has four goals in four games, two of those coming from the Hurricanes' 4-3 win over the Winnipeg Jets on Nov. 22. Staal had two goals on two shots, his first 1.000 shooting percentage game of the season. He has tallied seven goals and nine points over the 21 games the Hurricanes have played in 2025-26.

Staal's nine points put him 10th on the Hurricanes, while his seven goals have him tied for third alongside Andrei Svechnikov. During the game against the Jets, he scored 16 seconds into the game. That was the third-fastest road goal in team history. He owns that record with 12 seconds, dating back to Oct. 18 against the Los Angeles Kings.

Following his two-goal performance against the Jets, Brind'Amour stated, "With him, he could score every night. If you watch him, he gets opportunities every night like that. You know how it goes, sometimes they go in, sometimes they don't. But he's always around it. Tonight, the first one was a great goal. Normally, you see him get more like the other ones, a tip in front, or some sort of goal around the net, but he was obviously our best player tonight."

While he might not score 20 goals a season, Staal is always around the net and leading by example. The Hurricanes are 14-5-2 (30 points) on the season, three points ahead of the New Jersey Devils, playing 21 games compared to their 20. The Hurricanes are also first in the Eastern

Conference and second in the NHL, three points behind the leading Colorado Avalanche.

Staal mentioned after the win over the Jets, when talking about the total team win, "Everyone chipped in in all the aspects. Power play with a massive goal, PK was great, Bussi played good, D-core was solid, and we had goals throughout the lineup. It was a full team effort, and we need everyone if we want to win against teams like that. I thought everyone played really well."

It's been a season of intrigue for the Hurricanes as they've been winning consistently while dealing with all of the injuries that have plagued the team. It helps that the captain has been playing so well with the depth scoring, behind the usual stars like Sebastian Aho, Seth Jarvis, Andrei Svechnikov, Jackson Blake, etc. Doing this at 37 is impressive for the captain. Staal is currently in the third season of his four-year, \$11.60 million deal, paying him \$2.9 million annually. He will become an unrestricted free agent at age 38 following the 2026-27 season.

It'll be interesting to see what happens for the rest of this season as the Hurricanes are looking to win their second Stanley Cup in franchise history. As long as the captain can keep contributing, there is a good sense that the Hurricanes could see another deep playoff run in what hopes to be their eighth consecutive trip to the playoffs.

The Hockey Writers LOADED: 11.24.2025

1369387 Websites

The Athletic / Meet 2027 NHL Draft prospect Dima Zhilkin, who found his game and a home in Saginaw

By Scott Wheeler

Nov. 23, 2025

SAGINAW, Mich. — When Saginaw Spirit general manager Dave Drinkill talks about Dima Zhilkin, this is where he starts: "He's a competitive little prick."

Chris Lazary, the Spirit's head coach, calls Zhilkin a rat.

There are other things they'll say about him.



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"He has always been a pro. He can kill penalties, he can play on the power play, he fights, he's got jam to him, he's a leader," Drinkill says.

The Spirit selected Zhilkin with the 19th pick in the 2024 OHL draft. He was eighth on his Toronto Jr. Canadiens U16 AAA team in scoring that year with just 22 points in 34 games as a 5-foot-6 winger.

But he played with drive, and he was a late-birthday who was also one of the youngest players on that AAA team. The Spirit felt that he was going to make the most of the runway that he had.

Two seasons later, Zhilkin is still a full year out from his NHL Draft year in 2027, and he's already, in Drinkill's eyes, the Spirit's best player. Next year, he expects he'll be their captain, too.

And he's found a home away from the rink in Saginaw.

Kevin Smiley can still remember the first day he opened his doors to a billet.

It was the day of the national championship in college football, Jan. 7, 2013. John Llewelyn, a former billet of the Spirit who worked at the hospital with his wife, Kristen (an interventional radiologist), had brought defenseman Jesse Graham by because he needed a place to stay.

At the time, the Smileys had young kids, and so Kevin had told him, "Well, bring Jesse over and we'll meet him and see if he wants to be in our house and if it's a good fit."

