



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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The News & Observer

Tom Dundon to sell 12.5% of Hurricanes at \$2.66 billion valuation, report says

By: Chip Alexander

Carolina Hurricanes owner Tom Dundon has agreed to sell 12.5% of the NHL team at a \$2.66 billion valuation, it was reported Thursday by Sportico.

Sportico, a sports business website, said there were three minority partners, but did not identify them, citing a request for anonymity.

Dundon, a Dallas multi-billionaire, bought the NBA's Portland Trail Blazers last August for \$4.2 billion and there have been unsubstantiated reports the past few months of him looking to sell off part of the Hurricanes to help finance the NBA purchase.

Dundon could not be reached Thursday for comment.

Dundon began negotiations with former Canes owner Peter Karmanos about buying into the Hurricanes in the fall of 2017. He became the majority owner, buying 52% of the team for \$420 million, in January, 2018.

Dundon quickly installed Rod Brind'Amour as the team's new coach and has been willing to spend to the salary cap to make the team competitive. The Canes have reached the playoffs each year under Brind'Amour and have won Stanley Cup playoff rounds but have not reached a Stanley Cup final.

Dundon's agreement and the size of the valuation further underscores how valuable major league sports franchises have become.

The news Thursday came a day before the NHL trade deadline as the Hurricanes, who lead the Eastern Conference, try to gear up a deep Cup run.



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The Athletic

NHL trade board 9.0: The top 50 names to watch on Deadline Day

By: Chris Johnston

Pictured are Vincent Trocheck, Sergei Bobrovsky and Oliver Ekman-Larsson, three of the top names on the Big Board.

Vincent Trocheck, Sergei Bobrovsky and Oliver Ekman-Larsson are among the top names on the Big Board. Illustration: Demetrius Robinson / The Athletic, with photos by Sam Navarro / Imagn Images and Jamie Sabau / Getty Images

March 6, 2026 Updated 9:21 am EST

The Athletic has live coverage of the NHL trade deadline.

Deadline day is here, and the difference-makers are on the move.

To kick off what could be a splashy deadline, the Anaheim Ducks announced a stunner at 1:11 a.m. ET on Friday, acquiring veteran, Stanley Cup-winning defenseman John Carlson from the Washington Capitals.

Another name off the Big Board. But plenty of impact players remain, including a number with term remaining on their contracts, meaning we could see more "hockey moves" than usual.

As of 9 a.m. ET on Friday, six hours until the deadline, here are the top 50 players to watch.

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

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? 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 and Sabres,

who have each taken a run at getting something done already. 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

\$9,500,000

Net rating

St. Louis Blues

Forward

Center

Profile

Position

Center

Shoots

Right

Age

32

Contract term

2029 UFA

Current cap hit

\$5,625,000

The biggest question is whether the Rangers will get a big enough offer to act now. Trocheck recently demonstrated the kind of role he can play on a winning team while capturing gold at the Milan Cortina Olympics — dominating in the faceoff dot for Team USA while playing a key role on a penalty-killing unit that didn't allow a single goal in the tournament. Known for exuding grit and determination, he's got the tools to play in all situations and can handle heavy, difficult minutes. Trocheck looks like an ideal fit for the Minnesota Wild, but they're balking at the asking price.

Market value

\$7,400,000

Net rating

New York Rangers

Forward



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Center \$2,000,000
 Profile Net rating
 Position New Jersey Devils
 Center Defenseman
 Shoots Right-shot defenseman
 Left Profile
 Age Position
 35 Defenseman
 Contract term Shoots
 2029 UFA Right
 Current cap hit Age
 \$7,000,000 32

Kadri represents another interesting option for teams chasing a center. A fierce competitor with a Stanley Cup ring already in his collection, he 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 Kadri's contract beyond this season. Montreal makes sense here if the Flames elect to retain salary.

Market value
 \$7,000,000

Net rating
 Calgary Flames
 Forward
 Center
 Profile
 Position
 Defenseman

Shoots
 Right
 Age
 22
 Contract term
 2026 RFA
 Current cap hit
 \$918,333

A skilled puck-mover and former No. 2 pick, Nemecek will be in line for a raise when his entry-level contract expires this summer. With the Devils enduring a difficult season and already having plenty of money committed elsewhere on their blue line, they're listening to offers on the young right-shot defenseman. It will likely take an attractive forward being offered to pry Nemecek out of New Jersey.

