



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

The News & Observer

As Hurricanes rip Red Wings, NHL trade rumors abound. What will the Canes do?

By: Justin Pelletier

RALEIGH

Twice each year, the NHL — and the Carolina Hurricanes — enter their version of “silly season.”

In the summer, as free agency opens and the new league year begins, all 32 NHL teams believe they can at least make the playoffs the following season. Contracts are expiring, new deals struck, contracts extended. Each team tries to become the best possible version of itself, and sell that optimism to a fan base pining to watch a parade the following June.

And then, there is trade deadline season in early March. This year, Friday, March 6 at 3 p.m. is the cutoff, the last possible moment any of the league’s teams can complete a trade call. In this part of the cycle, teams have completed about 75 percent of the season. The playoff picture is mostly in focus, and top contenders are looking to become the top contender.

The Hurricanes have been no stranger to either scenario over the years, though most recently the latter has been true, and general manager Eric Tulsky, just shy of completing his second full year at the helm, has already proven to have a penchant for swinging big.

Carolina Hurricanes general manager Eric Tulsky smiles during a press conference on Tuesday, June 3, 2025, at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C.

Carolina Hurricanes general manager Eric Tulsky smiles during a press conference on Tuesday, June 3, 2025, at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C. Kaitlin McKeown The News & Observer

In the Hurricanes’ 5-2 win over Detroit on Saturday night at Lenovo Center, Carolina extended its points streak to 12 games and further cemented its status among the Eastern Conference elite.

One of the Canes’ mid-season acquisitions a year ago, Taylor Hall, got things rolling for Carolina on Saturday with the first goal of the game on a breakaway against Detroit’s Cam Talbot, and Shayne Gostisbehere set up Sebastian Aho back post on a power play for the Canes’ second of the night in the waning seconds of the first period. Hall and Gostisbehere each finished with three points.

Eric Robinson extended the Canes’ lead to 3-0, stuffing home the puck through Talbot less than five minutes into the second, and Carolina appeared to be on cruise control.

A pair of Detroit goals late in the second — a Simon Edvinsson wrister off the junction of the crossbar and post at 18:26, and a Patrick Kane wrister 47 seconds later following a bad Jackson Blake turnover -- pulled the Wings within one at 3-2..

But Gostisbehere reestablished the Canes’ lead early in the third with a wrister from the left circle past Talbot’s glove, and Blake added another at 5:30 of the third to put the game out of reach. Frederik Andersen finished with 27 saves for his eighth win of the season, and he looked far more composed and confident than he had in starts prior to the Olympic break.

Saturday’s result — and indeed the past month’s results — aside, every contending team will keep a keen eye on the market.

The Hurricanes are among the contenders with the best financial situation, in terms of immediately available cap space. The Canes can take on salary that most buyers cannot, which makes them a great trade partner for sellers looking to shed salary.

Why?

Because a selling team may take less in actual return value (players or picks) if it doesn’t have to retain salary.

This would be important in the case of a “rental,” a player with an expiring contract looking to make a run at a league title before testing free agency over the summer. But it could also be important for longer-term roster construction, because ...

Canes have upcoming salary cap additions

There is another consideration here when looking at the Canes’ gaping cap space: That gap is going to shrink significantly this summer. Currently, Logan Stankoven counts for about \$814,000 toward the cap, and Jackson Blake another \$905,000. Next year, Stankoven begins an eight-year deal worth \$6 million per season, and Blake settles into an eight-year pact worth \$5.1 million per season, for a total of \$11.1 million, a combined net addition of \$9.4 million.

If the Canes add salary with term at the trade deadline, it wouldn’t negatively affect roster construction in the short term, but it would certainly impact the way the team handles its roster business next summer and beyond.

The Canes are also in a unique position in the NHL in that not only is the roster as currently constructed completely under contract — and without any long-term injury designations — this season, but outside of Mark Jankowski (F), Mike Reilly (D) and Andersen (G), the Hurricanes’ players are all under contract next season, as well.

Frederik Andersen of the Carolina Hurricanes is introduced prior to the game against the New Jersey Devils at Lenovo Center on October 09, 2025 in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Frederik Andersen of the Carolina Hurricanes is introduced prior to the game against the New Jersey Devils at Lenovo



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Center on October 09, 2025 in Raleigh, North Carolina.
Jared C. Tilton Getty Images

Beyond that? The Canes only have four players — Gostisbehere, Jalen Chatfield, Jordan Martinook and Jordan Staal — hitting free agency after the 2026-27 season.

The good news here, of course, is that the team's core is locked up for a while, and given the team's results the past several years, that's a good thing. But ...

Can the Hurricanes get over the hump?

Any team that has wallowed in squalor for a long period of time has a different outlook when it once again finds success. For the Canes, making the playoffs in 2019 after a nine-year drought was cause for celebration. A trip to the Eastern Conference Final that season — sweep notwithstanding — was gravy.

The team's subsequent sustained regular-season success validated its turnaround, and a second trip to the NHL's version of the Final Four in 2023 cemented Carolina's status as a "perennial contender."

But another sweep — a third ECF loss-by-sweep since their lone Stanley Cup win in 2006 — left a sour taste.

But ... BUT ... things were trending properly. The core was growing.

A year ago, another ECF appearance begat three more losses in a row, pushing the skid in that round to 15 before a Game 4 win over the Florida Panthers snapped the streak. A loss in Game 5, though, left the Canes with a 1-16 record in four ECF appearances; 1-12 under head coach Rod Brind'Amour.

Carolina Hurricanes head coach Rod Brind'Amour walks towards the locker room after the Florida Panthers' 5-2 victory over the Carolina Hurricanes in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference Finals at the Lenovo Center in Raleigh, May 20, 2025.

Carolina Hurricanes head coach Rod Brind'Amour walks towards the locker room after the Florida Panthers' 5-2 victory over the Carolina Hurricanes in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference Finals at the Lenovo Center in Raleigh, May 20, 2025. Ethan Hyman ehyman@newsobserver.com

From playoff drought, to surprising run, to sustained success, to several "almosts," the team's trajectory suggests a breakthrough is imminent. But its results also beg the simple question:

"What's missing?"

In the NHL, there really is no secret sauce. There are commonalities, of course, among Stanley Cup champions: Depth to handle inevitable injuries and add scoring punch; Strong special teams to handle the inevitable penalty calls (deserved or otherwise); Timely goaltending to protect inevitable defensive lapses.

Any moves the Hurricanes make should address one of those needs.

So, who's out there?

Many factors go into teams' trading decisions, including whether a player wants to cooperate (or has the contractual

ability to dictate his path). And, for the players, skating for a title contender sometimes isn't enough by itself. Family matters. Location matters. Belief in their quality of life matters. Teammates matter. Playing style matters.

Any list of potential trade targets has to take those factors into account, and much of that can be presumptive, based only on supposition.

That said, let's "suppose." Here is a look at a handful of players recently linked to the Hurricanes, or who should be. All salary figures courtesy Puckpedia.com.

Jordan Binnington, G, St. Louis

Cap hit: \$6 million; Under contract through: 2026-27

A Stanley Cup-winning goalie for the floundering St. Louis Blues, he's had a rough year statistically, but he showed during the Olympics what he can do when a team plays defense in front of him. And the Hurricanes, last we checked, play an elite defensive system. Binnington has also shown a knack for coming up big in pressure situations. While the Hurricanes have three goalies locked up for next season, they could afford Binnington's contract outright and carry three goalies (Pyotr Kochetkov is out for the season) and deal with the logjam this summer, or trade Frederik Andersen (or Kochetkov) as part of the deal.

Canadian goalie Jordan Binnington dives for the puck as he defends against Finland's Sebastian Aho during the men's semifinal between Canada and Finland at the Milano Santagiulia Ice Hockey Arena during the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games in Milan, on Feb. 20, 2026.

Vincent Trocheck, C, New York Rangers

Cap hit: \$5.625 million; Under contract through: 2028-29

Trocheck is of course no stranger to the Hurricanes. Part of a surprise acquisition in 2020 from the Florida Panthers, Trocheck played two full seasons with Carolina, through 2022, before leaving for the Rangers in free agency that summer. His playoff numbers have been strong, he would add grit and snarl to the forward group, and he can win faceoffs. This year, Trocheck has won faceoffs at a 56.5% clip while playing more than 20 minutes per game. The knock on targeting Trocheck would be what it might cost the Canes to acquire him. He is owed \$5.63 million per season through 2028-29, when he will be 35 years old, and he will be in high demand after a successful Olympic experience.

Elias Pettersson, C/LW, Vancouver Canucks

Cap hit: \$11.6 million; Under contract through: 2031-32

Pettersson has a great agent. He's among the top earners in the National Hockey League, but hasn't produced points commensurate with his salary. Part of that, of course, is where he plays: He has played in just two playoff series with the Canucks in seven seasons, and they won't be in the postseason this year, either. His top point-production came in 2022-23 (102), and he has an underwhelming 35 points in 50 games this season. He also wins fewer than 50% of his faceoffs — not great for a 1C (or 2C) who would likely see time on a power play. Trading for Pettersson would feel like a high-risk, medium reward scenario and would likely require some salary retention.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Robert Thomas of the St. Louis Blues controls the puck during overtime against the New Jersey Devils at Prudential Center on Nov. 26, 2025 in Newark, New Jersey.

Robert Thomas, C, St. Louis Blues

Cap hit: \$8.125 million; Under contract through: 2030-31

With the salary cap on the rise, this contract is more than doable for the Hurricanes, and good, young, right-shot centers in their mid-20s don't grow on trees. But given all of that, the Blues, who are entering a significant retool, will want significant compensation. Think Alexander Nikishin and more. If the Canes make another deal for a defender beyond something for Thomas, that might make sense, but if this would be the only deal the team makes, giving up such a promising young defender would be tough to swallow. Thomas does have winning credibility: Stanley Cup, Memorial Cup, World Juniors. Thomas also plays in all situations, and would be a great fit in Brind'Amour's system. Of all of the available centers, Thomas is the best fit. His price tag may be the deterrent here.

Ryan O'Reilly, C, Nashville Predators

Cap hit: \$4.5 million; Under contract through: 2026-27

If in nine years, Thomas can say his career has mimicked Ryan O'Reilly's, he should be quite pleased with that. O'Reilly is a veteran centerman who's still finding scoreboard success this season in Nashville at a point-per-game clip. A former St. Louis skater, O'Reilly also has a Stanley Cup win in 2019, and adds a measure of grit to whichever team he's on. He's also almost a PPG player in the playoffs over his career. His cap hit would be favorable, the Canes wouldn't have to ask anyone to retain money, and he wins faceoffs at a 55.1% clip while playing the most minutes among forwards on the Predators roster. O'Reilly would potentially be a great fit in Raleigh.

Ryan O'Reilly (90) of the Nashville Predators celebrates scoring against the Florida Panthers during the third period at Amerant Bank Arena on Dec. 4, 2025 in Sunrise, Florida.

Ryan O'Reilly (90) of the Nashville Predators celebrates scoring against the Florida Panthers during the third period at Amerant Bank Arena on Dec. 4, 2025 in Sunrise, Florida. Carmen Mandato Getty Images

Charlie Coyle, C, Columbus Blue Jackets

Cap hit: \$5.25 million; Under contract through: 2025-26

Coyle is really the only true "rental" among the forwards on this list, because the Canes typically don't go for rentals. That's not to say they wouldn't try a short extension with the 33-year-old Coyle, but it will be interesting to see what he does as he hits free agency for just the second time in his career. His best season points total was 60 in 2023-24, but he is a valuable defensive center and better than average in the faceoff circle. The knock here may be that he doesn't add something to the Canes' roster that they don't already have, beyond the ability to line up at center. One thing Coyle does have in spades: Playoff experience. Oh, and let's not forget who the GM in Columbus is. Don Waddell, as much as anyone in the league, knows what the Hurricanes have in the cupboard for a potential creative return on a trade.

Dougie Hamilton, D, New Jersey Devils

Cap hit: \$9 million; Under contract through: 2027-28

This reunion doesn't seem to make much sense on quick glance, but here we are. First and foremost, though, the Devils would have to retain a significant portion of Hamilton's contract if this were to even be an option. Hamilton would also have to want to return to Carolina, as he has a no-move clause in his contract with a 10-team no-trade list. Hamilton has been benign this season from a points production standpoint, and it's fair to wonder if his best years are behind him, even at age 32. In 2022-23, Hamilton posted 74 points in 82 games. Since then, he's totaled 78 over 138 games. Would he play better back in Raleigh? Maybe. Just seems like an odd fit, if it were to happen.

The Carolina Hurricanes Seth Jarvis (24) controls the puck ahead of New Jersey Devils Dougie Hamilton (7) in the second period during Game 1 of their second round Stanley Cup playoff series against the New Jersey Devils on Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at PNC Arena in Raleigh, N.C.

Oliver Ekman-Larsson, D, Toronto Maple Leafs

Cap hit: \$3.5 million; Under contract through: 2027-28

Ekman-Larsson is one of those players who you sometimes forget is still in the league, even though he's not that old. A mainstay with the Coyotes for 11 seasons, OEL was an elite defender playing for a perennially bad team in the desert. He plays defense with an edge and can bomb the puck from the blue line at even strength or on the power play, and provide solid PK minutes. At age 34, he's not quite over the hill, and his cap hit is a friendly \$3.5 million. He would do well on a second D pairing, and would be a good addition to a blue line for a playoff push, and also for a couple more regular seasons, especially if the team has to move a good young defender or two in another deal to acquire a forward.

Other names to keep an eye on: Joseph Woll, Toronto (G); Stuart Skinner, Pittsburgh (G); Justin Faulk, St. Louis (D); Tyler Myers (D); Jonathan Marchessault (C); Nazem Kadri, Calgary (C); Shane Wright, Seattle (C); Brayden Schenn, St. Louis (C); Evander Kane, Vancouver (W); Bobby McMann, Toronto (W); Patrick Laine, Montreal (W).

Hurricanes unlikely to stand pat

For all of the "maybes" and "what ifs," there is one thing that feels certain: The Hurricanes are going to do ... something.

Tulsky is a mad scientist with a lab full of potions and potables at his disposal, and he's shown a willingness to mix a few of those together in his nearly two years at the helm of Carolina's laboratory.

He's not afraid of a few explosions along the way, either, so long as he doesn't burn the whole thing down. And, more often than not, his concoctions have resulted in solid team chemistry — and positive results.

The Hurricanes are close. This close. Carolina is the only team in the NHL not to have lost in regulation in its past 12 games. The Canes are riding momentum toward the toughest stretch of the season for everyone — a 23-games-in-45-days sprint through April 14, a condensed schedule thanks to the Olympics. Teams will lean on their depth, both in raw numbers and on the scoresheet. They'll rely on special teams to steal points whenever possible, and prevent stolen points from impacting playoff races. And they'll rely on



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

rotating goalies, with each keeper needing to give the contenders a chance to win, to stay at the top or in the hunt.

By the end of this week, the Hurricanes will know for certain which players will be available to them to fill each of these roles, and there's a better-than-average chance at least one of those players isn't yet on the team's roster.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

The Athletic

NHL trade board 8.0: Big names abound, but will the deadline end up being a dud?

By: Chris Johnston

Pictured are Nazem Kadri, Robert Thomas and Steven Stamkos, some of the top names on the Big Board.

Mere days away from the NHL's trade deadline, the market is starting to feel like an unstoppable force versus an immovable object.

There will be trades, of course, before the bell sounds at 3 p.m. ET on Friday, but multiple league sources indicated over the weekend that the level of chatter was unusually low for this pocket of the calendar.

It's not for a lack of star power or players who can fill premium positions. Plenty who fall into those categories are available right now. But with recent changes to the collective bargaining agreement, including the creation of a playoff salary cap and new restrictions on double salary retention in trades, there seems to be an expectation that trade activity won't match what we've seen in years gone by.

Of course, that could still change once the dominoes start to fall this week. The centers represent a potential tipping point with three notable ones atop our latest Big Board.

As always, players are listed by how closely they demand watching, based on their potential impact and the current amount of buzz around them.

Note: Net Ratings and market values are via Dom Luszczyszyn's model and are projected for the full season based on statistics through Feb. 28. Goals saved above expected (GSAX) are via Evolving-Hockey, also through Feb. 28. Contract info is via PuckPedia.

Expand all

Collapse all

Profile

Position

Center

Shoots

Right

Age

32

Contract term

2029 UFA

Current cap hit

\$5,625,000

Trocheck demonstrated the kind of role he can play on a winning team while capturing gold at the Milan Cortina Olympics. For Team USA, Trocheck was a monster in the faceoff dot and a key part of a penalty-killing unit that didn't allow a single goal in the tournament. Known for playing with grit and determination, he's got the tools to play in all situations and can handle heavy, difficult minutes. That should only bolster his appeal to teams looking for help down the middle. In fact, there's a sense leading into this trade deadline that the Rangers will likely establish the going rate for a center with their return in a Trocheck deal. Of note: The player's contract includes a 12-team no-trade list.

Market value

\$7,300,000

Net rating

New York Rangers

Forward

Center

Profile

Position

Center

Shoots

Left

Age

35

Contract term

2029 UFA

Current cap hit

\$7,000,000

Kadri represents a 1B option at center with Trocheck unofficially slotted as 1A in this market. A fierce competitor with a Stanley Cup ring already in his collection, Kadri possesses a rare combination of offensive ability and fearlessness. He never backs down from a challenge and seems to elevate his play when the game's emotions are highest. The biggest potential deterrent to a move at this deadline is the three years remaining on his contract beyond this season. Still, the Flames are getting calls.

Market value

\$6,900,000

Net rating



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Calgary Flames

Forward

Center

Profile

Position

Center

Shoots

Right

Age

26

Contract term

2031 UFA

Current cap hit

\$8,125,000

The trade chatter has really started to pick up around Thomas, and why not? Mid-career centers signed to positive-value contracts for several more years don't come available too often. Especially those with multiple 80-point seasons on their resumes. Thomas is an ideal fit for teams just entering their windows to win, such as the Mammoth, who have emerged as a serious suitor here. He possesses strong puck skills and vision, and he can handle the challenge of facing tough competition every night. Any trade involving him will be considered a blockbuster.

Market value

\$9,300,000

Net rating

St. Louis Blues

Forward

Center

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Right

Age

33

Contract term

2027 UFA

Current cap hit

\$6,500,000

The kind of low-maintenance veteran that contenders typically covet at the deadline, Faulk remains a consistent and durable player and is logging more than 22 minutes per night in his 15th NHL season. Known as a stout five-on-five defender who chips in a bit offensively, he generally keeps

things steady. Faulk is also a right shot capable of playing both sides of the ice. As an added bonus, his contract was front-loaded, which means that he's owed less in actual cash than his cap hit now that he's down to the final two seasons on it.

Market value

\$5,800,000

Net rating

St. Louis Blues

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Right

Age

36

Contract term

2027 UFA

Current cap hit

\$3,000,000

Already held out of multiple games by the Canucks for roster management purposes, the veteran defenseman is still weighing whether he'll waive a no-movement clause. The Detroit Red Wings have put forward an offer that appeals to Vancouver, according to league sources, but Myers seems inclined to find out if there will be other options available to him. Myers is a shutdown defender who plays the right side of the ice and is signed through next season at a good cap number. It's likely going to take a second-round pick to enter the conversation here.

Market value

\$775,000

Net rating

Vancouver Canucks

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

34

Contract term



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

2027 UFA

Current cap hit

\$4,900,000

The writing is on the wall for Coleman, who spoke openly with reporters in Calgary about the likelihood of being dealt after returning from the Olympic break. The interest in him is described as "significant." An excellent skater and defensively sound winger, the puck is usually headed in a positive direction when Coleman is on the ice. He's a 20-goal scorer who has been dangerous on the penalty kill over the years and ideally slots in on the third line of a top team — as he did for the Tampa Bay Lightning while winning back-to-back Stanley Cups in 2020 and 2021. He's the kind of deadline upgrade who can raise the bar for a contender.

Market value

\$5,400,000

Net rating

Calgary Flames

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

29

Contract term

2027 UFA

Current cap hit

\$3,600,000

Mangiapane hit the waiver wire Sunday after the Oilers spent months trying to find him a new home. He's unlikely to be claimed, but that doesn't mean he won't still be moved in a subsequent trade. Quite the contrary, in fact, because an acquiring team can send Mangiapane directly to the AHL once he's passed through waivers and would be in a position to get a sweetener from Edmonton for taking on his contract. Mangiapane's game is a long way from the 35-goal season he had in 2021-22, but he did score 13 even-strength goals in Washington last season and was also deployed as a penalty killer on the league's fifth-best unit. Edmonton is desperate to clear up cap space for other moves so he has to go.