When he showed up, Kevin was plowing snow in their driveway. When Graham hopped out of Llewelyn's car with a duffel bag, he remembers thinking, "Well, it's going to be awkward if we say no."

After tucking his kids to bed at halftime, suddenly he was sitting next to a stranger on his couch.

When Smiley tells that story today, he smiles ear to ear when he says that "by the next day, Jesse was a part of our family."

Until that moment, the Smileys were always a soccer family. Though they have a pond in their backyard in Saginaw's Chestnut Grove neighborhood, they rarely skated on it.

These days, though, they're a hockey family. Zhilkin is their newest billet son, Smiley is retired, and they don't miss a game.

They'll often even go to road games in Flint, Sault Ste. Marie and Windsor (where Zhilkin's parents, Anna and Boris, now live), too. They took two breaks from billeting when their two boys were in their senior years of high school but once they left home, Spirit assistant general manager Brian Prout, who oversees their billet program, asked them if they'd take Zhilkin in during their 2024 Memorial Cup run for a few weeks after the league permitted Zhilkin to be around the team immediately after they drafted him.

Those few weeks have turned into two seasons (it'll be three when Zhilkin returns for his draft year next year instead of going the college route). When the Spirit asked the Smileys if he could come back for his rookie season a year ago, Kristen told them, "You gave us a puppy for a few weeks and then said, 'Now he's gone.' Absolutely."

Sitting in his living room with their golden doodle Zoey in his lap ahead of a three-in-three weekend slate of games, Smiley, who used to substitute teach and always cherished when kids would scream to their friends "We've got Mr. Smiley today!" when he'd show up, says billeting Zhilkin has given him that feeling back.

More than a decade after having Graham stay with them, they attended his wedding and gifted him his jersey from the outdoor game he played in with Saginaw. On Mother's Day, Graham's text to Kristen often beats her own kids'. In their basement, they've got framed photos and memorabilia from all of their former players — from Graham to NHL Draft picks like Nick Moutrey, Jake Paterson and Markus Niemelainen. It was a hard

Christmas the year that Moutrey and Paterson were traded days apart. Before Paterson left, he insisted on dropping by both of the kids' schools to give them hugs goodbye.

They're not looking forward to that eventual goodbye with Zhilkin and say they've developed a particularly special relationship with him.,

Last season, before Zhilkin had even played his first game with the Spirit, the Smileys helped the then-15-year-old through his first injury after he took a knee to his quad in an exhibition game, and it turned into a hematoma.

The morning after it happened, Zhilkin called Drinkill to ask if he could skip a team event because his leg was bothering him. Drinkill, who was on the way to St. Lucia for his honeymoon, told him, "Well, you kind of have to do a team event." When he landed, Zhilkin was in the hospital.

Left: Zhilkin and the Smileys on billet night. Right: Zhilkin's hematoma. (Scott Wheeler / The Athletic)

He didn't play until November of that year and had to miss playing for Canada at U17 worlds, where he would have been on Drinkill's team.

"We missed him a ton. It's probably why we lost in the gold medal game," Drinkill says from the Smiley living room. "He proved it at Hlinka this year (where he scored three goals in five games). He ended up being one of their go-to guys by the end of it."

More time spent away during the injury helped bring him even closer to the Smileys. Zhilkin talks about their place as his second home now, and talks fondly of getting them out onto the pond last winter.

"You don't know what you're expecting with a billet, especially coming into your first year as a 15- and 16-year-old. It's tough moving away from family. But they've welcomed me so easily, and everything just clicked. I'm super happy to be here," Zhilkin said.

They'll have movie nights, ping pong matches and play pool in the basement. The night before The Athletic's visit, they were playing cards together. A few nights before that, when Zhilkin turned 17, his mom, dad and sister came over, and Smiley asked him what he liked to have for dessert on his birthday. He told him pancho, a Russian cake that he gets from a bakery whenever he's home. (Zhilkin moved to Canada from Russia when he was 8, two and a half years after his mom, sister and older brother, Danny, a prospect of the Winnipeg Jets, did, while he and his dad awaited their visas.)

So Smiley made him pancho, and the family ate it all.

When they were done, Anna told her son's billet dad, "This is exactly what it tastes like."