Market value

Contract term
 2030 UFA
 Current cap hit
 \$6,500,000

Parayko used his no-trade clause to block a potential trade to the Buffalo Sabres on Thursday but indicated a willingness to consider another move elsewhere. Now it's up to the Blues to cook up another deal. Parayko is a minute-munching defensive defenseman coming off a silver medal with Team Canada at the Milan Olympics. He moves well for a man of his size and plays a premium position as a top-pairing right-shot D.

Market value
 \$6,800,000
 Net rating
 St. Louis Blues
 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,



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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

\$9,700,000

Net rating

Nashville Predators

Forward

Center

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 materialize until the summer, but 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

\$6,900,000

Net rating

Nashville Predators

Forward

Winger

Center

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Left

Age

34

Contract term

2028 UFA

Current cap hit

\$3,500,000

The Leafs are seriously gauging the market on "OEL" and have garnered enough interest to justify scratching him for roster-management purposes this week. He's enjoying a renaissance season. One of the reasons Sweden elected to bring Ekman-Larsson to the Milan Cortina Olympics was because 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 and he's currently producing offense at a rate not seen since his days with the Coyotes.

Market value

\$4,700,000

Net rating

Toronto Maple Leafs

Defenseman

Left-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Right

Age

33

Contract term

2027 UFA

Current cap hit

\$6,500,000

There's been plenty of interest in the low-maintenance veteran, who is still 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 actual cap hit now that he's down to the final year and a half remaining.

Market value

\$5,600,000

Net rating

St. Louis Blues

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman



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Profile

Position

Goalie

Age

37

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$10,000,000

With the “For Sale” now hanging on all expiring players in South Florida, the future Hall of Fame goaltender is available to rent. The Panthers would have preferred to sign Bobrovsky to an extension but didn’t make much headway on a new contract. Even though he’s having a down season by his standards, it’s tough to ignore Bobrovsky’s starring role in Florida reaching the Stanley Cup Final the past three years. While he carries a monster \$10 million cap hit, the actual money still owing on it isn’t significant.

Market value

Not available for goalies

Goalie stats

Florida Panthers

Goalie

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

34

Contract term

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

\$5,300,000

Net rating

Calgary Flames

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

29

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$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

\$4,400,000

Net rating

Toronto Maple Leafs

Forward

Winger

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



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a shade off its usual level, Kyrrou remains a highly skilled winger who possesses an enviable toolkit: blinding speed, high-end vision and creativity to spare. There are multiple teams that would love to graft his skillset onto their cores because Kyrrou is signed through 2031.

Market value

\$8,300,000

Net rating

St. Louis Blues

Forward

Winger

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

\$4,000,000

Net rating

Philadelphia Flyers

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Right

Age

29

Contract term

2028 UFA

Current cap hit

\$2,750,000

The Flames would have to be blown away with an offer on Whitecloud after already shipping MacKenzie Weegar to Utah, but they're open to listening. Whitecloud is a big, solid right-shot defenseman with a Stanley Cup on his resume. He's signed through the 2027-28 season, which is appealing for teams looking to upgrade their blue lines.

Market value

\$2,200,000

Net rating

Calgary Flames

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

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, he's also incredibly reliable in the faceoff dot. The Flyers already chopped his cap hit in half, which means Toronto can make him a \$750,000 player for any interested team.

Market value

\$2,200,000

Net rating

Toronto Maple Leafs

Forward

Center

Winger

Profile

Position

Center

Shoots



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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

\$2,600,000

Net rating

Vancouver Canucks

Forward

Center

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

\$2,700,000

Net rating

Nashville Predators

Forward

Center

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

\$2,000,000

Net rating

Florida Panthers

Forward

Winger

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

\$8,200,000

Net rating



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New Jersey Devils

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Right

Age

28

Contract term

2030 UFA

Current cap hit

\$4,000,000

A knee injury kept the big right-shot defenseman on the sidelines until January, and playing time has been tough to come by since. Kovacevic is receiving three minutes less per game compared to last season. Unafraid to engage physically around his net, he's at his best when keeping the game simple. Kovacevic is under contract for four more seasons.