Market value

\$1,400,000

Net rating

Edmonton Oilers

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

34

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$5,125,000

The Canucks are trying to sell Kane's track record rather than what he's accomplished this season. A move to his hometown team last summer hasn't worked out as hoped. Still, multiple playoff-bound teams have interest in Kane's physical brand of play and are weighing the merits of taking on the perceived baggage that comes with him. He remains an intimidating presence who is unafraid to go to the hard areas of the ice, and he played in the past two Stanley Cup Finals with the Edmonton Oilers. Vancouver is willing to sweeten the deal by retaining salary.

Market value

\$2,200,000

Net rating

Vancouver Canucks

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Center

Shoots

Right

Age

36

Contract term

2028 UFA

Current cap hit

\$8,000,000

The future Hall of Famer has been on a heater after a slow start and just hit the 30-goal mark for the 10th time in his career. That's difficult to ignore. Stamkos recently told reporters he wasn't looking to expedite his way out of Nashville, but The Athletic's Pierre LeBrun reported there are multiple destinations he might consider attractive enough to waive his no-movement clause: Minnesota, Dallas, New Jersey and Tampa Bay. A trade involving Stamkos might not



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

materialize until the summer. However, given how he's turned back the clock and filled the net this season, his name is worthy of a long look in the days ahead, too.

Market value

\$6,700,000

Net rating

Nashville Predators

Forward

Winger

Center

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Left

Age

34

Contract term

2028 UFA

Current cap hit

\$3,500,000

One of the reasons Sweden elected to bring Ekman-Larsson to the Milan Cortina Olympics was that decision-makers noted he played like an "angry old man." That was a compliment. There's a welcome edge to the veteran defenseman's game. Plus he's turned back the clock this season by producing offense at a rate not seen since his days with the Arizona Coyotes. OEL is signed for two more seasons and has shown himself well-suited to playing high-stakes hockey after winning a Stanley Cup in Florida two years ago. And at a deadline where the Leafs desperately need to sell some players, he's an attractive asset to move.

Market value

\$4,400,000

Net rating

Toronto Maple Leafs

Defenseman

Left-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Right

Age

32

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$4,400,000

Right-shot defensemen are always in demand and Murphy is at a stage in his career when he'd like to play for a more competitive team. Rangy and strong, the pending unrestricted free agent has posted strong defensive results under less-than-favorable conditions with the Blackhawks in recent years. His contract should be fairly easy to move, particularly in light of how few options are likely to be available in free agency this summer. Chicago also has two remaining retention spots and could use one to boost the return.

Market value

\$2,700,000

Net rating

Chicago Blackhawks

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Center

Shoots

Left

Age

35

Contract term

2027 UFA

Current cap hit

\$4,500,000

O'Reilly would shoot up the board if the Predators made a firm decision to trade him. So far that hasn't happened, but multiple teams are keeping tabs here because O'Reilly is defying the aging curve with strong two-way results, including a bounce-back offensive performance that has already seen him eclipse last season's point total. The 2019 Conn Smythe Trophy winner remains a beast in the faceoff circle and has the ability to be a true difference-maker for a contender.

Market value

\$9,400,000

Net rating

Nashville Predators

Forward

Center

Profile



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Position

Center

Shoots

Left

Age

27

Contract term

2032 UFA

Current cap hit

\$11,600,000

There was some renewed trade interest in Pettersson before the Olympic break. He has played at a higher level than last season, when his name first circulated in trade rumors, but remains a long way off the performer he was when Vancouver signed him to a \$92.8 million, eight-year extension in March 2024. That obviously affects his trade value. However, the fact Pettersson has previously been an elite offensive play-driver makes him an enticing proposition for some, especially since the price tag to land him shouldn't be too steep. The biggest concern for the Canucks in considering a Pettersson trade is the fact that he may blossom again in a new environment.

Market value

\$6,900,000

Net rating

Vancouver Canucks

Forward

Center

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Right

Age

32

Contract term

2028 UFA

Current cap hit

\$9,000,000

Trade talk has cooled off since Hamilton returned to the Devils lineup following a healthy scratch in January, but he's still very much available. New Jersey would like to clear up cap space for other moves, and Hamilton no longer has a full no-trade clause in his contract. He's a mobile right-shot defenseman who is logging more than 21 minutes per night this season. His offensive prowess isn't what it once was, but the puck still tends to be moving in the right direction when he's on the ice. As a bonus, the actual dollars owed on

Hamilton's contract are less than the cap hit attached to the deal.

Market value

\$8,100,000

Net rating

New Jersey Devils

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Right

Age

31

Contract term

2027 UFA

Current cap hit

\$5,100,000

Coming off a strong Olympic tournament for Finland, his first national team assignment in nearly a decade, Ristolainen is once again available on the trade market. The Flyers can stick to their guns in terms of an ask due to the fact that he's under contract for another season beyond this one. A big right-shot defenseman who plays with some edge, Ristolainen has taken steps toward being more reliable on the defensive side of the puck since arriving in Philadelphia. Some scouts believe he could be a reliable second-pair option if slotted into the right system.

Market value

\$3,500,000

Net rating

Philadelphia Flyers

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

29

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

\$1,350,000

The door isn't closed on McMann remaining in Toronto with a contract extension in place, but it's currently an either/or situation with the pending unrestricted free agent. McMann skates extremely well for a man of his size, is unafraid to take the body and get in on the forecheck, and has authored a great story of perseverance — going undrafted before working his way up from the ECHL. He also carries the unofficial distinction of having the most team-friendly contract among players available at this deadline, which will be important to contenders as the NHL institutes a playoff salary cap for the first time.

Market value

\$4,500,000

Net rating

Toronto Maple Leafs

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Center

Shoots

Left

Age

31

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$1,500,000

The Leafs won't be able to recoup the package they gave up to acquire Laughton at last year's deadline, when they sent a first-round pick and prospect Nikita Grebenkin to Philadelphia, but the high-character center still has value. Not only is he a heart-and-soul player who helps set the dressing room culture, but he's also incredibly reliable in the faceoff dot. The Flyers already chopped his cap hit in half, which means that Toronto can make him a \$750,000 player for any interested team.

Market value

\$2,300,000

Net rating

Toronto Maple Leafs

Forward

Center

Winger

Profile

Position

Center

Shoots

Left

Age

30

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$4,250,000

A defense-first center who specializes in smothering opponents, Dickinson is ideally suited for a bottom-six role on a strong team. He's produced strong underlying metrics for the Blackhawks this season despite being fed a steady diet of defensive-zone starts. While Dickinson doesn't produce much offense, he can anchor a shutdown line and bring added value as a penalty killer. He's also playing on an expiring contract.

Market value

\$3,000,000

Net rating

Chicago Blackhawks

Forward

Center

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

30

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$4,500,000

The well-traveled perennial 20-goal man has a penchant for getting under the skin of opponents with a high-energy game. Bunting is unafraid to engage in puck battles and is well-suited to playing alongside high-end teammates because he can help win it back for them. He's also a pending unrestricted free agent who is having a reasonably productive season. Expect Nashville to shop him even if it remains in the playoff hunt.

Market value

\$4,100,000

Net rating

Nashville Predators

Forward



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Winger

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Right

Age

29

Contract term

2032 UFA

Current cap hit

\$6,000,000

Garland signed a six-year extension with the Canucks last summer, but he has since seen the team pivot to a rebuild. He is a strong skater who is unafraid to skate through opponents despite his diminutive size. More of a playmaker than a goal-scorer, he's an excellent complementary piece who can be counted on to produce at a 50-point pace. Teams are interested in the player, but moving this kind of contract might be better tackled in the offseason.

Market value

\$4,700,000

Net rating

Vancouver Canucks

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Right

Age

27

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$8,700,000

Working his way back from core muscle surgery that's limited him to just five games this season, Laine's future lies somewhere other than Montreal. The Canadiens don't have an obvious spot for him in the lineup and seem inclined to move off his contract in order to clear cap room needed for other moves. While Laine is no longer the game-breaking talent who took the NHL by storm a decade ago, he still possesses a wicked shot and remains a serious power-play threat. The Canadiens have the ability to retain salary on his expiring contract in order to help facilitate a move.

Market value

\$2,700,000

Net rating

Montreal Canadiens

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

36

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$3,250,000

Even though he's more associated with being a playmaker than a goal scorer, it's hard to ignore the fact Nyquist still hasn't scored a goal this season. He signed in Winnipeg last summer, and it hasn't worked out well for either side. Nyquist was traded for a second-round pick at last year's deadline, going from Nashville to Minnesota, but the price won't be nearly so steep this time around. He remains a strong skater with offensive flair and may be worth taking a flier on.

Market value

\$2,200,000

Net rating

Winnipeg Jets

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Left

Age

27

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$3,250,000

The Sharks have explored a short-term contract extension with Ferraro, but he remains a pending unrestricted free



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

agent. They'll have to weigh the merits of trading him ahead of the deadline if that doesn't change. Ferraro is a minute-munching, shot-blocking defenseman who appears capable of producing much better numbers on a more complete team. He's also a decent puck mover and penalty killer with a competitive streak to match.

Market value

\$2,200,000

Net rating

San Jose Sharks

Defenseman

Left-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Right

Age

27

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$2,750,000

A recent healthy scratch and the Bruins' failed pursuit of Rasmus Andersson don't exactly bode well for the future of the right-shot defenseman in Boston. The pending unrestricted free agent is a trade chip for an organization retooling on the fly. He is a mobile skater who excels in the defensive aspects of the game. While big at 6-foot-3, he isn't known for being overly physical.

Market value

\$1,100,000

Net rating

Boston Bruins

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

34

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$3,150,000

A rejuvenated season for the veteran center included a strong showing at the recent Milan Cortina Olympics with Finland. Haula has tremendous speed and penalty killing chops, and can chip in a bit offensively. He's a pending unrestricted free agent who the Predators are taking calls on.

Market value

\$2,600,000

Net rating

Nashville Predators

Forward

Center

Winger

Profile

Position

Center

Shoots

Left

Age

31

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$1,800,000

Blueger is fresh off an appearance at the Milan Olympics for Latvia and has been filling the net in Vancouver since returning from a three-month absence due to a lower-body injury. While he's more typically known for his speed and ability to take care of his own end as a defensive-minded center, the scoring surge won't hurt his trade value. Neither will the fact that Blueger won a Stanley Cup with the Golden Knights in 2023 and is playing on an expiring contract.

Market value

\$3,000,000

Net rating

Vancouver Canucks

Forward

Center

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

29

Contract term

2027 UFA

Current cap hit

\$3,500,000

The best season of Foegele's career has been followed by one of the worst. He was made a healthy scratch for a game in January after being unable to find a groove and replicate his prior level of productivity. At his best, Foegele plays with speed and is an effective forechecker who helps keep plays alive in the offensive zone. He's got a great shot and the percentages haven't been in his favor — hinting at a bounce-back to come. The puck tends to be moving in the right direction when he's on the ice. The Kings are committed to finding him a new home.

Market value

\$4,600,000

Net rating

Los Angeles Kings

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

25

Contract term

2030 UFA

Current cap hit

\$4,820,000

Kotkaniemi has seen a significant decline in his role with the Hurricanes, which makes him an interesting trade candidate given his age and the position he plays. The biggest red flag is that a player once prized for his 200-foot game has seen a big dip in his ability to drive play this season. Kotkaniemi's typically inconsistent offensive numbers have trended hard in the wrong direction as well. He still has four seasons remaining on his contract beyond this one, albeit at a reasonable cap number, and only has limited control of the situation courtesy of a 10-team no-trade list.

Market value

\$1,800,000

Net rating

Carolina Hurricanes

Forward

Winger

Center

Profile

Position

Center

Shoots

Left

Age

34

Contract term

2028 UFA

Current cap hit

\$6,500,000

There was plenty of interest in Schenn ahead of last year's deadline, and the Blues now appear more inclined to move the veteran center amid a disappointing season. What was once a full no-trade clause in Schenn's contract is now a 15-team no-trade list, giving him less control of the process. He's had a difficult season that mirrors what his team has endured, as evidenced by some concerning defensive metrics, but Schenn should still carry value as a reliable center capable of impacting the game at both ends of the ice. He's scored at a 22-goal, 54-point pace across a 17-year NHL career.

Market value

\$4,200,000

Net rating

St. Louis Blues

Forward

Winger

Center

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Right

Age

36

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$2,750,000

As the Jets continue to scrape along near the bottom of the NHL standings, Schenn should be one of their easiest pieces to move. While the sturdy right-shot defenseman may not return the same value Winnipeg gave up for him at last year's deadline — they dealt second- and fourth-round picks to Pittsburgh — he still has plenty of utility as a depth



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

defender. Schenn is a veteran of 1,100 NHL games who effectively protects the area around his net and consistently puts his body on the line as a shot blocker. He's also a two-time Stanley Cup champion.

Market value

\$775,000

Net rating

Winnipeg Jets

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

31

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$4,037,500

A big winger capable of playing up and down the lineup, Mikheyev brings a fair amount of versatility with his game. He's been deployed as a penalty-killer throughout his NHL career and is a threat to score short-handed. Not only is Mikheyev a pending UFA, 15 percent of his contract was retained by the Vancouver Canucks in a previous trade, so the cap hit on his deal is eligible to be reduced further.

Market value

\$4,000,000

Net rating

Chicago Blackhawks

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Right

Age

32

Contract term

2027 UFA

Current cap hit

\$3,000,000

A depth contributor on Florida's back-to-back championship teams, Rodrigues' name is circulating with the Panthers in danger of missing the playoffs. He possesses a good shot and has shown himself capable of producing a second wave of offense from the bottom six. Rodrigues is under contract through the end of next season.

Market value

\$4,600,000

Net rating

Florida Panthers

Forward

Center

Winger

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

33

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$5,500,000

An OG member of the Kraken, Schwartz is among a group of intriguing forwards playing out the final years of their contracts with Seattle — along with captain Jordan Eberle and Eeli Tolvanen, among others. He will carry trade value if the Kraken sell again. A quick, skilled winger coming off a 26-goal season, Schwartz has a little extra shine thanks to his Stanley Cup bona fides, earned during the 2019 run in St. Louis. He's cracked the 20-goal plateau on six occasions.

Market value

\$4,400,000

Net rating

Seattle Kraken

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Left

Age



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

33

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$4,600,000

One of the largest men in the league at 6-foot-7 and nearly 260 pounds, Oleksiak represents the kind of depth contenders crave. He has seen his usage decline the past couple seasons in Seattle but remains capable of taking a regular five-on-five shift while chipping in on the penalty kill. The pending unrestricted free agent is also comfortable playing both sides of the ice.

Market value

\$1,300,000

Net rating

Seattle Kraken

Defenseman

Left-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Left

Age

27

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$1,250,000

The Jets have invested nearly a decade in Stanley's development and seen him blossom with a surge in scoring to go with the stout physical play you'd expect from a 6-foot-7 defenseman. Unafraid to drop his gloves to defend teammates and with a reach that's basically unmatched across the league, Stanley is in position to cash in this summer with a contract that could be worth \$25 million or more. That leaves Winnipeg with a decision to make: Does it want to be the team offering that deal, or is it time to cash in on its investment by putting him on the trade market?

Market value

\$775,000

Net rating

Winnipeg Jets

Defenseman

Left-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Right

Age

29

Contract term

2028 UFA

Current cap hit

\$2,750,000

The Flames aren't in a position where they have to move Whitecloud, who was recently acquired from Vegas in the Rasmus Andersson trade. He's signed through the 2027-28 season and could yet become a fixture in Calgary. However, the Flames need to listen on everybody, and a big, solid right-shot defenseman such as Whitecloud is bound to draw interest.

Market value

\$2,200,000

Net rating

Calgary Flames

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Right

Age

29

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$4,750,000

With no apparent progress toward a contract extension with Tuch, the Sabres are facing a decision. While you can imagine why new general manager Jarmo Kekäläinen won't want to disrupt the mood around his surging club with the Sabres chasing a long-overdue return to the playoffs, Tuch is an important asset. He's a big, fast power forward with a proven ability to put the puck in the net. And he's looking for a big raise on his next contract.

Market value

\$8,200,000

Net rating

Buffalo Sabres

Forward



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Winger

\$1,700,000

Profile

Net rating

Position

Boston Bruins

Winger

Defenseman

Shoots

Left-shot defenseman

Right

Profile

Age

Position

35

Defenseman

Contract term

Shoots

2029 UFA

Left

Current cap hit

Age

\$5,500,000

27

The fit in Nashville hasn't been anything close to what Marchessault envisioned when he signed there in July 2024. Still, he scored 21 goals last season — his lowest total in an 82-game campaign since 2015-16 — and has seen yet another decline in his on-ice results this season. The 2023 Conn Smythe winner boasts a resume that includes 102 career playoff games, though, and his cap hit should become even more palatable in a rising-cap environment.

Contract term

2027 UFA

Current cap hit

\$1,350,000

A prototypical defensive defenseman who puts his body on the line by blocking shots and playing opponents physically, Benoit has endured some recent scratches. The Leafs have a number of depth options at the position, and Benoit represents a player who could bring back some value with a cap-friendly contract that runs through next season. What you see is what you get with Benoit, who has extremely limited offensive impacts.

Market value

Market value

\$2,600,000

\$775,000

Net rating

Net rating

Nashville Predators

Toronto Maple Leafs

Forward

Defenseman

Winger

Left-shot defenseman

Profile

Profile

Position

Position

Defenseman

Center

Shoots

Shoots

Left

Right

Age

Age

25

22

Contract term

Contract term

2027 RFA

2027 RFA

Current cap hit

Current cap hit

\$3,200,000

\$886,667

Lohrei's name circulated in trade rumors when the Bruins engaged in discussions on Rasmus Andersson. He's signed through next season at a reasonable cap number and has one year of team control remaining as a restricted free agent beyond that — making him an attractive asset. Lohrei is incredibly mobile for his size and will chip in with a bit of offense from the back end. He's also made strides defensively.

Rival scouts started hearing Wright's name in the rumor mill during World Juniors earlier this month. The 2022 No. 4 pick is still in a developmental phase but has seen his offensive production dip from last season's 19-goal, 44-point

Market value



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

campaign. Wright profiles as an intriguing two-way center and will likely only be moved in a trade that sees a player with similar upside going back to Seattle. The Kraken like their organizational depth down the middle and are looking for a game-breaking winger.

Market value

\$3,800,000

Net rating

Seattle Kraken

Forward

Center

Winger

Profile

Position

Goalie

Age

27

Contract term

2026 UFA

The pending unrestricted free agent has put up solid numbers in Pittsburgh since coming over from Edmonton in a December trade, producing 8.05 saves above expected in the span, per *Evolving-Hockey*. Skinner is a positionally sound goaltender who excels at remaining square to the shooter. He's also got plenty of big-game experience from consecutive runs to the Stanley Cup Final with the Oilers.

Market value

Not available for goalies

Goalie stats

Pittsburgh Penguins

Goalie

Profile

Position

Goalie

Age

32

Contract term

2027 UFA

Binnington burnished his reputation as a big-game goalie for Team Canada at the Milan Cortina Olympics, delivering a strong performance for the silver medalists despite arriving at the tournament with some of the worst numbers among NHL starters. That had to catch the eye of competitive teams looking for an upgrade in goal. The trade market is thin on viable options at the position. Binnington's contract includes a 14-team no-trade clause and runs through the end of next season.

Market value

Not available for goalies

Goalie stats

St. Louis Blues

Goalie

Profile

Position

Center

Shoots

Right

Age

32

Contract term

2027 UFA

Current cap hit

\$5,000,000

The emergence of Anaheim's higher-end forward talent has marginalized Strome's impact on the lineup this season and he's seen a significant reduction in minutes as a result. Even with his production dipping, the Ducks should be able to find a taker for a center who has consistently produced at a rate higher than 0.5 points per game throughout his NHL career. Strome is a smart player capable of playing a quick game and is under contract for one more season beyond this one.

Market value

\$2,100,000

Net rating

Anaheim Ducks

Forward

Center

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Right

Age

27

Contract term

2031 UFA

Current cap hit

\$8,125,000

Kyrou's name circled through the rumor mill before his no-movement clause officially took effect on July 1, and it resurfaced abruptly in November when he was made a healthy scratch by the scuffling Blues. While his production is a shade off its usual level, Kyrou remains a highly skilled



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

winger who possesses an enviable toolkit: blinding speed, high-end vision and creativity to spare. As much as he doesn't seem inclined to want a change of scenery, this could be a sea-change season in St. Louis.

Market value

\$8,600,000

Net rating

St. Louis Blues

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

29

Contract term

2031 UFA

Current cap hit

\$5,500,000

A strong skater with a nose for the net, DeBrusk is a difference-maker when on his game. But the Canucks have also made him a healthy scratch this season. DeBrusk scored 28 goals during his first season in Vancouver but hasn't seen the puck find the net at nearly that same rate in Year 2. There's a lot of meat left on the bone with a contract that includes a no-movement clause, which definitely complicates things, but DeBrusk is at an age where missing the playoffs won't sit well. There are competitive teams out there sizing up the potential fit.