"Well, you made my heart feel good," Smiley answered.

He has also taught himself how to make borscht, a Russian stew, and pelmeni, a kind of dumpling.

Zhilkin and his birthday pancho. (Kevin Smiley)

Smiley talks about Boris, who still speaks very little English and communicates primarily using his phone as his translator, as "just so thankful."

"Oh, Kevin, you my friend," Boris will say to Smiley whenever he sees him.

Smiley laughs about a game during Zhilkin's rookie season when Boris looked back down at a stream of one of Danny's games on his phone while Zhilkin was in the middle of a fight, numb to that competitiveness that everyone else now sees. Though Boris and Anna didn't attend the game against Erie, instead making the trip to see Danny play in Grand Rapids with the Manitoba Moose, they were in Windsor for the tail end of their three-in-three and having them a couple of hours away has been big for Zhilkin.



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"He showed me his phone after the Memorial Cup, and it said 'You're the first person I've ever entrusted my son to,'" Smiley said.

Smiley, who noted that he doesn't like winter and would eventually like to travel in his retirement, said he would have only made the three-year commitment they made for Zhilkin.

"We absolutely love having him," Smiley said. "We get to provide a safe space to be away, and we were so happy to really get back into billeting with Dima."

Zhilkin insists his second family has helped him perform on the ice, too.

He describes himself as a poised playmaker who can create under pressure and past defenders, but also likes to play in the dirty areas and defend.

His linemate, top 2026 prospect Nikita Klepov, describes him as "a hard-skill guy." Lazary calls him a future first-round pick who's still growing. He's now 5-foot-10 and change, and if he gets another inch or two (Danny is 6-foot-1), they think his first-round projection could become a top-of-the-draft one next year.

When the puck dropped on the three-in-three at the end of October, he already had 11 points in just six games to start the year.

By the end of the weekend, he'd made it 16 points in nine games, capped off by a hat trick against the 11-2-1 first-place Windsor Spitfires and the dagger in the shootout.

The "competitive prick" came out late in the third period when he took a slashing penalty in the offensive zone with the Spirit trailing 4-3 and on the power play.

He made up for it when he came out of the box and immediately scored to tie the game.

"He's got everything," Drinkill said when it was over.

The Athletic LOADED: 11.24.2025

1369388 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Slumping Canucks finding things 'very hard and frustrating' after loss to Flames

Iain MacIntyre

VANCOUVER – If this isn't rock bottom for the Vancouver Canucks, it will do until rock bottom gets here.

The team determined to bounce back from last year's 90-point, non-playoff season is now three games under .500 for the first time since March 2023 and on pace for 71 points, which would be the Canucks' worst National Hockey League season since 1999.

On Sunday, rested and playing a tired team that happened to have the poorest record in hockey, the Canucks surrendered five straight goals to the Calgary Flames and lost 5-2 at Rogers Arena.

Injuries alone don't explain how a team that planned to return to the Stanley Cup Playoffs this spring is now five points behind in the wildcard race at 9-12-2 – with just three wins at home this season.

The race the Canucks are falling into is for last place in the NHL and the best lottery odds in the Gavin McKenna draft sweepstakes.

There are, of course, 59 games to go, so the Canucks have plenty of time to rescue themselves. Or they could get worse.

The Flames, whose three-game winning streak mirrors the Canucks' three-game dive, are now only one point behind Vancouver and passed the Nashville Predators on winning percentage on Sunday. The Tennesseans are last in the NHL with 16 points, four behind the Canucks with two games in-hand.

So, yes, the Canucks are closer to last place overall than the final playoff spot.

"It stings," winger Kiefer Sherwood said. "All of us are competitors and we expect better results for all the work that we're putting in. We've got to continue to grind through it . . . get back to work tomorrow. It's a big road trip for us. I still think we've got a lot of good pieces in this room. We've just got to put it together on a consistent basis."

The Canucks are on their second three-game losing streak of the season. They haven't won consecutive games in five weeks.

After an encouraging performance Thursday, when they outplayed the Dallas Stars for stretches but lost on a pair of third-period goals, the Canucks were excellent in the first period against Calgary and then fairly awful after that.