Market value

\$2,300,000

Net rating

New Jersey Devils

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

\$3,900,000

Net rating

Chicago Blackhawks

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

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

25

Contract term

2030 UFA

Current cap hit

\$4,820,000



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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

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

\$3,900,000

Net rating

Nashville Predators

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Goalie

Age

27

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$2,600,000

The pending unrestricted free agent has put up solid numbers in Pittsburgh since coming over from Edmonton in a December trade, producing 16.91 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

Defenseman

Shoots

Right

Age

31

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$787,500

Claimed off waivers from Edmonton in November, the veteran right-shot defenseman became a key contributor for the Leafs. While undersized, he's a strong skater with decent puck skills who plays with determination. Stecher represents a low-cost depth option for playoff teams and has played the most minutes of his NHL career since arriving in Toronto.

Market value

\$1,900,000

Net rating

Toronto Maple Leafs

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Right

Age



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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

\$2,100,000

Net rating

Winnipeg Jets

Forward

Winger

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

35

Contract term

2026 UFA

Current cap hit

\$1,750,000

A tough customer who will never hesitate to drop the gloves to defend a teammate, Deslauriers is one of the few remaining fighters left in the NHL. A high-energy player with 700 games of NHL experience on his resume, he's the kind of depth forward counted on to help shift momentum in his team's favor. A pending unrestricted free agent, Deslauriers won't come at a high price.

Market value

\$775,000

Net rating

Philadelphia Flyers

Forward

Winger

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

\$4,600,000



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Net rating
 St. Louis Blues
 Forward
 Winger
 Center
 Profile
 Position
 Winger
 Shoots
 Right
 Age
 35
 Contract term
 2029 UFA
 Current cap hit
 \$5,500,000

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.

Market value
 \$3,900,000
 Net rating
 Nashville Predators
 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
 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 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



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\$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

\$1,200,000

Net rating

Boston Bruins

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Center

Shoots

Right

Age

22

Contract term

2027 RFA

Current cap hit

\$886,667

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 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

\$3,700,000

Net rating

Seattle Kraken

Forward

Center

Winger

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Left

Age

27

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

\$775,000

Net rating

Toronto Maple Leafs

Defenseman

Left-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Goalie

Age

32

Contract term

2027 UFA

Current cap hit

\$6,000,000

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



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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

\$2,400,000

Net rating

Anaheim Ducks

Forward

Center

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

\$5,000,000

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

\$2,800,000

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

\$2,300,000

Net rating

Ottawa Senators



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Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Center

Shoots

Left

Age

31

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

\$1,200,000

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 800 games of NHL experience.

Market value

\$1,400,000

Net rating

New Jersey Devils

Forward

Center

Profile

Position

Defenseman

Shoots

Left

Age

25

Contract term

2027 RFA

Current cap hit

\$3,200,000

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.

Market value

\$1,800,000

Net rating

Boston Bruins

Defenseman

Left-shot defenseman

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



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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

\$800,000

Net rating

New York Rangers

Defenseman

Right-shot defenseman

Profile

Position

Winger

Shoots

Left

Age

23

Contract term

2026 RFA

Current cap hit

\$863,333

The Rangers' system is stocked with wingers, including the 16th pick from 2021, and they're willing to part with players from that cohort. Othmann's dangerous shot and ability to win back the puck are both considered strengths, albeit traits he's yet to show with any consistency in limited looks at the NHL level. He didn't make it to the end of training camp with the Rangers before being sent down to AHL Hartford and hasn't made much of an impact since being recalled to the big club this season.

Market value

\$775,000

Net rating

New York Rangers

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

Winger

Profile

Position

Goalie

Age

23

Contract term

2027 RFA

Current cap hit

\$2,200,000

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

Center

Shoots

Left

Age



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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



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NORTH STATE JOURNAL

Hurricanes await trade deadline | The North State Journal

By: Cory Lavalette

RALEIGH — This week, the final days leading up to the NHL trade deadline, is not easy.

“Unless you have a no-move, anyone’s game,” Hurricanes center Mark Jankowski said, “and it could happen to anyone.”

Jankowski would know. Last year, he said the Predators — the organization with which he had spent the previous two-plus seasons — could sense changes were coming. Buried near the bottom of the standings despite an offseason spending spree, Nashville was poised to be a seller.

“You hear some names, but honestly, I never really saw my name,” Jankowski said. “I don’t really pay attention to that stuff anyway, but no one told me anything or I never really saw anything with my name, so I wasn’t really worried too much about it.