Market value

\$4,900,000

Net rating

Vancouver Canucks

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Right

Age

34

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$3,000,000

Currently seeing the lowest ice time from his six seasons in Washington, van Riemsdyk is a strong candidate to be moved by the deadline. The veteran right-shot defenseman is a decent skater known for his defensive impacts. He's best used in a depth role.

Market value

\$2,900,000

Net rating

Washington Capitals

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Right

Age

35

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$4,050,000

A pending UFA who had hip surgery last offseason, Jensen is a veteran puck-mover who can comfortably handle third-pair duty. He isn't overly physical and is a modest offensive contributor, but he's produced steady underlying numbers for Ottawa while starting less than half of his shifts in the offensive zone.

Market value

\$2,100,000

Net rating

Ottawa Senators

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Center

Shoots

Left

Age

31



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$1,100,000

The Czech Olympian found the playing time he was looking for when he signed in Vancouver in November, but the Canucks are going nowhere fast. Kämpf is ideally suited to be a fourth-line center. He's a low-maintenance player who kills penalties, wins faceoffs and consistently remains on the safe side of the puck. Neither team tends to get much done offensively during his minutes.

Market value

\$1,100,000

Net rating

Vancouver Canucks

Forward

Center

Profile

Position

Center

Shoots

Right

Age

33

Contract term

2027 UFA

Current cap hit

\$1,750,000

A veteran right-shot center who was already flipped from St. Louis to New Jersey this season, Bjugstad will likely be on the move again. He's ideally suited for a fourth-line role at this stage of his career. He is a big man who can handle himself in the faceoff dot and brings more than 800 games of NHL experience.

Market value

\$1,300,000

Net rating

New Jersey Devils

Forward

Center

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Right

Age

30

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$1,500,000

Acquired by the Sharks from Vancouver on Jan. 20, San Jose has been unable to sign the pending unrestricted free agent to an extension and is now open to flipping him elsewhere rather than risking losing him for nothing. What remains to be seen is if it can get a return that's equivalent to the two second-round picks it sent to the Canucks. Sherwood is well on his way to a 20-goal season and is an excellent skater for a big man, which makes him well-suited to disrupt opponents on the forecheck. Sherwood's work ethic is a major asset, too.

Market value

\$5,400,000

Net rating

San Jose Sharks

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Right

Age

34

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$2,100,000

Playing time has been difficult to come by for Järnkrok, who has been routinely scratched by Maple Leafs coach Craig Berube and is averaging a career-low 11:28 when he dresses. That's coming off a season nearly lost entirely to groin and sports hernia surgeries. Järnkrok is an undersized forward who doesn't play with any physicality — not exactly traits generally prized by Berube. Age and health-related decline may also be catching up to him. However, his biggest attribute has always been his ability to read the ice and consistently make good decisions with the puck.

Market value

\$775,000

Net rating

Toronto Maple Leafs

Forward



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Winger

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

29

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$850,000

A depth winger with plenty of size, Greer has already established career bests this season with 11 goals and 22 points. He represents a natural piece for the Panthers to flip since he's due to hit free agency this summer. Greer is a good skater who plays with an edge and carries some added shine after lifting the Stanley Cup in Florida last June.

Market value

\$1,900,000

Net rating

Florida Panthers

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Right

Age

24

Contract term

2026 RFA

Current cap hit

\$2,200,000

Schneider is a pending restricted free agent, which means that someone is really going to have to compel the Rangers to part with a player still under team control. But they're open to having those conversations right now. Schneider is a right-shot defenseman with good size and all the raw tools needed to become an effective top-four option. A big bump in usage this season has produced some concerning defensive metrics, so there's definitely still room for improvement in his game.

Market value

\$775,000

Net rating

New York Rangers

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Goalie

Age

23

Contract term

2027 RFA

The 23-year-old is having a superb season as part of the tandem in Minnesota but finds himself on this list because of the tremendous value he could potentially bring back in a trade. The Wild have Filip Gustavsson under contract through 2031 and will at least listen to interest in Wallstedt, according to The Athletic's Michael Russo. Minnesota is going to need to get a front-line player back in order to make this work. But after parting with their other A-plus assets in order to land Quinn Hughes in December, the Wild are willing to take another big swing before the deadline.

Market value

Not available for goalies

Goalie stats

Minnesota Wild

Goalie

Profile

Position

Goalie

Age

37

Contract term

2026 UFA

Like many of his Panthers teammates, Bobrovsky has had a tough year after making three straight trips to the Stanley Cup Final. The 37-year-old is on an expiring contract and hasn't seen any progress toward an extension in Florida, which at least brings the possibility of a trade into the picture. While that may not be the most likely outcome here, it's worth noting that Bobrovsky's contract only features a 16-team no-trade list.

Market value

Not available for goalies

Goalie stats

Florida Panthers

Goalie



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

NHL weekend rankings: 5 post-Olympic break overreactions (unless they're not)

By: Sean McIndoe

Welcome back to the NHL weekend rankings, returning after a three-week Olympic break. Aw, I missed you too.

Of course, those three weeks only contained a handful of NHL games for each team, so in theory our outlook on the league shouldn't have changed too much. In theory, sure. But this is the real world, where half our job as fans is to overreact to anything and everything.

So today, before we get to the top five and bottom five, let's first take a moment to pick a few teams and go way overboard based on their first few games back from the Olympic break.

Bonus five: Overreactions to the NHL's first week back (or are they?)

5. The Toronto Maple Leafs are cooked – No argument here, right? They went into the break on a three-game win streak that offered just a smidge of hope that they could get back in the race, but three regulation losses have put an end to that. Now they're sellers, and they should be selling big. How big? Mirtle weighs in here, and Jonas is already justifiably wondering if they'll screw it up.

4. The Columbus Blue Jackets were fun while they lasted – No team had worse timing around the Olympic break than the Jackets, who were the hottest team in hockey when the league shut down. Coming out of the break, they've lost their first two, including a crucial one against the wild-card Boston Bruins and another in overtime to the lowly New York Rangers. It's not over by any stretch, but any hopes they could continue to ride their momentum have been quashed.

3. The Buffalo Sabres haven't missed a beat – At the other end of the momentum spectrum are the Sabres, who were hot going into the break and somehow came out of it looking even better. They've started with three straight wins, all on the road and all in regulation, including Saturday's stomping of the Tampa Bay Lightning. At this point, the playoffs are getting close to a lock and first place in the Atlantic isn't completely out of the question. This is happening, folks.

2. Wait, isn't the deadline in a few days? – It's been a week since the Olympic trade freeze ended, and so far we've had exactly one trade of any consequence with the real-thing deadline coming on Friday. If that feels weird, it's because it is weird. The week before the deadline is usually a lot busier than this.

This time last year, we'd already had the Seth Jones trade. The year before, Chris Tanev had already been moved. The year before that, Timo Meier, Dmitry Orlov, Jake McCabe and Tanner Jeannot had all been dealt with four days to go.

Most of the bigger moves tend to happen in the two or three days before the deadline, which is to say right about now. So there's still time. But with the Olympics potentially throwing a wrench into the normal workflow, you have to wonder when GMs are going to get cooking. They're already behind schedule.

1. The Los Angeles Kings are broken – I had them on the list even before yesterday's news, but Ken Holland's decision to

make a coaching change only reinforces it. Jim Hiller was a popular "first coach fired" pick heading into the season, and while he stuck around long enough for Dean Evason to steal that honor, this change felt inevitable. Having D.J. Smith around as an assistant with recent head coaching experience should make for a smooth transition.

But a transition to what? The Kings looked absolutely awful in their first two games back, giving up 14 goals in a pair of losses that dropped them down to tenth in the West. Ironically, they followed that up with a tidy 2-0 win over the Flames on Saturday, but by that point Holland had reportedly already made his decision.

And it's hard to argue, given how tenuous the path to a playoff spot looks right now. Remember, Holland already went out and got Artemi Panarin, arguably the biggest name available at this year's deadline. An extension meant that move wasn't a one-off rental, but you typically don't go out and add 34-year-olds unless you're in win-now mode. And the Kings weren't winning anywhere near often enough.

We saw the Blue Jackets get a nice new coach bounce this year, and the Sabres somehow managed to get one from a GM change. If the Kings can follow suit, they might be OK as far as the wild-card chase. Do they have a best-case scenario beyond that? Based on the last week, that would be a no. Kings fans are hoping we're overreacting. I'm not sure we are.

What You Should Read Next

Jim Hiller firing too little, too late for Kings team with delusions of contending

Jim Hiller firing too little, too late for Kings team with delusions of contending

While a new voice can help the Kings move on from last season's playoff disaster against the Oilers, it's shocking it took this long.

On to this week's rankings...

Road to the Cup

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

If you missed it, the Oilers put Andrew Mangiapane on waivers yesterday; we'll find out if was claimed today. Either way, the move may spell the end of one of the offseason's weirdest signings, one that seemed destined to work but very much has not. And maybe more importantly, the move will free up some extra flexibility for the Oilers to make a much-needed move.

5. Minnesota Wild (35-16-10, +24 true goals differential*) – Joe Smith got some interesting comments from Bill Guerin in the aftermath of Team USA's gold medal win, including some of the post-game controversy.

4. Carolina Hurricanes (38-15-6, +37) – Here's my question: Are they a lock for top seed in the Metro? They came out of the weekend seven points up on the second-place Pittsburgh Penguins, which feels insurmountable with Sidney Crosby



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

missing multiple weeks. The New York Islanders are hanging tough, but would need to continue their recent surge for at least another week or two. It feels like the Hurricanes are home and cooled, which could have some interesting implications for how they play things down the stretch.

3. Dallas Stars (36-14-9, +36) – Eight straight wins, which could become ten with the Vancouver Canucks and Calgary Flames up next. And then comes the big showdown on deadline night: their first game against the Colorado Avalanche since the season's opening week.

2. Tampa Bay Lightning (38-16-4, +54) – Two things can both be true: We all know they're not actually going to reacquire Steven Stamkos, and also it would be super cool if they did.

1. Colorado Avalanche (39-10-9, +79) – So at what point, if any, do we start to worry here? On Jan. 3, this team won their tenth straight to move their record to a ridiculous 31-2-7. But since then they're a very pedestrian 8-8-2. You'd expect them to cool off at some point, if only out of boredom. But we're coming up on two months of this being a fake .500 team. We have to start taking that seriously soon, right?

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

Not ranked: Vegas Golden Knights – We have to figure this Pacific Division thing out.

That day is apparently not today, because we've once again got a top five with three Central teams and nobody from the Pacific. If we're picking the best five teams at any given time, there's no reason they'd have to be spread out nicely across divisions. But if we're trying to pick a Cup winner, there's an argument that what we have now can't work. Only one of those three Central powerhouses is going to make the conference final. And barring some crossover wild-card weirdness, there's going to be a Pacific team waiting there for them.

Right now, that team sure seems like it should be the Knights. They've spent the entire season doing just about everything other than pull away in a division they should win, but they still hold a comfortable lead. The Ducks, Kings and Kraken all have plenty of flaws, and the Oilers just refuse to look like a true contender. That leaves the Knights, even if it's by default. Doesn't it?

The projections page sure thinks so — they have Vegas with the fourth-best Cup odds, ahead of teams like the Stars and Wild. That makes sense when you factor playoff path into the equation, and maybe we should be doing it too. By the end of the season, we probably will be. For now, it would be nice to see a bit more about how the Central shakes out.

The bigger point is that it's not especially difficult to imagine the Knights team being the one that finally finds its top gear down the stretch, and next thing you know we're two rounds into the playoffs and everyone is saying of course Vegas look great, we should have all seen this coming. But this is also a team with fewer wins than the Ducks and Mammoth (and tied with the Kraken), and just one more regulation win than the Predators, Flames and Jets. Finally fix the standings so that teams can't just play for free points in overtime and this season looks different.

In other words, they should be good, but so far, they're not. Or at least they're not good often enough, including yesterday's 5-0 loss to the Penguins. And we're at the point where the beat writer's "they're obviously not going to fire the coach" shirt is raising questions already answered by his shirt.

Then again, the Knights are just exploiting a system that's there for everyone. They tend to do that when it comes to the player market too, which makes this an interesting week. Do we get another big move from the Knights, or have they already crossed off everything on their shopping list? We'll find out over the next few days. But it may take a few more weeks to trust them enough to get them back into the top five. Even if that's where they probably belong.

Pittsburgh's Parker Wotherspoon checks Vegas' Reilly Smith, pushing him off balance.

The Vegas Golden Knights are at the top of the Pacific Division, but don't quite look like they belong there. Charles LeClaire / Imagn Images

The bottom five

The five teams headed towards dead last, and the best lottery odds for the top pick in this year's draft and a shot at Gavin McKenna or Ivar Stenberg.

I'm just going to go ahead and say it, some of you readers are out of your minds if you don't think Connor Hellebuyck is easily a top-10 goalie of the modern era, and a lot closer to top-five than he is to not being on the list at all. With three Vezinas, a Hart and now a gold medal, he's not quite knocking on the door of the Hasek/Roy/Brodeur trinity, but he's within arm's reach. The playoff resume is an issue, sure, but if you don't think a three-time Vezina winner is in the elite tier then I'm not sure what to tell you.

5. Chicago Blackhawks (23-28-9, -29) – Yesterday's impressive shutout win over Utah ended a post-break losing streak, which is either good news or not depending on where you're at on the importance of another high pick. On that note, with Winnipeg tomorrow and the Canucks on Thursday, this is shaping up as a big week for lottery odds.

4. Calgary Flames (24-28-7, -26) – I've got to be honest, I kind of like the idea of Nazem Kadri going to the Sabres. Let's make that happen.

3. St. Louis Blues (21-29-9, -50) – No, see, hockey gods, when I said I wanted the team Doug Armstrong built to beat the team Bill Guerin built in a tight Sunday battle, what I meant was...

Anyway, this is the week the Blues either trade Robert Thomas and/or Jordan Kyrou, or at least have to stop pretending for a few weeks. Exciting times. Here's Shayna on what potential suitors should know.

2. New York Rangers (23-29-7, -32) – Do you think it was awkward for Vincent Trochek and J.T. Miller and Mike Sullivan to have to stop their gold medal talk whenever Adam Fox entered the room? I bet it was super awkward.

1. Vancouver Canucks (18-34-7, -68) – The latest from Drance not only captures the critical week ahead of the organization, it also makes use of the phrase "vortex of ineptitude" to do it.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Not ranked: New Jersey Devils – It's been a weird stretch of NHL schedule for Devils fans. Heading into the break, they lost three straight in regulation to essentially end any lingering playoff hopes. Coming out of it, they went right back to losing, a streak they snapped against the Blues on Saturday. They're done. Despite coming into the season with Cup hopes, they're going to miss the playoffs by a mile, while probably also almost certainly losing out on a top-five pick. What a disaster.

Oh, and in between, the franchise player became a national hero.

We'll stick to what Jack Hughes did on the ice, as opposed to the mess he and his teammates made off of it. But scoring the biggest goal of his career, and the biggest in American hockey since 1980, is the kind of thing that can redirect a player's career. Mario Lemieux used his 1987 Canada Cup winner to signal that he was well and truly ready to take the torch from Wayne Gretzky. Hughes may not be in the "best player in the world" discussion, but will we look back at the 2026 Olympics as a turning point in his career trajectory?

Your browser does not support the video tag.

And maybe more importantly, if you're a Devils fan, does that potentially save an otherwise miserable season? Ever since being taken first overall in 2019, Hughes has essentially done two things at the NHL level: flash the kind of elite-level talent few players have, and then fail to do it for long enough to truly be considered for the league's top tier.

Thanks to inconsistency and (mostly) injury, he's only had one full season of top production, and that came back in 2022-23. Seven seasons into his career, he's been a worthy No. 1 pick, but not the kind that transforms a franchise.

Right now, the Devils could use some transforming. Barring a miracle down the stretch, this year's miss will be their second in three years, wrapped around last year's brief appearance that saw them go out in five. Winning one playoff game in three years doesn't sound like contender status, and the 2022-23 team that had 112 points and at least won a round feels like a lifetime ago.

That's led to speculation of some big moves to come, including a busy rumor mill for Dougie Hamilton. Is that enough? Probably not, but after missing out on the Quinn Hughes deal we all figured would be a sure thing, there aren't any easy answers here. There's also the question of whether Tom Fitzgerald will even get the chance to be turn this around, or whether a new GM is incoming. If so, what does that mean for Sheldon Keefe? Can you really start over when you've built the roster around two top picks in their prime?

Like we said, no easy answers. Except for one: Hughes using his big moment as a launching pad to finally looking like that consistent Hart-level franchise player would go a long way towards moving the needle in the right direction. It might even change how the 2025-26 season is remembered in New Jersey, from yet another disappointment to the start of a new era. Let's see how it plays out.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026



Preview: March 2 at Seattle

By: Walt Ruff & Peter Dewar

Canes are 10-0-2 in their last 12 games

SEATTLE - The Carolina Hurricanes start a week out west tonight as they take on the Seattle Kraken.

When: Monday, March 2

Puck Drop: 10:00 p.m. ET

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

Listen: 99.9 The Fan, Hurricanes App

Canes Record: 38-15-6 (82 Points, 1st - Metropolitan Division)

Canes Last Game: 5-2 Win over the Detroit Red Wings on Saturday, Feb. 28

Kraken Record: 28-22-9 (65 Points, 4th - Pacific Division)

Kraken Last Game: 5-1 Win over the Vancouver Canucks on Saturday, Feb. 28

Last Time Out...

The Canes recorded a fifth straight win on Saturday, taking down the Red Wings by a score of 5-2.

Aside from a brief stretch at the end of the second period, Rod Brind'Amour's squad was in control for most of the contest.

Shayne Gostisbehere and Taylor Hall had a goal and two assists each, and Frederik Andersen earned the victory in net with 27 saves.

Season Series vs. SEA...

Jan. 10: Carolina scored twice in the final 10 minutes to take a 3-2 victory from Seattle at Lenovo Center.

Stacking Points...

The Canes have earned points in 12-straight games (10-0-2), tying their fourth longest points earned streak in franchise history and their longest since Jan. 12 - Feb. 1, 2023 (17 games; 15-0-2).

The team's last regulation loss was Jan. 13 in St. Louis, when they were held off the scoreboard by the Blues (3-0 L).

Hallsy Is Hot...

Arriving at the contest after back-to-back multi-point outings, Taylor Hall has been on fire.

Following up his goal and an assist on Thursday against Tampa with a three-point showing in the win over Detroit, Rod Brind'Amour has been singing the praises of Hall's line, which also includes Logan Stankoven and Jackson Blake, calling them the team's best line after both victories.

Hall's 14 goals and 32 points this season both sit seventh on the team.

In Net...

With Frederik Andersen picking up the win on Saturday, it feels likely tonight will be Brandon Bussi's turn.

Bussi has won eight consecutive starts and is now a stellar 24-3-1 on the season. The Kraken are one of 10 NHL teams that the 27-year-old has not yet faced.

Conversely, should the Canes go back to Andersen, he'd be looking to pick up at least a point for a seventh consecutive start. He is 3-0-3 in his last six appearances.

On The Other Side...

After dropping their first two games back from break, the Kraken picked up an important divisional win over Vancouver on Saturday. Goaltender Joey Daccord made 26 saves in the victory and has now won six of his last seven starts.

Captain Jordan Eberle, who leads the team in scoring this year with 41 points in 57 games, had two goals and an assist.

On the season as a whole, Seattle has struggled scoring at times. Despite currently being in a playoff spot, their 2.85 goals per game average sits 25th among all NHL teams. Their penalty kill has struggled too, killing off just 71.8% of their infractions (31st - NHL).

Injury Updates...

Goaltender Pyotr Kochetkov (hip surgery) was declared "probably out for the year" by Rod Brind'Amour on Dec. 29.

What Are We Wearing?

The Canes will wear their WHITE uniforms for the contest. To view the team's full 2025-26 uniform schedule, [click here](#).

What's Next After This Game?

The Canes are scheduled to be off on Tuesday. They'll return to game action on Wednesday against the Canucks.

Next Game: Wednesday, March 4 at Vancouver | 10:00 p.m. ET | FDSNSO



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Next Home Game: Tuesday, March 10 vs. Pittsburgh |
7:00 p.m. ET | FDSNSO | Tickets | Parking

Recap: Canes Stretch Point Streak To 12 With Win Over Wings

By: Peter Dewar & Walt Ruff

Canes win fifth straight and advance to 10-0-2 since Jan. 16

RALEIGH, N.C. - Taylor Hall and Shayne Gostisbehere posted three points apiece to push the Carolina Hurricanes to a 5-2 victory over the Detroit Red Wings at Lenovo Center on Saturday.