Sunday's loss feels like a low point.

"I think so," winger Brock Boeser said. "Especially because we played such a good game last game, and tonight our first period was so good. And then we let them take over the game, and they tilted the ice. We lost the battle in front of our net. We knew they like to shoot pucks and get to the net, and we knew the game plan (and) didn't execute it."

After Filip Hronek made it 1-0 for Vancouver on a two-on-one just 1:05 after the opening faceoff, Calgary's Morgan Frost was open in the high slot to guide a redirect past Canuck goalie Kevin Lankinen at 7:43. And just 25 seconds after that, Connor Zary beat Aatu Ratu to a rebound to make it 2-1 for Calgary, which beat Dallas in a shootout the night before in Alberta.

The Canucks' second period against the Stars was one of their best at home this season, but the middle period against the Flames was one of their worst.

With momentum from three power plays, one of them from an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty to Canuck Evander Kane, Calgary outshot Vancouver 11-6 and seized control of the game with a pair of goals.

At 10:37, Kevin Bahl banked a centring pass off Canuck defenceman Tom Willander, who had been pushed into his own crease by Joel Farabee. And at 16:31, Yegor Sharangovich batted another rebound past Lankinen, whose catching glove ejected the puck from Rasmus Andersson's unscreened point shot.

Calgary had three goals on 11 shots, four goals on 17 shots and finished with five on 21 against Lankinen.

Flames forward Blake Coleman, with a one-handed finish on a short-handed two-on-one, and Canucks captain Quinn Hughes traded meaningless third-period goals.

"Second and third, not our best hockey," Canucks defenceman Tyler Myers said. "And we have to look at it and we have to get better."

"You take a look at that Dallas game, I thought it was one of our better team games of the year. I thought we deserved more. And then we came out tonight . . . I thought we came out strong and then, for whatever reason, we just lost it. We have to address that, you know, figure out why and figure out ways to be more consistent and bring our best game each and every night."



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The Canucks have had their best game very few nights this season, although they've also yet to have their full lineup.

Rookie head coach Adam Foote has been missing as many as nine players, although Hughes noted last week that every team during the hyper-condensed NHL schedule seems to have "four or five" players injured. The Canucks' current toll is five.

Two of the long-term injuries – to centres Filip Chytil and Teddy Blueger and suffered in the same game on Oct. 19 – hollowed the Canucks down the middle at a position where they were already dangerously thin. Newest Canuck David Kampf, cast adrift last week by the Toronto Maple Leafs, is now centring the second line in Vancouver despite a career high of 20 points.

Foote indicated after Saturday's practice that the Canucks' problems at centre ice have been a key factor in the team's defensive metrics, which had been trending better but are still alarmingly down from last season.

"I mean, our defensive-zone (system) hasn't changed the last three years," Foote insisted. "We're working on it. When you lose that many guys up the middle at once, it's just logic that . . . numbers are going to go down. I mean, I don't know how they can't. Right, that's logic to everybody? It's logic to me."

But it doesn't fully explain where the Canucks are.

If they were playing better in their own zone, getting more saves and weren't last in the NHL in penalty killing, they wouldn't be three games under .500 as U.S. Thanksgiving approaches this week.

"For sure, yeah," Boeser said of the team's ability to do better, even with the players they're missing. "The last road trip, we were 1-1-1 (against Carolina, Tampa and Florida) and I thought that was pretty good. Obviously coming home, this was a big opportunity for us, and we haven't won a game. So yeah, it feels very hard and frustrating right now. Obviously, there's guys injured, but no excuses. Next man up. And you know, guys have to contribute, especially myself."

The Canucks practise Monday before leaving the next day on another difficult trip against the three California teams and the NHL-leading Colorado Avalanche.

Blueger may go on the trip but it doesn't appear the return of any of their injured players is imminent.

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Sportsnet.ca / Takeaways: Flames 'make some headway' with third consecutive win

Eric Francis

Doubled over with a pair of clenched fists in celebration, Connor Zary's scream echoed around the Rogers Arena he'd just silenced.

After banging in a crease-front rebound that marked just his second goal of the season, the Flames winger exhibited the sort of relief that comes from finding the net for the first time in 21 games.