A tussle between two of the Eastern Conference's top teams looked the part from the start, but the Canes potted back-to-back goals in the final five minutes of the first period to open up a two-goal lead at the break.

Hall got things going with a one-man effort at 14:05, blocking a shot in his own zone before tucking home a breakaway in the other. After a late penalty put the Red Wings in the box with 40 seconds remaining, Carolina's power play quickly doubled the lead, with a Sebastian Aho seam pass ricocheting off a Detroit skater and into the net.

Thanks to Eric Robinson, the Canes' lead swelled to three just 2:52 into the middle frame. But a more open second period allowed the Red Wings to find their footing, and two Detroit tallies in the final 1:34 narrowed the gap to one before the second break.

As they did two nights earlier, the Hurricanes returned to form in the final frame to cement their victory. Gostisbehere's top-shelf snipe at 2:18 completed a give-and-go with Jackson Blake, who then bagged another insurance marker 3:12 later on a rush chance from the right circle. Hall picked up assists on both goals.

Making his first start since his Olympic run with Team Denmark, Frederik Andersen turned in a sterling 27-save effort to move to 3-0-3 in his last six starts.

DET at CAR | Recap

Stats & Standouts

Forward Taylor Hall recorded his second straight multi-point game, posting two goals and three assists in that span.

Forward Jackson Blake pushed his point streak to three games with a goal and an assist. The second-year standout is up to 17 goals and 36 points in 58 games, tying his rookie-season goal output and surpassing his point total in 22 fewer games.

Defenseman Shayne Gostisbehere put up his fifth game of three or more points this season, tying Zach Werenski for the fourth-most such efforts among NHL defensemen.

Forward Sebastian Aho scored his 74th career power-play goal, surpassing Pat Verbeek for the third-most in franchise history behind Ron Francis (132) and Eric Staal (105).

The Hurricanes' 12-game point streak is tied for the fourth-longest in franchise history, trailing only a 17-game run in 2021-22 and 13-game runs in 2016-17 and 2020-21.

Converting with the man advantage for the fourth time in the last five games, Carolina has now scored 30 power-play goals in its last 33 games (since Dec. 6), which trails only Edmonton (31) in that span.

Carolina opened the scoring for the seventh time during its 12-game point streak. The Canes' 26 wins when scoring first this season are tied for the third-most among all NHL clubs.

With another capacity crowd of 18,547 (including the newly opened View Bar), the Canes posted their 150th consecutive regular-season/playoff sellout at Lenovo Center.

They Said It...

Rod Brind'Amour complimenting Shayne Gostisbehere's night...

"I thought Ghost was really good... He might've been one of our better players tonight. I thought he was all over it. Everyone, I thought, played pretty well, but he was a standout."

Shayne Gostisbehere on the team's third-period response, after Detroit had cut the lead to just one...

"We just got back to where we were having success. Four-on-four, there's more open ice, and their skill guys can get going and touch the puck a little more. For us, it was just getting back to our game and realizing what got us our success in the first [period]."

Jackson Blake with praise for Frederik Andersen...

"Freddie was the best player tonight, for sure, for both teams. He was unbelievable. That's what he brings. We know Freddie and how good he is and what he can do for us as a group. He was outstanding. I think there were at least three or four breakaways that he stopped, and many more chances. He was phenomenal."

Taylor Hall after another outstanding night for his line...

"For much of the time that we've been together, we've had nights where we were like, 'How do we come out of that game without any goals?' It's a credit to us for sticking with it. I think we've played with a lot of pace. We're around the net a bit more, which, maybe in some games, we'd be on the boards, a little further from the net. I think we're getting to the inside of the ice really well. That's when you score goals and maintain play."

What's Next?

The Canes are scheduled to fly to Seattle on Sunday. They'll start a four-game road trip on Monday against the Kraken.

Next Game: Monday, March 2 at Seattle | 10:00 p.m. ET | FDSNSO

Next Home Game: Tuesday, March 10 vs. Pittsburgh |
7:00 p.m. ET | FDSNSO | Tickets | Parking



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026



Hurricanes defeat Red Wings for 5th win in row, push point streak to 12

By: Kurt Dusterberg

Hall, Gostisbehere each has 3 points, Andersen makes 27 saves for Carolina

RALEIGH, N.C. -- Taylor Hall and Shayne Gostisbehere each had a goal and two assists, and the Carolina Hurricanes extended their point streak to 12 games with a 5-2 win against the Detroit Red Wings at Lenovo Center on Saturday.

Jackson Blake had a goal and an assist, and Frederik Andersen made 27 saves for the Hurricanes (38-15-6), who have won five in a row and are 10-0-2 during their point streak.

"There was a stretch there where we took our foot of the gas and it didn't look so good, but I thought overall the 'D' played really well," Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour said.

DET@CAR: Hall makes a move and buries it on the breakaway to open scoring

Simon Edvinsson and Patrick Kane scored for the Red Wings (34-20-6), who are 2-4-1 in their past seven games. Cam Talbot made 31 saves.

"I thought the game was real fast to begin with. There was a lot of pace going both ways," Detroit coach Todd McLellan said. "A lot of [Carolina's] offensive opportunities came off of our tape. We have it on our sticks, we make mistakes with it and they're gone the other way. They're a real good team that capitalizes on that."

Hall put the Hurricanes up 1-0 at 14:05 of the first period when he scored on a breakaway. Hall blocked a shot by Edvinsson along the left-side boards before chasing down the loose puck and tucking it around Talbot's right pad.

"I had a lot of time to think about what I wanted to do," Hall said. "I tried to sell the forehand [and] it didn't really work, so I went to option two. I like to put it to my forehand. It was a big goal for our team at the end of the period there."

A Carolina power-play goal extended the lead to 2-0 at 19:52. Sebastian Aho's wrist shot was deflected into the net by Edvinsson, who was trying to box out Seth Jarvis near the right post.

DET@CAR: Aho gets a bounce off a defenseman's stick in front for a PPG

Eric Robinson made it 3-0 at 2:52 of the second period. Sean Walker intercepted a pass in the neutral zone and passed to

William Carrier, who found Robinson alone in front for his 11th goal of the season.

"They're a heck of a team. This is a hard building to play in," Detroit captain Dylan Larkin said. "They're the class of the [Eastern Conference], and you've got to come in here at some point and get points. I just didn't think we executed, and we allowed them to be on top of us and come back in waves."

Detroit scored 47 seconds apart to pull within a goal. Edvinsson made it 3-1 at 18:26 during 4-on-4 play when he took a cross-ice pass in the left circle from Alex DeBrincat and beat Andersen inside the right post. Kane followed with a short-side goal from the left circle that deflected off Blake's skate to cut Carolina's lead to 3-2 at 19:13.

"The game was still in a good spot for us. We were playing really well," Brind'Amour said. "But we were doing, for the most part, what we had to do. We came out in the third, and guys answered that."

Gostisbehere passed to Logan Stankoven at the bottom of the left circle and scored on a return pass to take a 4-2 lead at 2:18 of the third period.

"Our offense is heavily driven on low-to-high stuff and getting pucks to the net, so I think it obviously works for the offensive defenseman," Gostisbehere said. "For myself, [it's] trying to do what I do best, just help out offensively while being responsible defensively."

Blake extended the lead to 5-2 at 5:30 when he kept the puck on a 2-on-1 with Stankoven and beat Talbot blocker side.

"I saw the defender on 'Stanks,' and I did glance and saw (defenseman Alexander Nikishin) coming in the play," Blake said. "But I pretty much had like a mini breakaway almost, and I'm like, I'm shooting this thing."

NOTES: Kane's goal was his 501st in the NHL, moving him past Lanny McDonald to 49th in League history. Kane scored his 239th career road goal and passed Keith Tkachuk (238) for the third most by a United States-born player. The only players with more are Mike Modano (259) and Jeremy Roenick (249). ... Larkin earned an assist on Edvinsson's goal to extend his point streak to four games (three goals, three assists). ... Gostisbehere has five three-point games this season. ... Blake's 17th goal tied his rookie total from last season, and his 36 points are two more than last season (59 games).



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

AP ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hurricanes look to keep win streak going, visit the Kraken

By: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Carolina Hurricanes (38-15-6, in the Metropolitan Division) vs. Seattle Kraken (28-22-9, in the Pacific Division)

Seattle; Monday, 10 p.m. EST

BOTTOM LINE: The Carolina Hurricanes will try to continue a five-game win streak with a victory against the Seattle Kraken.

Seattle is 28-22-9 overall and 15-9-5 in home games. The Kraken have conceded 171 goals while scoring 168 for a -3 scoring differential.

Carolina is 38-15-6 overall and 15-7-4 in road games. The Hurricanes are 21-5-3 in games their opponents commit more penalties.

Monday's game is the second time these teams match up this season. The Hurricanes won the last matchup 3-2.

TOP PERFORMERS: Jordan Eberle has 22 goals and 19 assists for the Kraken. Jared McCann has five goals and six assists over the past 10 games.

Seth Jarvis has 26 goals and 20 assists for the Hurricanes. Jordan Staal has five goals and one assist over the past 10 games.

LAST 10 GAMES: Kraken: 6-4-0, averaging 3.2 goals, 4.7 assists, 3.7 penalties and 9.3 penalty minutes while giving up 2.5 goals per game.

Hurricanes: 8-0-2, averaging 3.6 goals, 5.7 assists, three penalties and 7.1 penalty minutes while giving up 2.4 goals per game.

INJURIES: Kraken: None listed.

Hurricanes: None listed.

Hurricanes continue hot streak with 5-2 win over Detroit

By: AP News

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Shayne Gostisbehere had a goal and two assists to lead the Carolina Hurricanes to their fifth straight win, 5-2 over the Detroit Red Wings on Saturday night.

Jackson Blake, Taylor Hall, Sebastian Aho and Eric Robinson also scored for the Hurricanes, who have used a 12-game point streak (10-0-2) to surge to the top of the Eastern Conference with 82 points.

Carolina goalie Frederik Andersen made 27 saves to improve to 14-1-2 in his career against the Red Wings.

Simon Edvinsson and Patrick Kane scored and Cam Talbot stopped 31 shots for the Red Wings, who lost for the fifth time in seven games (2-4-1).

The Hurricanes built a 3-0 lead to continue their recent hot play at home. They lost their first two home games in January but have gone 10-0-1 at home since a 5-3 loss to Colorado on Jan. 3.

Gostisbehere scored at 2:18 in the third period to give the Hurricanes some breathing room after Detroit cut the margin to 3-2 at the end of the second period.

Blake, with assists from Gostisbehere and Hall, extended the Hurricanes' margin to 5-2 with a goal at 5:30 in the third.

Edvinsson scored from the left circle with 1:35 left in the second period to get Detroit on the scoreboard. Kane scored 47 seconds later to cut the deficit to 3-2 heading into the third period.

In the first period, Hall scored on a breakaway at 14:05 and Gostisbehere set up Aho's power-play goal with eight seconds left to make it 2-0. Aho, who helped Finland win bronze at the Olympics, has seven points in the past six games. Robinson scored 2:52 into the second period to push the lead to 3-0.

Up next

Red Wings: Visit Nashville on Monday night.

Hurricanes: Start a four-game road trip at Seattle on Monday night.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026



Kraken hope to finish hat trick this time vs. red-hot Hurricanes

By: FLM

Business is presumably booming at the Seattle Kraken's souvenir store.

Because a lot of fans are again unnecessarily in need of a new hat entering Monday's game against the visiting Carolina Hurricanes.

For the second time in five weeks, Kraken fans rained their headwear down on the ice at Climate Pledge Arena thinking one of the home team's players had netted a hat trick with three goals.

And for the second time, Matty Beniers nixed the party hats.

Back on Jan. 27 against Washington, a delayed penalty against Beniers -- called by a linesman, so neither referee had their arms raised -- wiped away a hat trick by Jared McCann.

It happened again Saturday in a 5-1 victory against Vancouver.

Captain Jordan Eberle, who tallied on a breakaway in the second period, appeared to score a power-play goal at 11:56 of the third when he took a pass in the left-wing corner, skated to the front of the net and stuffed the puck past the Canucks' goaltender and just inside the far post.

When Eberle scored into an empty net with three minutes left, fans littered the ice with their hats.

But they were unaware the official scorer had changed Eberle's previous goal, which apparently glanced off the toe of Beniers' skate.

"I think we owe the fans some hats," said Eberle, who has a team-leading 22 goals this season.

After McCann's fiasco, the Kraken announced a "Hat Tricked" promo which allowed 1,000 fans who were in attendance to fill out a form to receive a new hat.

There was no immediate word on whether the Kraken would do that again after Saturday's mishap.

Eberle (two goals, one assist) and Chandler Stephenson (one goal, two assists) both had three-point nights for the Kraken, who snapped a two-game skid. Seattle currently holds the second and final wild-card spot in the Western Conference, three points ahead of the San Jose Sharks, Nashville Predators and Los Angeles Kings.

"I liked our consistency from start to finish," Kraken coach Lane Lambert said. "It was nice for us putting some pucks on net. We had talked about shot mentality. I still think we can do a better job of that. ... If you look at the first two goals, we've got traffic (net front), and that's the way you're going to have to score down the stretch."

The Hurricanes, who are riding a five-game winning streak and have points in 12 straight (10-0-2), lead the Metropolitan Division and are first overall in the Eastern Conference with 82 points.

The Hurricanes are opening a four-game trip that will also take them to Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary in a span of six days.

They are coming off a 5-2 victory Saturday against visiting Detroit. Taylor Hall and Shayne Gostisbehere each had a goal and two assists in the win.

"There was a stretch there where we took our foot off the gas and it didn't look so good, but I thought overall the D played really well," Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour said.

This will be the second and final regular-season meeting between the teams. Carolina rallied with two goals in the final 10 minutes to win 3-2 on Jan. 10 in Raleigh, N.C., snapping Seattle's 10-game point streak (8-0-2).

--Field Level Media

Copyright 2026 STATS LLC and Field Level Media. Any commercial use or distribution without the express written consent of STATS LLC and Field Level Media is strictly prohibited.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026



SB NATION
CANES COUNTRY

Hurricanes rout Red Wings 5-2 for fifth straight win

By: Kyle Morton

For 59 minutes, the Carolina Hurricanes completely outclassed the Detroit Red Wings, a quality playoff team in the Eastern Conference, on their way to a 5-2 victory at the Lenovo Center on Saturday night.

Shayne Gostisbehere turned in a three-point night while Taylor Hall and Jackson Blake stayed hot as the Canes ran their point streak to 12 games and winning streak to 5 behind a quality performance between the pipes from Frederik Andersen.

Hall got the scoring started with his 14th goal of the season in the first period. After blocking a Detroit shot sent the puck into the neutral zone, Hall won a foot race to earn a breakaway in on veteran goalie Cam Talbot. Hall unfurled a slick move, beating Talbot to the far side on the forehand to make it 1-0.

In the dying moments of the first, Sebastian Aho struck for his 22nd of the year when a pass he intended for Seth Jarvis went in off the stick of Red Wing defenseman Simon Edvinsson to take a two-goal lead into the break.

Eric Robinson made it 3-0 with his first goal since returning from injury with a hard-fought tally in front of Talbot.

The one minute the Hurricanes didn't have a claim to dominating came at the end of the second, and it threw the

game's result into question. Edvinsson ripped a perfect shot off the bar and in behind Andersen to make it 3-1, and then Patrick Kane added his ninth of the season to get back within one.

The Wings weren't able to transfer that momentum into the third, as Andersen made a couple big stops before Gostisbehere restored Carolina's multi-goal lead on a give-and-go with Blake.

Blake got in on the scoring himself a few minutes later when he looked off Logan Stankoven on a 2-on-1 to wire a wrist past Talbot to make it 5-2.

Hall's three-point night wrapped up with losing some teeth on a high-stick from Edvinsson to give Carolina a four-minute power play that began with just under five minutes left in the contest.

With the win, the Canes bolstered their lead atop the Metropolitan Division standings, as the Pittsburgh Penguins let a point slip away in a shootout loss to the New York Rangers earlier in the day. The Hurricanes now hold a nine-point lead over both the Penguins and New York Islanders.

After coming back from the Olympic break with two wins on home ice, Carolina will hit the road for a four-game trip that will feature a stop in Seattle on Monday night before visits to Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary to occupy the schedule next week.

Taking Stock of the Canes' Possible Playoff Opponents

By: Kyle Morton

The Carolina Hurricanes have defeated their first playoff opponent in each of their seven seasons in which Rod Brind'Amour has been behind the bench.

The quality of those teams has been a mixed bag. In 2019, they slayed a behemoth in the reigning Stanley Cup champion Washington Capitals. In 2022, they knocked off a 107-point Boston Bruins team in a seven-game thriller.

More recently, they've gotten quality draws to start their bids for the Stanley Cup. Last year, it was a banged up New Jersey Devils group without Jack Hughes and some key defensemen that never stood much of a chance. The prior two seasons, it was very pedestrian New York Islanders squads.

With seven straight years with a playoff series won, the Hurricanes are tied with the Islanders dynasties of the early 1980s for the third-longest such streak. They're two away from catching the Broad Street Bully-era Flyers, and three

away from tying two different iterations of the Montreal Canadiens for the longest streak in NHL history.

If Carolina wants to run that stretch to eight this spring, it's going to have to defeat a better team than it has the past few first rounds.

Here's a look at the candidates the Canes could face in mid-April, where they stand, and what could make them a challenging matchup.

Montreal Canadiens

Cole Caufield - Montreal Canadiens

If the season ended today and went by raw points and not points percentage, this would be the matchup. It's an interesting one.

Comparing just the skaters, Montreal is close on paper. The top line of Juraj Slafkovsky, Nick Suzuki and Cole Caufield is up there with any in the league.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Lane Hutson and Noah Dobson provide oodles of offense from the back end, and Ivan Demidov is living up to the hype with 47 points in 58 games in his rookie season.

They're not just top heavy, either. Oliver Kapanen is a quality young forward in a depth role, and when healthy, they have capable size and defensive ability with a bit of scoring touch littered all over their bottom six.

There's one big problem though. Montreal's goalies can not stop a beach ball. Jakub Dobes is rocking a .892 save percentage, and incumbent starter Sam Montembeault is having a nightmare season at a .874. Rookie Jacob Fowler has been solid with a .904 in his 10 appearances, but it's hard to see this franchise turning the crease over to a rookie in such a high-leverage playoff opportunity for this emerging, young team.

The time for being happy just to be there was last year when the Capitals handled them in five. There are expectations this time. If the Habs add a goalie at the deadline, look out. Otherwise, Carolina would likely be able to survive a team with that as a major issue.

Buffalo Sabres

Buffalo Sabres

No. No, no, no. No thank you. That is what I say to the idea of drawing the Buffalo Sabres in a playoff series.

Are the Hurricanes better? Definitely. Should they win on paper? Certainly.

But there is something about these teams coming off of extended playoff droughts finally getting their chance in the dance that puts out some major team-of-destiny energy.

The Sabres have been absent from the Stanley Cup Playoffs since all the way back in 2011. That drought is the longest in the league by far, and it's even longer than the one the 2019 Hurricanes snapped.

Do you remember how excited you were to have playoff hockey back in Raleigh in 2019? Do you remember the home ice advantage the fans created in that first-round series against a superior Capitals squad?

That's what facing off with Buffalo invites. A talented team with a nothing-to-lose mentality with a rabid fan base ready to make life miserable for an opponent.

That's to say nothing of this very talented roster led by Olympic gold medalist Tage Thompson and Swedish star Rasmus Dahlin on the back end. This defense is way deeper than you'd expect. Mattias Samuelsson has taken massive steps forward, and Bowen Byram has improved. Michael Kesselring needs to get healthy, but you throw him into the mix with the other three and then add former first overall pick Owen Power? Loaded.

Josh Doan, Ryan McLeod, Jack Quinn and Peyton Krebs add quality young-ish depth up front to go with veterans Alex Tech and Jason Zucker.

Alex Lyon and Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen are finally providing strong goaltending, as well.

Boston Bruins

David Pastrnak - Boston Bruins

If the Sabres are a surprise because they're overcoming their recent history, the Bruins are a surprise because they're delivering better results than the talent on the roster suggests they should be capable of.

David Pastrnak is of course the star up front, but old friend Morgan Geekie has broken out as a bonafide top-end goalscorer, and fellow old friend Elias Lindholm has bounced back from a disastrous effort last season to provide some level of competency down the middle.

Center is still the weak point in Boston, though, as goalie Jeremy Swayman is back into form this season, and Charlie McAvoy leads a solid, even if unspectacular, unit on the backend.

While a glance at the roster suggests a ho-hum team, the emergence of entertaining young players like Fraser Minten, Alex Steeves and Marat Khusnutdinov have exponentially increased the watchability of these Bruins compared to their counterparts last year.

This is another team on this list against whom the Hurricanes would be favored, maybe even pretty comfortably, but it's another roster that if it gets hot for a couple weeks could present some big issues.

Detroit Red Wings

Alex DeBrincat - Detroit Red Wings

This is an interesting one. Detroit checks all the boxes for a worthy playoff team. They've got star players at center in Dylan Larkin and defense in Moritz Seider.

They also have a pair of impactful wingers in Alex DeBrincat and Lucas Raymond at the top of their lineup.

John Gibson provides solid play between the pipes, and they've already shown to be a challenging matchup for the Hurricanes in the regular season.

Simon Edvinsson and Axel Sandin-Pellikka provide strong upside on defense, but the forward depth is a possible issue here in a playoff series.

The Wings, like every team in the top half of the Atlantic, have been playing incredible hockey for a while now. If the Hurricanes face one of these Atlantic teams, it could look comparable to that 107-point 2022 Bruins squad that finished fourth in the division.

Washington Capitals

Tom Wilson - Washington Capitals

After a shockingly strong regular season that saw them claim the No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference in 2024-25, many predicted a fall back to earth for the Capitals.

Not many were brave enough to peg them as a team outside the playoffs entirely, but that's where they sit right now. A big win over Vegas on Friday helps their chances, but they're two points behind a Bruins team that has three games in hand on them for the second wild card spot at the time of this writing.

But if the Capitals were overrated last year when the Canes sent them home with relative ease in the second round, they're underrated this season.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Logan Thompson is still the sort of goalie who can steal a series. They still have the sort of physical, defensive buy-in from most of their forwards that translates well to the spring. Jakob Chychrun, Alex Ovechkin and Aliaksei Protas provide valuable finishing ability.

The lack of elite talent up front will hold this team back, but with all the other ingredients, Washington is not a first-round matchup I'd be clamoring for personally.

New York Islanders

Matthew Schaefer - New York Islanders

This is certainly not your grandfather's New York Islanders, but it's definitely not your New York Islanders either.

Sure, Patrick Roy is still the coach, and they're still largely dependent upon goaltender Ilya Sorokin turning in elite performances on a regular basis, but there's something different about this team from the past iterations the Canes have easily sent home in the spring.

It's largely about Matthew Schaefer, the jaw-droppingly good rookie defenseman who has taken the league by storm as he waltzes to the Calder Trophy.

He's a minute-munching blue liner who skates like the wind and has a finishing touch that would put many quality top-six forwards to shame. He recently broke the record for most goals by an 18-year-old defenseman.

Throw in a quality one-two punch down the middle consisting of Bo Horvat and a newly healthy Mathew Barzal, and while the Isles need more time in the oven to be a real contender, they have a much higher ceiling than they have in recent years.

They're 33-21-5, currently third in the Metro, and it would require a really strong push from Washington for the Islanders to fall into the wild card mix. If it happens, Carolina would be favored, but write this Islanders squad off at your own peril.

Columbus Blue Jackets

Adam Fantilli - Columbus Blue Jackets

I'm not going to devote a ton of time to the Jackets here. They're currently six points out of the playoffs, but they could still get in.

They've turned a corner since hiring Rick Bowness as their head coach following the dismissal of Dean Evason, but a loss to Boston in their first game back from the break poured some cold water on their hopes.

Zach Werenski is having another Norris-caliber season, and forwards like Kirill Marchenko, Dmitri Voronkov and Adam Fantilli provide some young upside to go with strong veteran contributions from Charlie Coyle, but there's not much of note beyond those key core pieces.

Young goalie Jet Greaves and his .910 save percentage is surely the most intimidating thing about this team in a playoff matchup in terms of who could single-handedly steal a series for this team.

If Columbus gets in, it means they went on a run that would make them hot enough to be concerning, but this is as close as it would get for the Canes to what they've drawn in the past few years.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026



Andersen shines as Hurricanes defeat Red Wings 5-2

By: Andrew Schwartz

Goalie Frederik Andersen walks out for the second period of the game versus the Chicago Blackhawks at the Lenovo Center on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026. Andersen successfully blocked 19 shots. The Blackhawks beat the Canes 4-3 in a shootout.

Goalie Frederik Andersen walks out for the second period of the game versus the Chicago Blackhawks at the Lenovo Center on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026. Andersen successfully blocked 19 shots. The Blackhawks beat the Canes 4-3 in a shootout.

Riding a strong performance from goaltender Frederik Andersen, the Hurricanes earned their fifth-straight win against a struggling Red Wings team that has won just three of its last nine games.

The Canes (38-15-6) got off to a hot start, scoring three unanswered goals and held a solid position late into the second period. But the Red Wings (34-20-6) clawed back into the game with two goals 47 seconds apart to close the second, threatening the Canes' lead. Leading the way to victory, Andersen played a clean game in the final 20 minutes as Carolina netted two more goals to put the game away.

"They got some real good firepower over there and they got behind us a couple times and Freddie kept us in there," said head coach Rod Brind'Amour. "They had a couple moments but it allowed us to settle down and get to our game and crucial saves at pivotal times tonight."

Opening the scoring, forward Taylor Hall forced a takeaway in the defensive zone, outskated the Red Wings' defense into a 1-on-1 chance against Detroit goaltender Cam Talbot, and used a series of puck fakes to send Talbot sliding the wrong way before burying the puck in the back of the net.

With just 40 seconds left in the first period, Hurricanes defenseman Shayne Gostisbehere drew a penalty after maneuvering past two Red Wings defenders with an impressive move. Thirty-two seconds later, he set up forward Sebastian Aho, who doubled the Canes' lead heading into the first intermission with his sixth power play goal of the season.

Building on the lead early in the second period, Carolina defenseman Sean Walker stepped up and picked off Detroit forward James van Riemsdyk. Walker quickly found forward

Eric Robinson who finished the chance with ease, extending the Canes' lead to 3-0.

Frederik Andersen, off the back of an Olympic campaign where he managed an impressive .913 save percentage with Denmark, got the start in the Canes' second game back. Andersen opened the game with 18 straight saves, anchoring Carolina early. He made key 1-on-1 saves in the 11th and 13th minutes of the second, drawing "Freddie" chants from the crowd after each save.

The Canes carried a 3-0 lead into the final two minutes of the second period and looked to close out the frame despite sustained pressure from the Detroit Red Wings. Frederik Andersen's terrific play in net was the only thing keeping Detroit off the board.

After a brawl reduced both teams to four players, Detroit defenseman Simon Edvinsson ripped a precise shot that struck both posts before sneaking across the goal line.

Less than a minute later, Detroit forward Patrick Kane scored from a tight angle. In a flash, the Red Wings cut the deficit to one, leaving the Canes vulnerable in the third period.

With the pressure 100% on the Canes, the top team in the Metropolitan Division responded. Shayne Gostisbehere recorded his 10th goal of the season, extending Carolina's lead and giving the team much-needed breathing room.

Forward Jackson Blake pushed the lead to 5-2 on a 2-on-1 transition opportunity. He held the Red Wings defender with his eyes and the threat of a pass, skated the length of the ice and buried the puck in the top of the net. The 22 year old now has 17 goals and 19 assists on the season.

"I mean, the talent — obviously there's skill — but there's a fire there that he [Blake] has," Brind'Amour said. "And it helps him throughout the game. I think he could be a little more shoot first mentality. When he did tonight a few times, he got rewarded."

With just under five minutes left to go, Detroit's Simon Edvinsson hit Taylor Hall in the face, leaving Hall picking up his teeth from the ice. Unfortunately for Edvinsson, this resulted in a four minute penalty, allowing the canes to see out the win without issue.

The Canes now sit nine points ahead of the Penguins and the Islanders for the top seed in the Metropolitan Division and two points ahead of the Lightning for the top seed in the Eastern Conference with 23 games to play.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

The Hockey News

'It's Good To Get Wins Against Good Teams': Taylor Hall, Shayne Gostisbehere, Jackson Blake, Rod Brind'Amour On Win Over Detroit

By: Ryan Henkel

Stars shine in Detroit victory: Hall, Gostisbehere ignite offense while Brind'Amour praises defensive grit and Andersen's crucial saves.

The Carolina Hurricanes pushed their point streak to 12 games as they defeated the Detroit Red Wings 5-2 Saturday night at Lenovo Center.

Shayne Gostisbehere and Taylor Hall each had a three-point outing while Frederik Andersen stopped 27 shots in the win.

After the game, Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour along with Hall, Gostisbehere and Jackson Blake spoke with the media. Here's what they had to say:

Rod Brind'Amour

On the team's defensive effort: They did a nice job. Obviously we gave up a couple of grade-A opportunities, but overall, I thought we were fairly tight and created a lot of momentum for most of the game. Obviously there was a stretch there where we took our foot off of the gas and it didn't look so good, but I thought overall, the D played really well.

On Frederik Andersen performance: Obviously they have some real good firepower over there and they got behind us a couple of times and Freddie kept us in there. That allowed us to settle down and get to our game. Crucial saves at pivotal times tonight.

On working with Logan Stankoven and Jackson Blake: I love the fire that they play with. To me, that's probably the thing with Blaker that stands out the most. I mean, the talent is obviously there, but there's a fire there that he has and it helps him throughout the game. I think he could be a little more shoot-first mentality, and he did tonight a few times and got rewarded. That line, in general, has just been really, really solid here. Clearly the best line that we have going right now.

On resetting the team after the 4v4 debacle: The game was still in a good spot for us and I don't want to lose track of the fact that we were playing really well for whatever it was. It was a minute a half of bad. And yeah, the game's now, we have to get to it, but what we were doing for the most part is what we had to do. And we did. We came out in the third and guys answered and got one right away and I thought played fairly well.

On Blake's confidence: I think that stuff [turnovers] doesn't affect him. There's certain players where you want them to... they're going to have some of that. Otherwise they wouldn't have the other stuff. There's a trade off. Now, there's a time and place and he's learned too to know when and where to do that kind of opportunities to go for it. 4v4 is the time to try and make little things happen. He's learning every day and I

think he's going to get better and better as he goes along. He clearly is just watching him from where he was last year to now. He's taken huge steps and I still think there's more there.

On Shayne Gostisbehere and Alexander Nikishin: I thought Ghost was really good. He fed Niki a few times and bobbed it a bit. Like, they could have had more. But again, we're talking about a young player that is still learning away from the puck and that's the hardest part in this league. Stuff that most people don't really notice, but there's a-whole-nother level for him that I think he can get to. We're already pretty happy with what we're seeing. Ghost, I thought he might have been one of our better players tonight too. He was all over it. Everyone played well, but he was a standout.

Taylor Hall

On losing a tooth (veneer): It's an implant. If it was a real implant, it probably would have taken out my gum. So it's like a plastic that breaks off, so that only the tooth comes out. It all worked out according to plan, but I've spent way too much time in the dental chair lately. But it didn't hurt.

On his line's chemistry: For most of the time that we've been together, we've had nights where we're like, "Man, how do we come out of that game without any goals?" So it's just a credit to us for sticking with it. We've played with a lot of pace and we're around the net a bit more. Maybe in some games, we've been on the boards, a little farther from the net. So I think we're getting to the inside of the ice really well and that's when you score goals and you maintain play.

On Jackson Blake having more of a shoot-first mentality: It's a balance. The game is so quick. He made a great play to me last game on a 2-on-1. It's just knowing when to shoot and taking what's there. He processes the game so well. He's a very heady player and really fun to play with.

On his breakaway goal: If that's at the start of the period, it probably goes all the way down to the goalie with fresh ice, but it didn't. I had a lot of time to think about what I wanted to do, honestly. I tried to sell forehand, didn't really work, so I went to option two. I'm not much of a backhand on the breakaway kind of guy. I like to go to my forehand, but it managed to work out. Big goal for our team there.

On taking advantage of the matchups: That's our role, right? We'd love to be out there against top competition, but we have two lines that do that really well. So it's up to us to drive play against who we're playing against and now that we're going on the road, we might not get those same matchups. We might get some harder ones, so it might be a bit of a different game, but we have to play the same way.

Shayne Gostisbehere



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

On facing his former team: Yeah, I don't mind it. We played pretty good against them too. They're a good team. Much different than past years. It's good to get wins against good teams.

On his production: Our offense is heavily driven on low-to-high stuff and getting pucks to the net, so I think it works for an offensive defenseman. For myself, just trying to do what I do best and try to help out offensively while being responsible defensively.

On how much the break helped him: A lot. Probably helped a lot of guys, obviously not the guys that went to the Olympics, but the expedited schedule is definitely a challenging one. Even finishing up here, have to be smart, but it definitely helped.

On getting back to their game after the 4v4 debacle: We just got back to where we were having success. Obviously 4v4 there's more ice and their skill guys can get going and touch the puck a little more. I think for us, it was just about getting back to our game and realize what got us success in the first place.

On Frederik Andersen's performance: Definitely one of his better games. He kept us in it in the first, made some big saves. It could have been a different game. That's the Freddie we know. When he's making those big saves, he's a big part of our team. Happy to see him have some success.

On the team's second line: Happy I get to play a lot with them. It's fun playing with those guys. They're puck hounds and they're obviously offensive, but they don't give up on plays. They're dogs. They work their butts off and they want to make a difference.

On Alexander Nikishin's development: It's good. I like how he likes to play the right side. He always wants to play the right and I'm telling him he has to shoot more. Every time he gets it, I'm like, "Just take a one-timer, man." He's got the hardest shot in the world. But he's doing good. The simpler is the better for him. As you get going in the league, myself included when I was younger, trying to do too much can hurt yourself. You have to build that confidence and let that game come to you. Less is more. He's evolving every game.

Jackson Blake

On his line's chemistry: Stanks and Hallsy are really skilled guys and if we work off of each other and play the way we're capable of, like I feel we have these last couple of games, I

think we're going to be really good down the stretch. We could have had even more goals than we have right now, but that's the game of hockey, right? I've been having a lot of fun these last few games though.

On focusing on shooting the puck more: My whole life, I've just wanted to be a playmaker and setup guys and that sort of stuff, but at the end of the day, when you get opportunities like that, you've got to shoot them. Earlier this year, I've had some opportunities to shoot the puck and didn't and so that's one thing I have to do more, shoot the puck. These guys set me up and I probably could have had more, but great goalie.

On the emotions of missing on grade-A chances: I saw the whole net and I don't know how great my angle was, but I still had pretty much the entire net, so to hit the post, it's frustrating, for sure. You never know if you're going to get one of those chances in the next couple of games or not, so you have to bury those ones when you get them. But I got fortunate by getting a 2-on-1 and putting one in. But it is frustrating to hit the post and come inches from scoring.

On his goal: I think one of the reasons I did shoot is cause I thought that maybe he was thinking pass, right? Like, you never know with goalies, but I saw the defender on Stanks and I did glance and see Niki coming into the play, but I pretty much had a mini breakaway and I was thinking, "I'm shooting this thing. I already hit the post. I'm glad that one went in. It was a good feeling for that to go in, for sure.

On Frederik Andersen's performance: Freddie was the best player tonight, for sure. For both teams. He was unbelievable and that's what he brings. We know how good Freddie is and what he can do for us as a group. He was outstanding. There was at least three or four breakaways that he stopped and many more chances. But he was phenomenal.

On Taylor Hall's impact: Me and Stanks, this is pretty much are second full year in the league and Hallsy's a vet, an unbelievable player and he's won an MVP, so we're gonna listen to that guy. He's kind of the guy that when we're getting our chances and we're rolling a little bit, he's telling us to stick with it and that it's going to come. We trust in him and I'm happy to play with him.

On Hall losing a tooth: I didn't even know he lost it until I went up to him and he smiled, but he's still a good looking guy. I like him without a tooth, honestly. It's good. But that one's already fake he said. At least it's not a real one. He can probably get that puppy back in there.

Hurricanes Overwhelm Red Wings In Dominant Display

By: Ryan Henkel

Andersen's stellar saves and a potent second line fueled the Hurricanes' decisive victory over the Red Wings, showcasing offensive firepower.

The Carolina Hurricanes just can't stop winning it seems, this time picking up a 5-2 win over the Detroit Red Wings Saturday night at Lenovo Center.

It was a strong performance overall for Carolina, who allowed just two goals during 4v4 play in the second period, but it was an especially good game for a select few players.

Frederik Andersen picked up just his eighth win of the season, making 27 saves in the victory, including some really good grade-A chances.

"Freddie was the best player tonight, for sure," said Jackson Blake. "For both teams. He was unbelievable and that's what he brings. We know how good Freddie is and what he can do for us as a group. He was outstanding. There was at least three or four breakaways that he stopped and many more chances. But he was phenomenal."



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Outside of Andersen, the other two top performers on the night were Taylor Hall and Shayne Gostisbehere, who both had three-point nights.

For Hall, it's his first three-point game of the season, but for Gostisbehere, who reached the 10-goal and 40-point markers in just his 42nd game tonight, it's his fifth such outing.

"Our offense is heavily driven on low-to-high stuff and getting pucks to the net, so I think it works for an offensive defenseman," Gostisbehere said. "For myself, just trying to do what I do best and try to help out offensively while being responsible defensively."

The Canes enjoyed yet another early offensive outpouring Saturday night, much like Thursday, as they jumped out to a 3-0 lead less than halfway through the game.

Taylor Hall got the party started, scoring a silky smooth goal off of a breakaway he orchestrated after blocking a shot at the defensive blueline.

"If that's at the start of the period, it probably goes all the way down to the goalie with fresh ice, but it didn't," Hall said. "I had a lot of time to think about what I wanted to do, honestly. I tried to sell forehand, didn't really work, so I went to option two. I'm not much of a backhand on the breakaway kind of guy. I like to go to my forehand, but it managed to work out. Big goal for our team there."

It was the second straight game with a goal for Hall, who now has 14 tallies and 32 points with Carolina, and his line with Logan Stankoven and Jackson Blake continued to look like difference makers too.

After a dominant game against the Lightning, the trio were again the top-rated line for the Hurricanes, outchancing Detroit 15-1 in their 5v5 minutes.

Then with 7.9 seconds remaining in the first period, Sebastian Aho threaded a puck through traffic on the power play and found a friendly bounce off of Simon Edvinsson's stick to put his team up 2-0.

The Hurricanes would add to the lead quickly into the second period as Sean Walker stepped up in the neutral zone to intercept an outlet pass, then found William Carrier cross-ice, who then one-touched it to Eric Robinson in front of the net.

The Hurricanes were well in control of the game from there, but Detroit every so often was slipping through the cracks and finding some open space.

However, Andersen was standing tall.

The only time things started to get dicey though, was at 4v4.

As the second period came to a close, and with Andrei Svechnikov and Ben Chiarot in the box, the Canes apparently decided that they could just casually skate their way into intermission.

Detroit had other plans though, taking advantage of Carolina's lax defense and lackadaisical effort to pot two quick ones in the span of 47 seconds.

The Hurricanes have made blowing multi-goal leads a habit this year and that segment was another example in how they've been doing it.

You can't take shifts off in the NHL. You're gonna get burned.

However, the Canes took the intermission to regroup and came out to start the third period in a fury.

"The game was still in a good spot for us and I don't want to lose track of the fact that we were playing really well for whatever it was," said Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour. "It was a minute a half of bad. And yeah, the game, we have to get to it, but what we were doing for the most part is what we had to do. And we did. We came out in the third and guys answered and got one right away and I thought played fairly well."

First Shayne Gostisbehere laced one top corner after a give-and-go with Jackson Blake, then Blake got loose on a 3-on-1 and called his shot to push Carolina's lead back up to three.

"I pretty much had a mini breakaway and I was thinking, 'I'm shooting this thing,'" Blake said. "I already hit the post. I'm glad that one went in. It was a good feeling for that to go in, for sure."

From there, the Hurricanes simply smothered the Red Wings, giving up virtually very little as they capped off their 12th straight game with a point.

Carolina will now head out on a four-game road trip out West.

LINKS

<https://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/article314798670.html>
<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/7079997/2026/03/02/nhl-trade-board-kadri-thomas-stankos/>
<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/7079934/2026/03/02/nhl-weekend-rankings-olympics-overreactions-vegas-golden-knights-devils/>
<https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/preview-march-2-at-seattle>
<https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/recap-can-es-stretch-point-streak-to-12-with-win-over-wings>
<https://www.nhl.com/news/detroit-red-wings-carolina-hurricanes-game-recap-february-28-2026>
<https://apnews.com/article/carolina-hurricanes-seattle-kraken-928a26ad949c41bc82d441ff3f63c702>
<https://apnews.com/article/red-wings-hurricanes-score-cb6ea08a9276162f8621342b1aacdf25>
<https://www.cbssports.com/nhl/news/kraken-hope-to-finish-hat-trick-this-time-vs-red-hot-hurricanes/>
<https://www.canescountry.com/2010-11-carolina-hurricanes-game-recaps/52991/carolina-hurricanes-rout-detroit-red-wings-5-2-for-fifth-straight-win>
<https://www.canescountry.com/general/52969/carolina-hurricanes-possible-playoff-opponents-nhl-stanley-cup>
<https://technicianonline.com/156765/sports/andersen-shines-as-hurricanes-defeat-red-wings-5-2/>
<https://thehockeynews.com/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/game-day/it-s-good-to-get-wins-against-good-teams-taylor-hall-shayne-gostisbehere-jackson-blake-rod-brind-amour-on-win-over-detroit>
<https://thehockeynews.com/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/game-day/hurricanes-overwhelm-red-wings-in-dominant-display>



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

SportScan

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

1381041 Carolina Hurricanes

As Hurricanes rip Red Wings, NHL trade rumors abound. What will the Canes do?