"It felt good — I think that's a lot of emotion," said Zary, who entered the game with a 3.8 per cent shooting percentage that said plenty about the frustration he's been carrying around since his opening night snipe.

"It's been a frustrating year so far for me, personally. I think, just mentally, trying to overcome things and be better for it. When you're going through something like that, I think it's just as special as any other goal you score, just to have that kind of weight just lifted even for a second."

While it was one thing to end his painful streak, it was another to contribute meaningfully to the Flames' third win in a row.

Less than 24 hours after a gritty shootout win at home over Dallas was followed by a late-night flight over the Rocky Mountains, Zary and the Flames started a daunting date with the Canucks by spotting the hosts a 1-0 lead one minute in.

However, goals by Morgan Frost and Zary 35 seconds apart turned the tide midway through a first period that the Flames built on one period later with goals from Kevin Bahl and another frustrated forward, Yegor Sharangovich.

By night's end, the offensively challenged Flames extended their oddest of streaks to 41 straight wins when scoring four or more, triumphing 5-2.

"Really proud of our group," said Blake Coleman, whose 300th career point was a short-handed redirect that capped the Flames' five unanswered goals.

"We could have had every excuse in the book tonight: couple tough back-to-backs, get in late, and a quick turnaround from 8 to 6 p.m., and we gave up an early goal... I could go down the line, but guys dug in. We took over the game and we're starting to find our rhythm."

"Guys are committed, we knew it would turn at some point. It took a little longer than we would have liked, but we're starting to make some headway."

More takeaways from the opening contest of a five-game roadie:

Andersson en fuego

Rasmus Andersson's ongoing surge in play saw the veteran blue-liner pick up three assists, racking up his ninth career three-point game.

For those keeping track at home, that's now two goals and eight assists in a five-game point streak, putting him in the mix for being one of the NHL's three stars of the week.

All told, he was plus-4 on the night, which is where he stands on the season — a far cry from the minus-38 his critics point to when they discuss the season he had last year.

"Much like Connor, he's being rewarded now," smiled coach Ryan Huska of his top minute-muncher.

"I think he's been consistent all year for us, and now I would say he's on a heater. The younger guys always talk about that.

"He's doing a lot of good things for us in a lot of different situations, whether it's penalty kill or the power play now, which is starting to generate for us, and five-on-five."

Bubble boy rolls on

Matt Coronato's four-game goal-scoring streak came to a halt, but he's now on a five-game point streak after helping set up the Flames' opening goal.

Despite wearing a fishbowl to protect the series of stitches needed to piece his nose back together following a vicious hit from behind by Mikko Rantanen, Coronato was in the thick of things all night.

Earlier in the day, the league announced Rantanen would miss one game by virtue of an obscure rule essentially saying he had a mandatory suspension due to getting hooped from two straight games within a 41-day window.



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Perhaps Coronato is counting his blessings, as the hit Rantanen laid on Alexander Romanov earlier in the week has put the Islanders defender on the shelf for up to six months after having to undergo shoulder surgery.

The horrific hit on Coronato warranted more than just one game, but such is life in the NHL.

No goalie debate here

Lost in the Flames' offensive outburst was the fact that after allowing the first shot of the night to beat him clean a mere 65 seconds in, Dustin Wolf rebounded with a stellar outing that saw him finish with 28 saves.

"We're finding our groove," said Wolf, who watched his backup shine in the previous two wins.

"It's good to get the road trip off on the right foot.

"You can see in our game we're giving up less chances. When you score five, you're going to win a lot of games. We did our job on the back end and the forwards did theirs, and we came out with two points."

The Flames make the longest charter flight the NHL has to offer Monday for a Wednesday visit in Tampa.

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Sportsnet.ca / Canadiens make no-risk, no-brainer move for Texier

Eric Engels

MONTREAL — It was an easy decision, born of need, posing little risk, and even featuring a bit of upside, so Montreal Canadiens general manager Kent Hughes made it and signed Alexandre Texier to a one-year, \$1-million deal Sunday after Texier and the St. Louis Blues decided to terminate the player's \$2.1-million deal.