Justin Pelletier 20-25 minutes 01/03/2026

Twice each year, the NHL — and the Carolina Hurricanes — enter their version of “silly season.”

In the summer, as free agency opens and the new league year begins, all 32 NHL teams believe they can at least make the playoffs the following season. Contracts are expiring, new deals struck, contracts extended. Each team tries to become the best possible version of itself, and sell that optimism to a fan base pining to watch a parade the following June.

And then, there is trade deadline season in early March. This year, Friday, March 6 at 3 p.m. is the cutoff, the last possible moment any of the league's teams can complete a trade call. In this part of the cycle, teams have completed about 75 percent of the season. The playoff picture is mostly in focus, and top contenders are looking to become the top contender.

The Hurricanes have been no stranger to either scenario over the years, though most recently the latter has been true, and general manager Eric Tulsky, just shy of completing his second full year at the helm, has already proven to have a penchant for swinging big.

In the Hurricanes' 5-2 win over Detroit on Saturday night at Lenovo Center, Carolina extended its points streak to 12 games and further cemented its status among the Eastern Conference elite.

One of the Canes' mid-season acquisitions a year ago, Taylor Hall, got things rolling for Carolina on Saturday with the first goal of the game on a breakaway against Detroit's Cam Talbot, and Shayne Gostisbehere set up Sebastian Aho back post on a power play for the Canes' second of the night in the waning seconds of the first period. Hall and Gostisbehere each finished with three points.

Eric Robinson extended the Canes' lead to 3-0, stuffing home the puck through Talbot less than five minutes into the second, and Carolina appeared to be on cruise control.

A pair of Detroit goals late in the second — a Simon Edvinsson wrist shot off the junction of the crossbar and post at 18:26, and a Patrick Kane wrist shot 47 seconds later following a bad Jackson Blake turnover — pulled the Wings within one at 3-2.

But Gostisbehere reestablished the Canes' lead early in the third with a wrist shot from the left circle past Talbot's glove, and Blake added another at 5:30 of the third to put the game out of reach. Frederik Andersen finished

with 27 saves for his eighth win of the season, and he looked far more composed and confident than he had in starts prior to the Olympic break.

Saturday's result — and indeed the past month's results — aside, every contending team will keep a keen eye on the market.

The Hurricanes are among the contenders with the best financial situation, in terms of immediately available cap space. The Canes can take on salary that most buyers cannot, which makes them a great trade partner for sellers looking to shed salary.

Why?

Because a selling team may take less in actual return value (players or picks) if it doesn't have to retain salary.

This would be important in the case of a “rental,” a player with an expiring contract looking to make a run at a league title before testing free agency over the summer. But it could also be important for longer-term roster construction, because ...

Canes have upcoming salary cap additions

There is another consideration here when looking at the Canes' gaping cap space: That gap is going to shrink significantly this summer. Currently, Logan Stankoven counts for about \$814,000 toward the cap, and Jackson Blake another \$905,000. Next year, Stankoven begins an eight-year deal worth \$6 million per season, and Blake settles into an eight-year pact worth \$5.1 million per season, for a total of \$11.1 million, a combined net addition of \$9.4 million.

If the Canes add salary with term at the trade deadline, it wouldn't negatively affect roster construction in the short term, but it would certainly impact the way the team handles its roster business next summer and beyond.

The Canes are also in a unique position in the NHL in that not only is the roster as currently constructed completely under contract — and without any long-term injury designations — this season, but outside of Mark Jankowski (F), Mike Reilly (D) and Andersen (G), the Hurricanes' players are all under contract next season, as well.

Beyond that? The Canes only have four players — Gostisbehere, Jalen Chatfield, Jordan Martinook and Jordan Staal — hitting free agency after the 2026-27 season.

The good news here, of course, is that the team's core is locked up for a while, and given the team's results the past several years, that's a good thing. But ...

Can the Hurricanes get over the hump?

Any team that has wallowed in squalor for a long period of time has a different outlook when it once again finds success. For the Canes, making the playoffs in 2019 after a nine-year drought was cause for celebration. A trip to the Eastern Conference Final that season — sweep notwithstanding — was gravy.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

The team's subsequent sustained regular-season success validated its turnaround, and a second trip to the NHL's version of the Final Four in 2023 cemented Carolina's status as a "perennial contender."

But another sweep — a third ECF loss-by-sweep since their lone Stanley Cup win in 2006 — left a sour taste.

But ... BUT ... things were trending properly. The core was growing.

A year ago, another ECF appearance begat three more losses in a row, pushing the skid in that round to 15 before a Game 4 win over the Florida Panthers snapped the streak. A loss in Game 5, though, left the Canes with a 1-16 record in four ECF appearances; 1-12 under head coach Rod Brind'Amour.

From playoff drought, to surprising run, to sustained success, to several "almosts," the team's trajectory suggests a breakthrough is imminent. But its results also beg the simple question:

"What's missing?"

In the NHL, there really is no secret sauce. There are commonalities, of course, among Stanley Cup champions: Depth to handle inevitable injuries and add scoring punch; Strong special teams to handle the inevitable penalty calls (deserved or otherwise); Timely goaltending to protect inevitable defensive lapses.

Any moves the Hurricanes make should address one of those needs.

So, who's out there?

Many factors go into teams' trading decisions, including whether a player wants to cooperate (or has the contractual ability to dictate his path). And, for the players, skating for a title contender sometimes isn't enough by itself. Family matters. Location matters. Belief in their quality of life matters. Teammates matter. Playing style matters.

Any list of potential trade targets has to take those factors into account, and much of that can be presumptive, based only on supposition.

That said, let's "suppose." Here is a look at a handful of players recently linked to the Hurricanes, or who should be. All salary figures courtesy Puckpedia.com.

Jordan Binnington, G, St. Louis

Cap hit: \$6 million; Under contract through: 2026-27

A Stanley Cup-winning goalie for the floundering St. Louis Blues, he's had a rough year statistically, but he showed during the Olympics what he can do when a team plays defense in front of him. And the Hurricanes, last we checked, play an elite defensive system. Binnington has also shown a knack for coming up big in pressure situations. While the Hurricanes have three goalies locked up for next season, they could afford Binnington's contract outright and carry three goalies (Pyotr Kochetkov is out for the season) and deal with the logjam this summer, or trade Frederik Andersen (or Kochetkov) as part of the deal.

Canadian goalie Jordan Binnington dives for the puck as he defends against Finland's Sebastian Aho during the men's semifinal between Canada and Finland at the Milano Santagiulia Ice Hockey Arena during the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games in Milan, on Feb. 20, 2026.

Vincent Trocheck, C, New York Rangers

Cap hit: \$5.625 million; Under contract through: 2028-29

Trocheck is of course no stranger to the Hurricanes. Part of a surprise acquisition in 2020 from the Florida Panthers, Trocheck played two full seasons with Carolina, through 2022, before leaving for the Rangers in free agency that summer. His playoff numbers have been strong, he would add grit and snarl to the forward group, and he can win faceoffs. This year, Trocheck has won faceoffs at a 56.5% clip while playing more than 20 minutes per game. The knock on targeting Trocheck would be

what it might cost the Canes to acquire him. He is owed \$5.63 million per season through 2028-29, when he will be 35 years old, and he will be in high demand after a successful Olympic experience.

Elias Pettersson, C/LW, Vancouver Canucks

Cap hit: \$11.6 million; Under contract through: 2031-32

Pettersson has a great agent. He's among the top earners in the National Hockey League, but hasn't produced points commensurate with his salary. Part of that, of course, is where he plays: He has played in just two playoff series with the Canucks in seven seasons, and they won't be in the postseason this year, either. His top point-production came in 2022-23 (102), and he has an underwhelming 35 points in 50 games this season. He also wins fewer than 50% of his faceoffs — not great for a 1C (or 2C) who would likely see time on a power play. Trading for Pettersson would feel like a high-risk, medium reward scenario and would likely require some salary retention.

Robert Thomas, C, St. Louis Blues

Cap hit: \$8.125 million; Under contract through: 2030-31

With the salary cap on the rise, this contract is more than doable for the Hurricanes, and good, young, right-shot centers in their mid-20s don't grow on trees. But given all of that, the Blues, who are entering a significant retool, will want significant compensation. Think Alexander Nikishin and more. If the Canes make another deal for a defender beyond something for Thomas, that might make sense, but if this would be the only deal the team makes, giving up such a promising young defender would be tough to swallow. Thomas does have winning credibility: Stanley Cup, Memorial Cup, World Juniors. Thomas also plays in all situations, and would be a great fit in Brind'Amour's system. Of all of the available centers, Thomas is the best fit. His price tag may be the deterrent here.

Ryan O'Reilly, C, Nashville Predators

Cap hit: \$4.5 million; Under contract through: 2026-27

If in nine years, Thomas can say his career has mimicked Ryan O'Reilly's, he should be quite pleased with that. O'Reilly is a veteran centerman who's still finding scoreboard success this season in Nashville at a point-per-game clip. A former St. Louis skater, O'Reilly also has a Stanley Cup win in 2019, and adds a measure of grit to whichever team he's on. He's also almost a PPG player in the playoffs over his career. His cap hit would be favorable, the Canes wouldn't have to ask anyone to retain money, and he wins faceoffs at a 55.1% clip while playing the most minutes among forwards on the Predators roster. O'Reilly would potentially be a great fit in Raleigh.

Ryan O'Reilly (90) of the Nashville Predators celebrates scoring against the Florida Panthers during the third period at Amerant Bank Arena on Dec. 4, 2025 in Sunrise, Florida.

Ryan O'Reilly (90) of the Nashville Predators celebrates scoring against the Florida Panthers during the third period at Amerant Bank Arena on Dec. 4, 2025 in Sunrise, Florida. Carmen Mandato Getty Images

Charlie Coyle, C, Columbus Blue Jackets

Cap hit: \$5.25 million; Under contract through: 2025-26

Coyle is really the only true "rental" among the forwards on this list, because the Canes typically don't go for rentals. That's not to say they wouldn't try a short extension with the 33-year-old Coyle, but it will be interesting to see what he does as he hits free agency for just the second time in his career. His best season points total was 60 in 2023-24, but he is a valuable defensive center and better than average in the faceoff circle. The knock here may be that he doesn't add something to the Canes' roster that they don't already have, beyond the ability to line up at center. One thing Coyle does have in spades: Playoff experience. Oh, and let's not forget who the GM in Columbus is. Don Waddell, as much



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

as anyone in the league, knows what the Hurricanes have in the cupboard for a potential creative return on a trade.

Dougie Hamilton, D, New Jersey Devils

Cap hit: \$9 million; Under contract through: 2027-28

This reunion doesn't seem to make much sense on quick glance, but here we are. First and foremost, though, the Devils would have to retain a significant portion of Hamilton's contract if this were to even be an option. Hamilton would also have to want to return to Carolina, as he has a no-move clause in his contract with a 10-team no-trade list. Hamilton has been benign this season from a points production standpoint, and it's fair to wonder if his best years are behind him, even at age 32. In 2022-23, Hamilton posted 74 points in 82 games. Since then, he's totaled 78 over 138 games. Would he play better back in Raleigh? Maybe. Just seems like an odd fit, if it were to happen.

The Carolina Hurricanes Seth Jarvis (24) controls the puck ahead of New Jersey Devils Dougie Hamilton (7) in the second period during Game 1 of their second round Stanley Cup playoff series against the New Jersey Devils on Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at PNC Arena in Raleigh, N.C.

The Carolina Hurricanes Seth Jarvis (24) controls the puck ahead of New Jersey Devils Dougie Hamilton (7) in the second period during Game 1 of their second round Stanley Cup playoff series against the New Jersey Devils on Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at PNC Arena in Raleigh, N.C. Robert Willett rwillett@newsobserver.com

Oliver Ekman-Larsson, D, Toronto Maple Leafs

Cap hit: \$3.5 million; Under contract through: 2027-28

Ekman-Larsson is one of those players who you sometimes forget is still in the league, even though he's not that old. A mainstay with the Coyotes for 11 seasons, OEL was an elite defender playing for a perennially bad team in the desert. He plays defense with an edge and can bomb the puck from the blue line at even strength or on the power play, and provide solid PK minutes. At age 34, he's not quite over the hill, and his cap hit is a friendly \$3.5 million. He would do well on a second D pairing, and would be a good addition to a blue line for a playoff push, and also for a couple more regular seasons, especially if the team has to move a good young defender or two in another deal to acquire a forward.

Other names to keep an eye on: Joseph Woll, Toronto (G); Stuart Skinner, Pittsburgh (G); Justin Faulk, St. Louis (D); Tyler Myers (D); Jonathan Marchessault (C); Nazem Kadri, Calgary (C); Shane Wright, Seattle (C); Brayden Schenn, St. Louis (C); Evander Kane, Vancouver (W); Bobby McMann, Toronto (W); Patrick Laine, Montreal (W).

Hurricanes unlikely to stand pat

For all of the "maybes" and "what ifs," there is one thing that feels certain: The Hurricanes are going to do ... something.

Tulsky is a mad scientist with a lab full of potions and potables at his disposal, and he's shown a willingness to mix a few of those together in his nearly two years at the helm of Carolina's laboratory.

He's not afraid of a few explosions along the way, either, so long as he doesn't burn the whole thing down. And, more often than not, his concoctions have resulted in solid team chemistry — and positive results.

The Hurricanes are close. This close. Carolina is the only team in the NHL not to have lost in regulation in its past 12 games. The Canes are riding momentum toward the toughest stretch of the season for everyone — a 23-games-in-45-days sprint through April 14, a condensed schedule thanks to the Olympics. Teams will lean on their depth, both in raw numbers and on the scoresheet. They'll rely on special teams to steal points whenever possible, and prevent stolen points from impacting playoff races. And they'll rely on rotating goalies, with each keeper needing to give the contenders a chance to win, to stay at the top or in the hunt.

By the end of this week, the Hurricanes will know for certain which players will be available to them to fill each of these roles, and there's a better-than-average chance at least one of those players isn't yet on the team's roster.

News Observer LOADED: 03.02.2026

1381142 Websites

The Athletic / Jim Hiller firing too little, too late for Kings team with delusions of contending

By Eric Stephens

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. — Five days are left until the NHL trade deadline, and the moribund Los Angeles Kings should have long since arrived at a couple of important conclusions.

This season is toast. And there is no point in using more assets for another major trade.

Those are connected, and Saturday's 2-0 win over the rebuilding-bound Calgary Flames did nothing to change a dim outlook. Precious little has gone right for a franchise that looks as if it hasn't recovered from last season's epic collapse in a Western Conference first-round playoff series to the Edmonton Oilers, the Kings' annual spring nemesis.

And after they fired embattled coach Jim Hiller on Sunday, an honest new interim boss, D.J. Smith, in his first address with the media, said they hadn't.

"I think that particular loss, the way we lost, somehow carried on to this season," Smith said. "And it ends now. Unfortunately, the way we lost, you could feel it. You could feel it, maybe dragging the group down. Maybe we didn't believe in ourselves. It's over. That has ended, and today is a brand-new, fresh start. We got to look at it that way.

"We have a number of guys that were on that team that aren't here. We have a number of guys, because of the injuries that we have, that are getting opportunities. It's time to build a brand-new group right now. And it's not a big window. It's not a long runway to do so. But we got some guys that are capable."

WHAT YOU SHOULD READ NEXT

Kings fire head coach Jim Hiller, name D.J. Smith interim boss

D.J. Smith will take over behind the bench with the Kings sitting outside the playoffs.

That first part was refreshingly forthright from Smith, considering his previous role as an assistant meant he had been around to witness the Kings' rudderless follow-up. But the rest of it, and much of what was said from others at Kings headquarters Sunday, carries the same air of delusion of being a good team that this organization has been stuck in.

They're not. Only 15 regulation victories — third-worst in the NHL — along with 35 losses in 59 games, when you factor in all the overtime and shootout defeats, say so. There won't be any worry about running into the Oilers with something important on the line again. The last meeting Thursday — one Hiller termed a "playoff game" in its meaning — saw Edmonton drive eight nails into their coffin.

It was the final straw for Hiller in a job many feel he had for too long. There was no coming back from an 8-1 loss to the hated Oilers — especially when that came after a horrific third period in blowing their post-Olympic break opener against the first-place Vegas Golden Knights.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Both came at home, and fans, in signs and chants, let the decision-makers know how they felt about Hiller still standing behind the bench.

When you look at the coaching change in a vacuum, the problem isn't that it was done. Hiller's status had been a topic ever since his horrendous decisions last spring and remained so as the Kings never regained the magic that flowed throughout 2024-25 up until that fateful series. The problem is the timing.

The decision was made Friday, and Hiller was behind the bench Saturday only because the players weren't around on an off Friday, and Saturday's afternoon game provided too short a window to make the change official. But if Kings general manager Ken Holland and president Luc Robitaille really wanted the spark or the "bounce" that a new coach can bring, why couldn't they have done it in January, as the Columbus Blue Jackets did in turfing Dean Evason for Rick Bowness? Or even earlier, when their situation might have been more appetizing?

"Why now?" Holland said. "I guess I tried to wait as long as I could. There's 23 games to go. We've hung around the race. You can even look at our division. I think first place in our division is only 8 points ahead of us. Now 8 points is a lot of points over 20 games. We've kind of hung around the race. But I didn't like the two games heading into the break. I didn't like the games coming out of the break, and time's running out. It was either kind of just stay status quo and see what happened and see where it goes, but I felt that I wanted to make a decision and go with it."

You can go back to when Kings dropped the final four games to the Oilers after grabbing a 2-0 lead, with the loudest corners of an increasingly dissatisfied fan base wanting Hiller out following his disastrous Game 3 challenge and roster management throughout. Sticking with Hiller, as Holland did upon his hiring in May, cost them Marco Sturm, who had been with the franchise for years, would have loved the promotion after capably running the AHL team and now has the surprising Boston Bruins in playoff position.

The levers Hiller pulled that largely worked last season didn't at all in 2025-26, and the Kings are within striking distance of a playoff berth only because of the turtle derby that is the Pacific. Maybe they propped open the coffin slightly Saturday, but the Kings still need to take a hard look at themselves and their unsettled future.

Getting past the nondescript Flames shouldn't give them license to be seduced by Smith lighting a fire under a club — which has won more than two games in a row only twice (with its longest win streak at just four) — to all of a sudden beat out three teams and squeeze into a playoff spot where a real Stanley Cup contender like the Colorado Avalanche would await.

Nor should being 3 points out seduce Holland into sacrificing more of their best assets before Friday's trade deadline to address a roster he failed to improve last summer after taking over. The move to get Artemi Panarin from the New York Rangers can still work in his favor, but that cost top prospect Liam Greentree and a couple of draft picks.

WHAT YOU SHOULD READ NEXT

Adding Artemi Panarin signals ambition from the Kings — and possibly hubris

The Kings got a star offensive winger for a song thanks to his no-move clause. But it still left a fairly bare cupboard emptier than before.

At least Holland took a realistic tone to what he might do over the next few days.

"I'll work the phones," Holland said. "I'll see what's out there. Given where we are in the standings, I don't anticipate our first-round pick being in play. I think we have the ninth or 10th pick as we sit here today. So, we'll see. I'll work the phones and see what happens."

What he should do — and what losses to the league-leading Avalanche on Monday and the rolling, good-vibing New York Islanders on Thursday

can make crystal clear — is look at what Warren Foegele and Trevor Moore, useful wingers with term left, could get to restock the Kings' asset pool and even fortify it. (Along with their 2026 first, the Kings have their own second and one that originally belonged to Columbus from the Phillip Danault trade).

The effective end to the season was written in three parts: 1) the back-to-back losses to the Seattle Kraken and Golden Knights; 2) the loss of Kevin Fiala for the season just days after acquiring Panarin; and 3) last week's abomination once they restarted. Now there is too much to overcome.

Holland alluded to Andrei Kuzmenko's knee surgery possibly keeping him out the rest of the way. Drew Doughty is day to day, but the aging defenseman may no longer get through a full season unscathed. The combination of injured and underperforming players is a bad one.

But the Kings are clinging to the belief of the playoffs, even if it's misguided. The season is in Smith's hands, and the 48-year-old former coach of the Ottawa Senators is determined to succeed in what could otherwise be a fruitless assignment.

"We got to get our confidence," Smith said. "We have three Hall of Fame players in our dressing room, and who knows what else down the road. Our guys got to gravitate to that leadership and take confidence in that. We're a good enough team. We're a good team. We've got good players. We've got good young players. And we got to start feeling better about ourselves. And for whatever reason, we just haven't had that feeling this year. We've tried different things, and we just haven't had that swagger. It's a short runway to get it done.

"We got the best team in the league coming in here tomorrow. Guys got to start to believe a little bit, and guys got to start feeling good about themselves. Some guys have underperformed, and I think they got to take responsibility in that. Ultimately, the coach pays the price, but there's some guys that got to play better. And my job is to put them in those spots to play better and get them feeling better about themselves."

As for Hiller, Anže Kopitar and Mikey Anderson insisted after Thursday's beatdown that they hadn't quit on him. On Sunday, Kopitar said the players realize they haven't played up to their standards and that Hiller "fell on the sword for that." Holland was another who said any turnaround must come from within. Swapping in Brian Dumoulin and Cody Ceci for Vladislav Gavrikov and Jordan Spence was a clear downgrade defensively, but several of their core performers have not matched their 2024-25 play or production.

"I'm not asking to perform above their level," Holland said. "They've performed at that level. We need them to perform at that level, and I think that — why haven't they performed at the level? I don't really have an answer for you. I made the move today to see if our players will respond and we get more of them going at that level."

Following the Kings' win over Calgary, Robitaille peeked his head into the Kings' interview room at Crypto.com Arena as an empty lectern awaited Hiller for what turned out to be his final media session as coach. That could have been the time for Robitaille to address the organizational shortcomings and how their path taken a few years ago to become a Cup contender failed and a season that's headed toward nowhere.

But that time is coming. They're not good, and they may not be for a while. Someone has got to answer for that.

The Athletic LOADED: 03.02.2026

1381143 Websites

The Athletic / Kings fire head coach Jim Hiller, name D.J. Smith interim boss



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

By Eric Stephens

The Los Angeles Kings have fired embattled coach Jim Hiller during his second full season, the team announced Sunday, making a move behind the bench in a last-ditch attempt to turn around a disappointing year. The Kings snapped a five-game losing streak with a 2-0 win over the Calgary Flames on Saturday, but still sit three points behind the Seattle Kraken for the final playoff spot in the Western Conference.

Assistant coach D.J. Smith will take over as interim head coach for the remainder of the season.

The final straw for Hiller was an 8-1 loss to the Edmonton Oilers on Thursday, their worst defeat of the season, which followed a blown third-period lead to a Golden Knights club resting several top performers. Disenchanted fans at Crypto.com Arena held up "Fire Hiller" signs and engaged in similar chants.

"I want to thank Jim Hiller for his dedication, professionalism, and the commitment he showed to our players and our team every day. He is a respected coach and person, and we appreciate the work he's done behind our bench," Kings general manager Ken Holland said in a statement. "At this point in the season, we believe a change in leadership is necessary to give our group the best opportunity to reach its potential and compete at the level we expect."

When asked about concerns over his job security after the brutal performance against Edmonton, Hiller said his focus was on getting the Kings to beat the Flames on Saturday. He also pushed back at the notion that his messaging was no longer being received within L.A.'s dressing room.

"We signed up for this job," Hiller said. "I think you're probably always concerned when you get a job in the coaching world, so that's just something that's always tucked away. But what overrides all of that is trying to get your team to win games."

In his first NHL head-coaching job after 10 years as an assistant with multiple teams, Hiller went 93-58-24 with the Kings and coached them in two playoff series. He took over for Todd McLellan on an interim basis in February 2024 and coached the Kings to a 21-12-1 record to end that season. The Kings took the interim tag off in May 2024, and Hiller coached L.A. to a 48-25-9 record and franchise-best 105 points last season.

Smith, 48, came to the Kings when Hiller replaced McLellan. His previous NHL head-coaching experience was a potential fallback if Hiller himself was moved out. Smith and Hiller worked together with the Toronto Maple Leafs before the Ottawa Senators hired Smith on May 23, 2019. The Senators went 131-154-32 without a playoff appearance in Smith's four-plus seasons guiding the club. He was let go 26 games into the 2023-24 season.

Hiller was kept on this season by Holland despite heavy criticism for his decision-making and roster management last spring, when Los Angeles let a 2-0 first-round series lead over the Oilers get away as the Kings dropped the final four games. The Kings lost for the fourth consecutive postseason to the Oilers, who eventually advanced to their second straight Stanley Cup Final.

In early December, Holland told The Athletic's Pierre LeBrun there was "zero truth" to reports of a possible coaching change despite rumblings that Pete DeBoer was a potential target. Hiller managed to survive rough stretches and insisted that the Kings had it in them to put together a lengthy winning streak, but his club won only nine times over a 29-game span. The Kings managed to stay in a playoff race only because of their ability to get games into overtime and scrape out single points. Their 15 victories within 60 minutes of play were among the lowest in the NHL.

The 56-year-old Hiller had guided the Kings to a 24-21-14 record this season. The Kings, never known for having a high-octane offense, faltered badly on that side of the puck under Hiller this season. And their tried-and-true method of stout defense and goaltending was completely abandoned following the Olympic break.

Hiller's deployment of his few difference-makers also came under scrutiny. Talented defenseman Brandt Clarke, one of only two true puck-movers on their blue line, didn't get a significant boost in his ice time until Drew Doughty was sidelined with a foot injury.

Top scorer Adrian Kempe spent a large chunk of time earlier in the season playing the point on a five-forward power play instead of being a focal point for one-time shots from the right circle. Hiller also routinely changed his forward lines between games and within them in a futile search for a sustainable offensive spark. Holland made a major acquisition Feb. 4 in obtaining star point producer Artemi Panarin from the New York Rangers, but the potential jolt was negated when Kevin Fiala suffered leg fractures while playing for Switzerland during the Olympics that ended his NHL regular season.

Already in a precarious position to keep their streak of playoff appearances going, the Kings are battered beyond losing the services of Fiala. Winger Andrei Kuzmenko underwent surgery Friday to repair a meniscus tear. The Kings also didn't have Doughty or forward Joel Armia, who both played in the Olympics, for Saturday's win over the Flames. Both are considered day-to-day.

The Athletic LOADED: 03.02.2026

1381144 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Oilers not firing on all cylinders as trade deadline approaches

Mark Spector

EDMONTON — Let's think of an NHL roster like a car. A confluence of interconnected parts that come together to produce a single entity — a game — which is the output of all the working parts doing their own specific job.

Contracts (and no-move clauses) marry teams to certain parts that cannot simply be changed out on a whim. Andrew Mangiapane, waived by the Edmonton Oilers on Sunday, was not one such part.

Otherwise, they are forced to depend on those parts, whether they're working well or not. If those parts function at less than their required level, the car — the team — cannot purr along at its highest level.

The 11-year veteran is a huge part of Edmonton's defensive game on the ice, and their dressing room culture off of it. He's been there since the start, before Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl, and he has the battle scars to prove it.

Nurse wears an 'A' as an alternate captain, and for better or worse, has been given a large percentage of the salary pie (\$9.25 million per season).

Nurse is trusted with nearly 21 minutes per game of ice time — fourth on the Oilers. Edmonton's defensive game, like it or not, turns around Nurse's axis to some degree.

If Nurse's game becomes leaky or untrustworthy, which it has been for much of the season, Edmonton's overall game becomes untrustworthy for the one-third of the game that he plays. As a leader, if he's not



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

performing, it becomes impossible for him to call on others to block more shots, or make better plays.

You might say, "Then don't play Nurse so much!" Fine.

But what does head coach Kris Knoblauch do with those minutes then?

Evan Bouchard and Mattias Ekholm, the first pairing, can't take on more ice time. Their plate is full.

And the third-pairing guys — Ty Emberson and Spencer Stastney — are third-pairing guys for a reason. If they could handle 20-plus minutes a night, they'd be second-pairing guys, right?

Now, back to the car analogy. You can trick our car out at the deadline with an extra, optional part here and there. But if the core pieces — Nurse, the penalty kill, the depth scorers, an overall game that respects the defensive side of the sport — don't effectively cover off their responsibilities, it doesn't matter who or what you add.

And it's not just Nurse.

The other core pieces on this roster are playing an unbalanced game as well. Lots of offence is great, but that's only one facet of the game — a facet that becomes secondary to solid defensive play as the games get more important.

32 Thoughts: The Podcast

32 Thoughts: The Podcast

Hockey fans already know the name, but this is not the blog. From Sportsnet, 32 Thoughts: The Podcast with NHL Insider Elliotte Friedman and Kyle Bukauskas is a weekly deep dive into the biggest news and interviews from the hockey world.

Latest episode

Since Christmas, at five-on-five, Edmonton's top line of McDavid between Zach Hyman and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins has been on the ice for one more goal for than against. The trio has produced 29 goals and 73 points, yet it has a 5v5 goals share of barely over 50 per cent.

Draisaitl is minus-2, with a goals-for share of 47 per cent. He has 11-19-30 since Christmas.

So the team's top producers function offensively extremely well. But they give up as much as they get — sometimes more.

The top pairing of Ekholm and Bouchard is plus-17 since Christmas. But the second pairing is minus-13, with Nurse holding a 39 per cent goals-for differential, worst among Edmonton's top six forwards and top four defencemen.

Here's another telling stat: in their past 10 games, the Oilers have scored the most goals in the NHL (44) and allowed the most (46). Their record in that time is 4-6.

The Buffalo Sabres have played 11 games in that time span, going 8-2-1. They've scored one less goal (43) but allowed 18 fewer (28).

So it's awesome that McDavid is heading towards another Art Ross, and that Bouchard has crawled into the NHL's top 10 with 69 points and might be a Norris candidate. But here's the problem.

The team is not winning games — they have 22 regulation wins in 61 starts — and that's the only thing that matters.

McDavid has said it 100 times: they've had plenty of individual awards in this dressing room. There's only one trophy that really matters.

With McDavid under contract for only three more playoff runs, and with the spectre that it could only be two if he doesn't re-sign, general manager Stan Bowman has no choice but to be all in at the trade deadline.

Even if it is possible that, like the Florida Panthers, the sheer number of games this Oilers roster has played over the past three seasons — coupled with the frenetic pace of this compacted Olympic year — has left the Oilers too mentally fatigued to locate a game worthy of a third straight Stanley Cup Final.

Bowman's primary deadline goal is to find a partner to play with Nurse, like a gear head adding horse power to an already powerful muscle car. That could be the antidote for Nurse's game, which was at a seasonal low in Game 61 at San Jose on Saturday.

But Bowman can add all he wants.

If Nurse doesn't find his game, if McDavid turns pucks over in a 4-4 game on the road, if the shot blockers don't start selling out and blocking some shots, if goalie Tristan Jarry doesn't perform to the level expected of him...

The new part will be just that.

A part. Of a team that doesn't win.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 03.02.2026

1381145 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Gary Bettman heading to Calgary to look at potential World Cup venue

Eric Francis

ANAHEIM — Gary Bettman is coming to Calgary on Monday for a site visit of Scotiabank Place.

Could an announcement that Calgary will host the 2028 World Cup of Hockey soon follow?

Deputy commissioner Bill Daly told Sportsnet he will join the commissioner for a sit-down with ownership, a tour of the arena's construction site and an update on the building's progress.

The timing is fascinating, given the fact Calgary is on the short list to host the next incarnation of best-on-best hockey, which fans are already anticipating given the triumphant return to the Olympics by NHLers.

The NHL and NHLPA have whittled the list of 25 applicants down to just a few North American candidates to host four nations in round-robin play, followed by a playdown that would also be hosted on this side of the pond.

A European city will host the other four teams before they make the trans-Atlantic flight to start playing elimination games.

Daly revealed on Sunday the venue announcements are two weeks away.

He said there would be no need to announce the participants at that time, as there is still plenty of time to see how the situation in Ukraine unfolds before determining whether Russia and Belarus could be reinstated, or if Slovakia could be the eighth team.

The other seven will be Canada, U.S., Sweden, Finland, Czechia, Switzerland and Germany.

Slated to open in the fall of 2027, the \$1.2 billion event centre would be the perfect place to showcase a battle for international hockey supremacy slated for February 2028.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Imagine Matthew Tkachuk returning to Calgary wearing Team USA colours, alongside his brother, as Connor McDavid, Sidney Crosby and Co. try to avenge the overtime loss in last month's Olympic gold-medal game.

Dare to dream Calgary, as plenty of sources suggest the world-class pitch tabled by the Flames and city partners is going to be hard to beat.

The plan goes well beyond hosting games, as Calgary is promising a festival-style atmosphere built around concerts, fan events, and community celebrations.

Think of the energy that swept through the city during the Olympics, then add the modern production value of a league-run event.

Imagine the economic impact, the global attention, the chance to christen Scotia Place with the biggest hockey event the city has seen since the Flames' run to the 2004 Stanley Cup Final.

This is the kind of moment that defines a new arena's legacy before the paint is even dry.

In a city that came within a plebiscite of hosting the Olympic games we just watched, the legacy of volunteerism, support and spirit is all part of the appeal that would make it an event guaranteed to make the league proud.

In terms of pedigree, the city has proven conclusively how well it welcomes the world, with millions attending the Stampede every year.

Bettman has a long history of rewarding cities that get new venues built by awarding them flagship events like the draft or an all-star game.

Murray Edwards' influence in league circles doesn't hurt either, but what's really pushing Calgary forward is the sheer scale of what's being proposed: not just a tournament, but a two-week celebration of the sport, wrapped around the debut of what will be the world's newest, most modern hockey arena.

There's also a geopolitical wrinkle working in Calgary's favour. With Donald Trump's threats to move FIFA World Cup games out of cities with Democratic leadership, creating uncertainty around major events in the U.S., surely American bids for the World Cup of Hockey suddenly look less stable.

Boston already hosted the playoffs and final of the 4 Nations Face-Off.

Calgary, by contrast, offers stability, enthusiasm, and a proven volunteer base that made the 1988 Olympics one of the most memorable of all five-ring parties. The Saddledome last hosted a major league event in 2000, when the NHL Draft came to town.

A new arena changes everything.

The league knows it. The city knows it. Bettman knows it.

Calgary's bid checks every box: a new arena, a global-event pedigree, a hockey-mad market, and a plan that elevates the tournament beyond the ice.

If the league wants a showcase, Calgary is ready to deliver one.

Now we wait to see if Bettman and the NHLPA agree.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 03.02.2026

1381146 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Senators muddy trade-deadline plans with thumping of Maple Leafs

Alex Adams

TORONTO — A Battle of Ontario showdown on a Saturday on Hockey Night in Canada was always going to be a big game.

But at the beginning of the season, neither the Ottawa Senators nor the Toronto Maple Leafs would have expected the outcome of a game on the last night in February would be shaping their deadline plans as buyers or sellers.

Just 10 months ago, the Maple Leafs and Senators were duelling in a hotly contested playoff series — now, they're simply battling to get out of the Atlantic Division's basement.

This time, the Senators emphatically dimmed Toronto's playoff hopes in a 5-2 victory, prompting the Scotiabank Arena crowd to serenade the home side with some boos.

Morgan Rielly scored 2:52 into the game, but the Maple Leafs did not earn another shot for the rest of the period. In the meantime, Ottawa fired 16 straight shots on net to finish the first frame.

"Oh, it's lovely. It's just dandy. Means that we're playing really good hockey in front of me," goalie Linus Ullmark said of his low workload.

Ottawa dominated and it wasn't close, despite the two teams being separated by just three points in the standings. The Senators looked like they believed they could make the playoffs and desperately wanted to; the Leafs looked like they had given up.

"Just fairly embarrassing, to be honest with you," Leafs captain Auston Matthews said. "We have to have more pride in our play."

The gulf between the teams Saturday night was the size of Lake Ontario.

Rielly called the Maple Leafs' game "confusing" and "unacceptable," while Jake McCabe said they "s--- the bed."

Music to Senators fans' ears.

Ottawa's win drags it within five points of a playoff spot. Its post-season odds now sit at 45 per cent, according to MoneyPuck.com.

Juxtapose that with Toronto. The Leafs' playoff hopes are now on life support, and they are poised to send a mass of bodies out of their unit ahead of Friday's 3 p.m. ET trade deadline. It's a seller's market in a city where that talk has typically been reserved for housing, not the Maple Leafs.

Everyone from Bobby McMann to Scott Laughton to Oliver Ekman-Larsson seem potentially headed for the exits from Ontario's capital.

Meanwhile, in Canada's capital, the deadline path looks more complicated. The Senators have plenty of expiring contracts, including Claude Giroux, Nick Jensen, David Perron, Nick Cousins and Lars Eller. Ottawa's win gives it some hope that the team won't waste another year of Brady Tkachuk in a Senators uniform.

The Senators still need an upgrade on the right side of their defensive top four in tandem with an Ullmark renaissance tour.

If Ottawa had Toronto's 17th-ranked .892 team save percentage, it'd be in a playoff spot rather than five points out.

Ullmark struggled on Toronto's second goal Saturday with poor rebound control, but he got five goals in support.

Yet, in something bigger than his on-ice play, Ullmark returned to Toronto for the first time since he suffered from panic episodes on Dec. 27 that led him to get pulled and then promptly take a leave of absence to tend to his mental health.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

"It's nice not getting pulled. That's nice," Ullmark joked. "And I mean, it's just one game out of I don't know how many times I've been here in Toronto, and you can't really focus too much on just one night."

Nevertheless, even with the Senators' victory, there is still a lack of clarity in the bigger picture for the rivals. Both general managers, Brad Treliving and Steve Staios, are in a jam. Each of them has an American captain with a contract finishing in 2028 and neither looks much like a Stanley Cup contender at the moment.

Each GM's track record has been mixed and their roadmap to convincing their captains to stay in a winning environment is hard.

In Toronto, Mitch Marner's loss is felt deep, while his replacements from Dakota Joshua to Nicolas Roy to Matias Maccelli and even Easton Cowan have been underwhelming.

Staios let Jakob Chychrun leave for an older, solid pro in Nick Jensen. In retrospect, the Senators did not recoup enough for the uber-talented Chychrun, who's scored 42 goals in less than two seasons in Washington. Staios also traded a prime asset in a second-round pick for Fabian Zetterlund, while inking the Swede to a \$12.83 million dollar contract over three years. Zetterlund is currently playing on Ottawa's fourth line.

On the other hand, Staios' acquisitions of David Perron, Michael Amadio and Jordan Spence have been fine. And his trade of Josh Norris for Dylan Cozens is looking like a success. Cozens scored twice on Saturday, notching his second career 20-goal campaign, and first in Ottawa in his first full season in Canada's capital. In contrast, Norris has played just 22 games this season.

Staios' predecessor, Pierre Dorion, left him no prospects or draft capital and no first-round pick this year due to the botched Evgenii Dadonov trade. Similarly, Treliving inherited an empty cupboard, yet his two trades for Brandon Carlo and Scott Laughton leave Toronto on the verge of giving up a top-10 pick to archrival Boston and no first-round pick next season, to boot.

Which is in worse shape: Toronto or Ottawa?

Right now you'd say Toronto, but it has a track record of winning and Ottawa doesn't — especially with its traumatic history between the pipes.

The Senators are likely still a few wins away from hitting the buy button.

In hockey, fans want either wins or hope. For one night at least, the Senators rekindled hope, while Toronto's golden age looked like it was on the precipice of expiring.

Adams' Apples

Drake Batherson hadn't scored since Jan. 18. But in the mecca of hockey, he found twine twice to end a 10-game goalless drought and reach the 20-goal mark for the fourth consecutive season.

"It's frustrating," Batherson said. "I've been through a lot of stretches like that throughout my career, so it still makes me as mad as the first time going through that."

Ullmark was asked how often he tells Batherson to shoot more often: "Every day."

"I mean, if anyone saw his Sens skills (competition), he put on a 106 m.p.h. (shot)."

If Batherson can regain some scoring touch, it will enhance Ottawa's ability to get on a heater.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 03.02.2026

Sportsnet.ca / Sunday Overreactions: Should Panthers trade Sergei Bobrovsky before deadline?

Michael Amato

Very little has gone right for the Florida Panthers this season.

Things started off horribly when star centre Aleksander Barkov went down with a serious knee injury in training camp, and everything has snowballed from there. Florida was also without Matthew Tkachuk for a huge chunk of the season, and other injuries started to add up and take a toll. Combine that with three lengthy playoff runs in a row, and it's not all that shocking to see this season slipping away from the Panthers.

Florida is sitting eight points back of the cutoff line right now, which will force it to make some tough decisions leading up to the trade deadline. If the Panthers were to get in, they would certainly still be threatening, especially if Barkov returns, but to spend assets at the deadline in a season that may be too far gone doesn't make a lot of sense. Instead, the Panthers could use this as an opportunity to reload for what will no doubt be a much more competitive and healthier team next year.