With that, Hughes bought a forward who can play all three forward positions, who possesses top-nine talent and, most importantly, has five seasons and 240 games of NHL experience.

For a team that came into this season as the youngest one in the league before quickly losing established NHL forwards Patrik Laine, Alex Newhook and Kirby Dach to long-term injuries, that experience was too much to turn away from. It's why the Canadiens reportedly first had interest in Toronto Maple Leafs castaway David Kampf (who ultimately chose a much more secure position with the centre-depleted Vancouver Canucks once his contract was terminated nine days ago), and it's also why, according to our sources, they're still poking around a relatively dormant marketplace for more help.

With the standings jammed up — if you want an idea of how jammed up, the Canadiens currently sit outside of the playoffs but are also just two points out of second place in the Eastern Conference — it's hard to suggest another move is imminent. But Sunday's move for Texier curbs some of the Canadiens' need while also giving the player an opportunity to re-establish himself in a league he once showed promise in.

The six-foot-one, 196-pounder was effective shortly after debuting with the Columbus Blue Jackets, who drafted him 45th overall in 2017. Texier put up 34 goals and 79 points while averaging just 14:20 per game over the 201 he played with the franchise, and there's at least some hope he

can produce at a similar clip with the Canadiens after failing to do so in 39 games spread over the last two seasons with the Blues.

The 26-year-old missed some time due to injury and illness, and much more of it as a healthy scratch who never seemed to fit with the aging core in St. Louis — with just six goals, 11 points, and a role that kept diminishing an obvious reflection of that reality.

In anticipation of Texier's contract termination going through and the Canadiens signing him, we texted a Western Conference executive Sunday afternoon for some insight beyond the obvious.

"I think he's primarily a versatile, checking/energy-style player with some complementary skill and sense to elevate up your lineup when needed," he responded. "He's yet to really live up to that consistent middle-six potential he showed early in his career, but he has the elements to fit various roles."

The Canadiens aren't exactly assuming much risk in seeing if Texier can fit one with them. And they're hardly gambling the French-speaking native of Saint-Martin-d'Heres, France will fit in their market and with their players, who are all mostly between 22 and 27.

The Canadiens haven't sacrificed much cap space, either, with Texier's prorated contract still leaving them with close to \$4 million to play with.

That contract is also just the 43rd of 50 the team is permitted to carry this season, and the entirety of it can be buried in the minors if Texier doesn't prove to be more than a stop-gap solution while Laine, Newhook and Dach continue to heal.

Texier is starting with an opportunity to at least show he can help right now, which also gives the Canadiens the chance to partially replenish the diminished reserves of their AHL affiliate, the Laval Rocket.

That should happen with Joshua Roy's retrogression Monday, provided Jared Davidson is health enough to practise after Scott Laughton jumped him and caused him to briefly leave Saturday's 5-2 win over the Maple Leafs.

Assuming Florian Xhekaj also stays after his impressive NHL debut against Toronto, that will give the Canadiens the depth they need up front for three games in four nights in Utah, Las Vegas and Colorado this week.

The road trip gives Texier an immediate opportunity the Canadiens hope he'll seize.

They could've left him for someone else to sign, but assuming minimal risk to see if he could do that — and then some — made sense.

Add in the need for an experienced player like Texier, and the potential he possesses to bolster both the team's present and future depth, signing him was a no-brainer.

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Sportsnet.ca / Sunday Overreactions: Stagnant 3-on-3 OT must be changed

Michael Amato

If you enjoy circling back, slow methodical hockey and even the occasional pass back to a goalie, 3-on-3 overtime could be for you.



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It seems like every night a handful of games are going past 60 minutes, but the extra session isn't what it once was. Conservative play has taken over, and teams are content maintaining possession for as long as it takes to get a quality look. The Toronto Maple Leafs and St. Louis Blues played an overtime game earlier this week that was punctuated by an incredible game-winner from William Nylander, but prior to that, boos rained down from the crowd as the Blues circled back to their own end several times. Fans seem to be getting more displeased about how much different overtime looks from the first 60 minutes.

Overtime format needs a refresh

There are times when a 3-on-3 session can be exciting, but those are becoming few and far between. What we often see now is so much tentativeness in overtime because one simple mistake usually leads to an odd-man rush and a goal the other way. Teams are scared to shoot unless they have a clear lane at the net, players don't want to make a pass if there's even a slight chance it won't connect, and if a rush looks like it might get thwarted, they'll simply go backwards and regroup. Not exactly the most exciting brand of hockey to say the least, and it could be time to look at changing the format to make it more entertaining.

Overreaction? No

There are a few things I think the NHL could do to improve the product, and one doesn't even start in overtime. The first would be to hand out three points for a regulation win, which may make some teams more motivated to end things beforehand and ultimately create fewer overtime games. When there are only a few minutes left, especially in a non-conference clash, you can see how content both teams are to grab their point and let the chips fall where they may for the bonus point.

The other thing I would like to see happen is an over-and-back rule, similar to what the NBA does. Once a team carries the puck over centre, they wouldn't be allowed to bring it back past the red line. If they did, it would result in a turnover and change of possession and the puck would be given to the other team. This would at least force teams to continue in the attacking zone and limit regrouping, leading to more of what resembles actual hockey.

Finally, there could be an opportunity to introduce a shot clock, too. Maybe once you cross centre, you have a certain amount of time to get a shot off or it results in a change of possession. That would create a lot of urgency and action. I can see some people arguing that these potential rule changes would detract from the tradition of the game, but what we're watching now typically isn't anything that a hockey purist would enjoy anyway. If it's already a departure from the standard way the game is played, why not lean into it and make overtime more interesting?

It was a tough Friday for the Winnipeg Jets. Reigning Hart and Vezina Trophy winner Connor Hellebuyck will miss the next four to six weeks with a knee issue, putting Winnipeg in a difficult spot. There is obvious reason for concern when you lose your best player for a substantial amount of time, and the Jets haven't been as typically stingy as they usually are. The Jets rank 23rd in shots allowed per game and 19th in high-danger chances against. Hellebuyck compensates for a lot of this, so backup Eric Comrie is going to have his hands full to pick up the slack. Winnipeg could be in trouble for the next month and a half.

Overreaction? Yes

I still think the Jets have enough talent to at least stay afloat while Hellebuyck is out. Comrie has also been really strong when he's been called upon this season, posting a 4-2-0 record with four quality starts in six games. He also has 1.9 goals saved above expected. Getting Dylan Samberg back recently shouldn't hurt either. Samberg has emerged as one of the better shutdown defenders in the league.

Plus, even though they haven't been as stellar defensively as they usually are, Winnipeg's special teams have been great. They rank sixth in power-play and seventh in penalty-kill percentage. That can carry a

team a long way. The Jets' schedule also isn't a complete gauntlet. They will enjoy a four-game stretch later this month and into December where they'll play Nashville and Buffalo twice, and then just before the holidays, they get St. Louis. Winnipeg is in a decent enough position that if they can just play .500 hockey or slightly above with Hellebuyck sidelined, they'll still be in decent enough shape when he returns.

Islanders-Stars is the most anticipated rematch this season

Who knew two out-of-conference opponents with little to no history between each other would create so much intrigue?

After Tuesday night's clash between the New York Islanders and Dallas Stars, many have now circled March 26 on their calendars when the two teams will play again. That's because the game had a little bit of everything in the final minute. Stars forward Mikko Rantanen was ejected for boarding Isles defender Alexander Romanov, and New York head coach Patrick Roy was livid about the play and went on an old-fashioned rant about how dangerous it was. To top it off, the Stars scored with 0.1 seconds remaining, but the goal was called off for goaltender interference. We'll have to wait four months for a rematch and to see how the Isles respond to Rantanen's hit, but it's hard to see another return affair creating this much anticipation.

Overreaction? Yes

While I do think the next game between these teams could have some drama, I think there are other contenders for the best rematch. We just watched the New York Rangers and Detroit Red Wings have a big melee after the final horn involving nearly their entire teams, where it felt like there was still more to settle. Then there's the Edmonton Oilers, who lost 9-1 to Colorado, as it appeared the Avalanche were pushing for a 10th goal late in the game. Edmonton and Connor McDavid may have something to say about that the next time they meet. And of course, you can't go wrong with any matchup between the Tampa Bay Lightning and Florida Panthers right now.