There aren't a lot of players on this team with bad contracts you'd want to move off of, but one area they could look at is in goal. Sergei Bobrovsky is a pending UFA this summer, and if he's not re-signed by next Friday, Florida could conceivably move him for something (he only has a 16-team no-trade clause) if the two sides are too far apart on term.

Panthers should deal Bobrovsky for an asset

A Bobrovsky extension could be a tricky contract to navigate for the Panthers. He's currently making \$10 million per season, and Florida will no doubt want him to take a payout to remain with the team, though the question will be how much he is willing to take. The Panthers would probably be comfortable bringing him back on a one-year deal at \$5 million or so, but given Bobrovsky's age and resume, he may be looking for more than that and additional term.

Bobrovsky's numbers haven't been great this season, but he's still coming off three very incredible playoff runs. It's hard to imagine the netminder taking a massive discount, and if the two sides can't come to terms, the Panthers would have to at least entertain the idea of moving on from him as opposed to potentially losing him for nothing.

Overreaction? No

The good news for the Panthers is they have a chance to get creative if a Bobrovsky move is on the horizon. Selling him off as a standard rental likely wouldn't fetch a huge return, but there are other avenues they could go down to shore up their goaltending. Florida traded its first-round pick a year ago to Chicago in the Spencer Knight deal, though it's top-10 protected. It's conceivable the Panthers could fall out of it and end up with a pick somewhere in the eight-to-10 range that they could use to add a goalie to replace Bobrovsky. Jesper Wallstedt, Jordan Binnington and one of Toronto's three goalies could be in play in a potential deal around draft time. Florida may have an opportunity to get younger and cheaper in net, while also picking up a piece in a Bobrovsky return.

There's another scenario where it would make sense for Florida to move Bobrovsky. They could trade him and then re-sign him in the summer. We rarely see it happen, but the Panthers are the type of forward-thinking organization that probably wouldn't shy away from attempting it. They'd need to get Bobrovsky's blessing before doing it to ensure he's onboard with the plan, but they have a chance to get an asset and then bring back a potential Hall of Fame netminder at a lower price.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Whether the Panthers will be playing hockey this spring remains to be seen, though I'd bet they'll be active at the deadline either way.

Nazem Kadri is the perfect fit for the Avalanche

It seems only a matter of time before the Calgary Flames deal Nazem Kadri. Even though Kadri is 35 and has three more years remaining on his contract at \$7 million per season, there will be no shortage of suitors for his services. The Flames forward has a unique blend of offence and physicality that is very effective for playoff hockey, and it was only a year ago that Kadri posted a career-high 35 goals. Colorado would no doubt have an interest in reuniting with Kadri, and with the familiarity between the two sides, it could be the perfect match to bolster the Avalanche centre depth.

Overreaction? Yes

The Avs have a very obvious need at centre — after Nathan MacKinnon and Brock Nelson, they boast Jack Drury and Parker Kelly. Both Drury and Kelly are fine players, but a team with Stanley Cup intentions like Colorado would ideally like to upgrade there. While Kadri would do just that and he's had his most productive seasons with the Avalanche, that was four years ago and he'll be 36 by the time next season starts. Even with the cap going up, the last couple years of Kadri's deal could become very problematic.

Colorado is definitely in win-now mode, and it should be looking at centres, but there might be better options than Kadri. Someone like Vincent Trocheck is younger and comes cheaper than Kadri, while Ryan O'Reilly also has a smaller cap hit and less term. If the Avs are going to put together a package based around the limited assets they have, Kadri is probably a riskier acquisition than some other centres available.

Connor Hellebuyck has ended the narrative that he can't deliver in big games

There were a number of players under pressure from both sides in last Sunday's gold-medal game, but Connor Hellebuyck was right at the top of the list. The Winnipeg Jets goaltender hasn't had a save percentage better than .886 over his past three playoff runs and was outduelled by Jordan Binnington at last year's 4 Nations final.

However, there was no question who the best goalie at these Olympics was. Hellebuyck was not only sensational against Canada, making a handful of improbable stops, but he was also rock-solid all throughout the tournament. The 32-year-old posted a .956 save percentage and saved nearly six goals above expected. Without his paddle save on Devon Toews and his work on a lengthy five-on-three, there's a very real possibility Team USA doesn't have gold medals around its necks right now.

Overreaction? No

If you're being doubted about your ability to win a big game, they don't come much bigger than a gold-medal contest at the Olympics that goes to overtime. In addition to denying Toews of a sure goal, he also stopped Connor McDavid and Macklin Celebrini on breakaways to help the U.S. to the overtime victory. Even if Hellebuyck reaches a Game 7 in the Stanley Cup Final at some point in his career with the Jets, you could still argue last Sunday's game was more pressure-packed. The whole world was watching, and the Canadian team would be a far more talented and potent squad than any NHL opposition. Hellebuyck was also carrying the weight of trying to guide the U.S. to its first Olympic gold in 46 years, and he checked every box.

Avalanche will finish with the league's worst power play

The Avalanche are one of the league's most potent offences with arguably two of the top-five players in the world. Colorado leads the league in shots on goal per game, goals per game and goal differential at plus-75. But somehow, somehow, the Avs are dead last on the power play at a shocking 14.8 per cent. It's one of hockey's greatest mysteries,

as Nathan MacKinnon and Cale Makar alone should be enough to get just about any power play in the top 10 — not to mention guys like Brock Nelson, Martin Necas and Gabriel Landeskog who can also bolster the unit. You'd be hard-pressed to find more than a handful of other teams that can boast a top power play with more talent than that.

With only a month and a half to go, the Avs are running out of time to improve on their dismal rating. There's a very real possibility Colorado could win the Presidents' Trophy and finish last in power-play percentage.

Overreaction? Yes

Maybe the Avs don't explode up the rankings with the man advantage in the final 25 games or so, but they should have enough talent not to finish last. There's also a very real possibility that they add someone at the deadline who can help them on the power play and at least improve the unit somewhat. Teams like Philadelphia and Calgary, who are just ahead of Colorado, are also likely to sell pieces off, which could make their power play even worse going forward. Someone referred to Colorado on the power play as a fast-break offence that struggles in the half-court, and that's the best explanation I've heard so far to something that seems otherwise unexplainable.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 03.02.2026

1381148 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / 'Just embarrassing': Maple Leafs feeling the pressure as losses mount

Sonny Sachdeva

TORONTO — The Toronto Maple Leafs are taking on water. The buckets are out, trying to send it back over the edge faster than it's coming in, trying to keep this thing afloat. But day by day, game by game, it's becoming undeniable — this ship is going down.

That was made clear once more Saturday night, as Craig Berube's club waded through yet another disappointing loss, as boos rained down on a squad that's worn plenty of them this season. The Maple Leafs returned to their home barn having stumbled through a pair of tough back-to-back road tilts to begin their post-Olympic slate — a humbling loss at the hands of the conference-leading Tampa Bay Lightning, followed by a one-sided drubbing by the defending champion Florida Panthers.

Then came this. A date with another familiar foe, a Battle of Ontario reunion with the Ottawa Senators under the Scotiabank Arena lights. A chance to earn some good will from the Maple Leafs faithful, if not some crucially needed points. They found only more pain.

"A good first five minutes, I thought," assessed defender Jake McCabe after the dust settled on a 5-2 shellacking from the visiting Sens. "We get the first goal, which we've been searching for.

"And then s*** the bed after that."

After getting caved in through 20 minutes two nights ago — allowing three goals in the opening frame against Florida, while getting outshot 16-7 — the Leafs managed to draw first blood three minutes into the follow-up on Saturday, Morgan Rielly potting an early power-play goal to set things on the right track.

Then the waves started. The Sens sent a flurry of chances at Joseph Woll, breaking through with a goal of their own eight minutes later. Ottawa finished the opening period outshooting Toronto 16-2. By the



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

second half of the next period, they'd tacked on two more goals, and were outshooting the hosts by an absurd margin of 26-4.

"I thought we started better. We just kind of lost it there. Just really disconnected throughout all three zones," Auston Matthews said from the locker room after the fans had filtered out of the building. "Just bad. Just fairly embarrassing, to be honest with you. We need to have more pride in our play, no matter where we're at, no matter what the situation is.

"We didn't have that tonight."

His club found a brief glimmer late in the middle frame, William Nylander pouncing on a rebound and getting a second goal for Toronto on the board. Within two minutes, the Senators had potted two more of their own, negating any fleeting fight shown by the blue-and-white.

And now it's all getting all too real for these Maple Leafs. Three straight wins before the Olympic break have been erased by three straight losses since returning. They've been outscored 14-5 in these latest three, outshot 113-87. They've now dropped 11 of their past 15 games. With 22 games remaining on the schedule, Toronto sits eight points out of a playoff berth. Five clubs sit between them and a wild-card slot, and they lost to two of them in the past 72 hours.

It's grim. And those who've been here for a fair while, who've faced the immense scrutiny of early post-season exits, are now feeling the weight of potentially missing the dance altogether.

"I think it's just, right now, we're just disconnected. Not finding our game. It's a lot of pressure," said William Nylander. The question was put to him: Have these Leafs quit on their coach, on each other, on the belief that they can realistically climb back into the post-season?

"Nobody's quitting, everybody wants to fight for a playoff spot," the winger said quietly. "It's just, we've got to figure it out. ... It's still not impossible, but we've got to play a lot better hockey if we want to be there."

"Every night — it doesn't matter what the situation is, where we are in the standings — we have to go out and put our best effort in. Especially on home ice," the captain added. "It's not good enough. For ourselves, for one another. We've got to play for one another, no matter what. Yeah, it's just not good enough."

Asked to assess how it's all gone so wrong, how it's gone so sideways, McCabe pointed to the group's lack of confidence — a diagnosis that's come up more than a few times over the course of this tumultuous campaign.

"Confidence is a funny thing," he said. "Lack of confidence can do crazy things to our game, as we've seen through stretches of the year. ... It's very fleeting. I've been around long enough — no matter how veteran you are, you know, there's times where you don't have that confidence. And this is a tough game to play when you don't have it."

It will only get tougher from here, as the playoffs slip out of reach. As the trade deadline threatens to pluck a few talented contributors off this roster, with a quarter of the season left to play out.

"It's never fun to lose, it's never fun to lose in this kind of fashion, three games in a row. So it's hard," Matthews said. "It definitely wears on you. But we just have to be better. I mean, there's no hanging our head, there's no feeling sorry for ourselves. Everybody's got to look in the mirror and be better. ... We've just had too many stretches throughout the year where it's up and then it's down — and when it's good, it's really good, and when it's bad, it's obviously not very good.

"It's just been too much of a rollercoaster."

For the man at the helm, time seems to be running thin. It has the look of a journey that's gotten away from him. Berube can see the holes in the hull, the water level rising, as well as anyone else. He can feel the pressure too, can see its impact on his group.

"There's all kinds of things that can play into it this time of year, with the deadline and everything, guys' heads are someplace else. But those are all excuses. And we can't make excuses," he said. "Until guys want to decide in there how to play the game the right way, play as a team, this is what you'll get."

In the coach's eyes, there is only so much outside the room to be used as fuel. Only so much motivation found in the desperate need for wins, only so much found in his own urging. At a certain point, it has to come from within.

"I can't give guys this," he said Saturday night, pointing to his heart. "Or this," he said, pointing to his head. "They have to come with that. That's got to be on them. They've got to bring the heart and the competitiveness that's needed.

"They've got to bring that. They've got to want to bring that."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 03.02.2026

1381149 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canucks Takeaways: Elias Pettersson's slump hits new low in loss to Kraken

Iain MacIntyre

Before the Vancouver Canucks lost for the 19th time in 21 games, Elliotte Friedman reported in his "Saturday Headlines" segment on Hockey Night in Canada that it's "pretty quiet" around Elias Pettersson as the trade deadline approaches.

But it was stunningly silent around the highest-paid Canuck in Seattle, where Pettersson played his way on to the fourth line before sitting out the final 10 minutes of what turned into a 5-1 loss against the Kraken.

The Canucks' \$92.8-million centre finished with just 14:20 of ice time and recorded zero shots, one hit and three wins in 10 faceoffs. Coach Adam Foote did not use Pettersson during a full two-minute power play to start the third period when Vancouver trailed by two goals, nor during more than two minutes of six-on-five play late in the game.

Pettersson did not get a shift in the final 9:47.

"He's got to be better, and he knows that, he's aware of that," Foote told reporters in Seattle. "We need more from him and he's got to find it. He knows he's got to be better for us and we'll see that next game.

"(He has) got to play with more zip, like, more pace to his game, more engaged. Good things will happen when he gets his motor going."

It has been a while since Pettersson's motor roared.

Since returning from the Olympics, Pettersson hasn't had a shot on target in two games and has now gone 13 National Hockey League games without scoring.

Halfway through Saturday's game, Foote dropped Pettersson from the first line to the fourth, where he skated between Nils Hoglander and Linus Karlsson. Pettersson did make a nice pass to set up Karlsson in the slot, but his fall to the fourth line mirrored his Olympic deployment for the Swedish team in Italy.

No wonder there hasn't been much trade interest in the 27-year-old beyond some periodic tire-kicking.

Friedman reported that the Canucks have told teams they're not willing to retain salary on Pettersson's \$11.6-million annual cap hit, which would



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

further reduce his appeal to anyone who thinks a trade might spur the fallen star back towards point-per-game form.

With 13 goals and 35 points in 51 games, Pettersson is on pace for a 51-point season if he plays the Canucks' final 23 games. Last season, in the first year of his franchise-record eight-year contract, he had 45 points in 64 games. His points-per-60-minutes of 1.49 is half what it was three years ago during his 102-point season.

If Pettersson stays in Vancouver and his next two seasons are as disappointing as these two have been, the Canucks will be measuring him for a buyout. So, retaining \$2-million a season for the next 6 ½ years could actually be a bargain if it facilitates a trade.

The game

Despite losing their ninth straight road game in regulation, the Canucks actually played fairly solidly in Seattle. They slightly outshot the Kraken 28-25, and according to naturalstattrick.com deserved to be about one goal better than Seattle at five-on-five.

But the quality of the best scoring chances the Canucks surrendered were survivable only with elite goaltending, which Kevin Lankinen could not provide in his first start since returning from the Olympics. A backup to Juuse Saros on Team Finland, Lankinen allowed four goals on 24 shots in his first game of any kind since Feb. 4.

Seattle's goals came on a Vince Dunn shot from distance when Lankinen appeared to be interfered with by Jaden Schwartz, an unlucky carom that left Chandler Stephenson with an open net, a breakaway by Jordan Eberle, and an undefended move to the netfront by Eberle in which the Canuck-killer's shot was deemed to have brushed teammate Matty Beniers' skate blade as it beat Lankinen.

Since defeating the Washington Capitals on Jan. 21, Lankinen is 0-6 with a save percentage of .800. The Canucks have yet to win a road game in 2026.

Ted talk

Liam Ohgren scored Vancouver's only goal and he and linemates Teddy Blueger and Connor Garland – the B.O.G. line – were again the team's best trio. They combined for six shots, and Ohgren's speed and Garland's shifty playmaking gave Seattle problems.

Blueger, however, remains the Canuck most likely to be traded by Friday's deadline. But interest in the 31-year-old centre, as well as other impending unrestricted free agents Evander Kane and David Kampf, has so far not been what management had hoped. It is more than three months since general manager Patrik Allvin notified other NHL teams that Vancouver's UFAs were available.

In a rebuild, the Canucks obviously have to get whatever they can for players they would lose for nothing in free agency. But we wonder if the team should circle back on Blueger.

The Latvian told Sportsnet this week he loves Vancouver and wants to stay. Given what appears to be excellent chemistry with Garland and Ohgren, Blueger's strong season last year and a resumption of superior play since returning from a significant knee injury on Jan. 21, and the organization's critical need for centres, it seems worth management checking in to see what it would cost to bring Blueger back next season if trade interest remains tepid.

Myers update

Friedman suggested Monday as a potential deadline for defenceman Tyler Myers, who sat out his second straight game on Saturday, to decide whether he'll waive his no-movement clause and accept the trade destination — widely reported as Detroit — in the offer Allvin presented him this week. By all accounts, Myers is looking for a more favourable destination for him and family but, as of Saturday night, the Canucks did not have any other firm offers to present the 36-year-old.

Next up

The Canucks return home to face powerhouses Dallas and Carolina, Monday and Wednesday, before travelling to Chicago for Friday's trade-deadline-day game against the Blackhawks.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 03.02.2026

1381150 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canadiens' Nick Suzuki levels up in crucial win over Capitals

Eric Engels

MONTREAL — In the shadow of Mr. Saturday Night, Cole Caufield, who scored the first two goals and was named the first star of the Canadiens' 6-2 win over the Washington Capitals, stands Nick Suzuki, who's speaking in hushed tones about the way his team locked down a lead two nights after squandering one to the New York Islanders.

He's spreading the credit around, taking none for himself, applauding his teammates for continuing to press from up 4-1, for trying to bury the game on a late power play while keeping in mind what coach Martin St. Louis emphasized during a timeout — to not be so careless as to allow the Capitals a chance to break up the ice — and largely executing it, even if the puck didn't go in for them.

All the Canadiens were doing was following Suzuki's lead, because nothing he does on the ice is in the shadows.

All of it has stood out that much more to these eyes since his return from the Olympics.

Not just to these eyes, though.

"It translates directly," the captain of the Canadiens said after he registered three points to get to 68 on his season and finishing plus-4 in Game 59 to improve to plus-28. "Just being around those guys, practising, trying to earn your spot every time you go out on the ice, I think it helps. You can't take anything for granted, and I want to continue to build and become a better player."

Seeing Suzuki fight through the grind of the last week suggests he's on the right path.

A week ago, he was on the cusp of achieving a lifelong dream. A day later he watched it go up in smoke, with Canada's gut-wrenching loss to Team USA the abrupt and anticlimactic end to the wildest emotional rollercoaster he'd ever ridden. And yet, there was no evidence of its toll on him.

If crashing down from the highest of highs hadn't affected Suzuki, you'd have thought the jetlag from his three-week stay in Milan would've.

But instead of looking sluggish on the ice through his first two games back, Suzuki's appeared even more energized than when he left.

Faster, too.

"He's flying," said Canadiens defenceman Alex Carrier.

It's not an illusion.

Watching Suzuki turn on the jets to beat Alex Ovechkin down the ice to a loose puck which he backhanded into Charlie Lindgren's vacated net, after he played 2:53 of the 4:32 prior, was proof positive of his elevated pace.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 2, 2026

Suzuki confirmed it's up a beat.

"I think so," he said. "In a long season, you can kind of get maybe a little bit comfortable and maybe not skating as hard as I could and conserving, but I think I found a pretty good spot where I'm picking my points to try to use my speed a bit more."

The leadership part is just par for the course, according to Caufield.

"Just does what he does," said the man who now has 35 goals — 15 of which have come on Saturday nights. "Obviously, he's doing it every night, and he didn't get a break like we did. He just never complains, does it the right way, and we're just lucky to have a leader like that, that does it every night."

Kind of like Connor McDavid for the Edmonton Oilers. Kind of like Nathan MacKinnon for the Colorado Avalanche.

And yeah, kind of like Sidney Crosby, who Suzuki was trying to observe most over his Olympic crash course in being an everyday winner.

"Just the way he carries himself," Suzuki said, "he does everything the right way. Just leads by example more than anything."

He might as well have been talking about himself.

That's how the Canadiens see Suzuki.

It's how St. Louis sees him, too.

So, he hasn't noticed marked change in Suzuki since the player's return from Italy.

"I feel right now what I'm observing is just what I've seen for the years that I've been with him," St. Louis said.

"I thought he was excellent against the Islanders. I thought he was excellent tonight," St. Louis continued. "I just feel he's in control a lot. And when he's at his best, I feel that's what you see from Nick. But the way he's played the last two games, I think we feel like we expect that from Nick each night, and I feel like we're lucky to have him."

Not just on the stat sheet, where Suzuki usually leads the Canadiens.

The 26-year-old's influence on his team's process runs so much deeper than goals, assists, face-offs and pluses. He rises to each big occasion — like Saturday's game against a Washington team that's had the Canadiens' number over the last few seasons, a game that threatened to pull his team closer to the playoff bubble than towards the top of the Atlantic Division — and finds a way to be the best player on the ice just by being himself.

"If I'm playing the right way, doing the right things, I think guys have kind of no choice but to follow if top are playing the game the right way," Suzuki said. "We have pretty high standards in here, so you do the best you can to hold those up for the players."

It's just what he does — quietly, confidently, and now with the experience of being put on the level with the game's greats bolstering his impact.

"I think that's pushed me to a different level than I was at before the break," Suzuki said.

There's no denying it.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 03.02.2026