Do we really see an Islanders player trying to fight Rantanen four months from now for this hit? Possibly. But something tells me, given how infrequently these teams play, the level of hatred won't be as high as some of these other matchups.

Rumours of the Wild's demise were greatly exaggerated.

After a dismal start that saw Minnesota plummet down the standings, the team has righted the ship and won eight of its past 10 games. A big catalyst for the turnaround has been between the pipes, as Jesper Wallstedt is delivering in a big way with a 5-0-2 record this season and a .926 save percentage. He also has a pair of shutouts and has now started four of the past seven games after Filip Gustavsson played eight of nine. The Wild are suddenly back in a playoff spot, and any talk of major changes to the roster or coaching staff has quelled. Given how well Wallstedt has played, there's a good argument to be made that he deserves the bulk of the starts.

Overreaction? No

Wallstedt only has 12 career games under his belt compared to Gustavsson's 183, but he's simply been better than the veteran up to this point. Considering how bleak things looked for the Wild earlier in the season, they need to be more focused on winning games than ruffling Gustavsson's feathers. Goaltending can be fickle, and things could always swing back in Gustavsson's favour, but right now it should be Wallstedt's net until he gives Minnesota a reason not to start him.

Sergei Bobrovsky is quickly vaulting up the all-time wins list for goaltenders, passing Jacques Plante this week to move into ninth. There's also an excellent chance that before this season concludes, Bobrovsky will overtake Terry Sawchuk, Curtis Joseph and Henrik Lundqvist as well. If he plays another season or two, Ed Belfour and Roberto Luongo could be in reach, too. That would put him fourth all-time



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and add in a couple of Vezina's and a pair of Stanley Cups, plus another trip to the Finals and Bobrovsky could have a case as a top-five goalie all time.

Overreaction? Yes

He's very close, but I don't think I'd put him there right now. Bobrovsky had the benefit of the shootout during his entire career, which means he never had any ties and currently has 36 shootout wins. Goaltenders of a different era, like Sawchuk, Plante or Ken Dryden, had a bunch of ties that could've been wins had there been a shootout.

Bobrovsky's 51 shutouts also put him at only 30th all-time, behind the likes of Jaroslav Halak and Evgeni Nabokov. He's also more than 50 shutouts back of Sawchuk and Martin Brodeur. Based on this, I would have a hard time putting him ahead of any of Sawchuk, Brodeur, Dominik Hasek, Patrick Roy, Plante, Tony Esposito and a few others. There's a great argument for putting Bobrovsky in the top 10, but for me, he's still outside the top five.

The Anaheim Ducks have been a great story this season and they appear to be a team on the rise, but it's all happening with little impact from Frank Vatrano. The Ducks forward has just two goals and three points in 22 games, well below his standards. He's also spent extensive time in the bottom six this season, which includes a lengthy stay on the fourth line. Not only that, he's currently averaging 12:11 of ice time per game, putting him at more than five minutes less a night than he was playing last season. Vatrano signed a three-year extension with the Ducks less than a year ago, but it doesn't feel like new head coach Joel Quenneville is a fan of his game. There's a good player in there somewhere, which could mean there's an opportunity for a team to buy low if Anaheim wants to move off of his contract.

Overreaction? No

If I'm a contending team with eyes on the playoffs, I'm definitely making a call to the Ducks about Vatrano. This is a player who's averaged 27 goals over the past three seasons and scored 37 just two years ago. He's also only 31 and in his last playoff appearance, Vatrano notched five goals and 13 points in 20 contests for the New York Rangers during the 2022 post-season. Vatrano also has a physical side to his game, recording more than 155 hits in each of the past two campaigns.

The veteran doesn't have an unreasonable contract either. Vatrano has a \$4.5-million cap hit for the next two seasons beyond this one, which shouldn't be difficult for a team to absorb with a rising cap. He can play up and down the lineup, whether that's in your top six to provide offence or be a physical presence on a third line. Vatrano feels like he may just need a change of scenery and could make a huge impact for a contending team.



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