“And then, obviously, I got the call, and everything changed. Everything happened so quick.”

Word that Jankowski had been traded to Carolina for a fifth round draft pick came so late that Hurricanes GM Eric Tulskey had already held his post-deadline availability with the media while the Jankowski trade sat in the queue awaiting final approval from the league.

“So that was another reason why I didn’t think anything was happening. It was two hours past,” Jankowski said of the late notice. “But I guess those things take time to process through the registry or whatever. But I ended up getting on a flight that night. I had to pack as much as I could right away and got here pretty quickly.”

Jankowski’s transition to Carolina went as well as it could have. He scored two goals on two shots in his debut two days later, and in his first 10 games with the Hurricanes, he found the back of the net seven times — on only 11 shots on goal.

Now, a year later, players around the NHL are wondering if they’ll be among those dealt before Friday at 3 p.m.

“Obviously, yeah, that’s coming up pretty soon here,” Hurricanes center Logan Stankoven said. “So it is going to be a hot topic amongst everyone.”

Like Jankowski, Stankoven was caught off guard when he was traded to Carolina as part of the blockbuster trade that sent Mikko Rantanen to Dallas at last year’s deadline.

“I think just with having to go through what I went through last year, it was hard,” Stankoven said. “Obviously, everything turned out for the better, but it was hard at that time to go through that. I was blindsided by it. I did not see it coming. And I’m just really pumped to be here again. I think things worked out in a great way.”

The Hurricanes, among the teams near the top of the league standings, are poised to again be buyers. But as Stankoven learned last year and Jankowski said, anyone without contractual protection can be traded whether they are on a buyer or a seller.

“That’s coming up pretty soon here,” Stankoven said. “So it is going to be a hot topic amongst everyone.”

The Hurricanes have been mentioned among several of the bigger available names. That includes a handful of centers — Vincent Trocheck, Robert Thomas, Elias Pettersson, Nazem Kadri and Ryan O’Reilly — and Carolina has certainly checked in on every player they feel could help them in their quest to get past the Eastern Conference final and within reach of the franchise’s second Stanley Cup.

Fortunately for all the anxious and fretting players and their families, this year’s deadline hasn’t had the buildup of previous years thanks to the Olympic break. After going three weeks without a game, Carolina returned to the ice with just over a week to the deadline. What is usually weeks of reports and social media banter was whittled down to fewer than 10 days.

“It’s the trade deadline — it happens every year, every team, so you just can’t really be focused on that,” Jankowski said.

By Friday afternoon, the Hurricanes may acquire a player who forces a fourth-liner like Jankowski out of the lineup or even to another city. And a deal for one of the bigger aforementioned names may require a young and talented player — perhaps Stankoven — to be on the move yet again.

“You can’t really control that and just control what you can control in the locker room and go from there,” Jankowski said.

And make sure your phone is on — even if it’s a couple of hours after 3 p.m.



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Preview: March 6 at Edmonton

By: Walt Ruff & Peter Dewar

Canes look to continue their winning ways as the western swing arrives at Rogers Place

EDMONTON, Alta. - The Carolina Hurricanes kick off a back-to-back set in Alberta on Friday, first going head-to-head with the Edmonton Oilers.

When: Friday, March 6

Puck Drop: 9:00 p.m. ET

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

Listen: 99.9 The Fan, Hurricanes App

Canes Record: 39-16-6 (84 Points, 1st - Metropolitan Division)

Canes Last Game: 6-4 Win over the Vancouver Canucks on Wednesday, Mar. 4

Oilers Record: 30-24-8 (68 Points, 3rd - Pacific Division)

Oilers Last Game: 5-4 Win (OT) over the Ottawa Senators on Tuesday, Mar. 3

Last Time Out...

Nikolaj Ehlers' second hat trick of the season helped Carolina come out on top of a roller coaster affair in Vancouver on Wednesday.

In addition to the first-year Hurricane scoring twice during a four-goal second period, Sean Walker also factored in with a goal and an assist.

Brandon Bussi improved to 25-3-1 with 18 saves.

Season Series vs. EDM...

Nov. 15: Leon Draisaitl scored the overtime winner for Edmonton in Raleigh.

Fly Guy...

Recording his 17th, 18th, and 19th goals of the season on Wednesday, Nikolaj Ehlers once again showcased his perfect fit for the group.

His second hat trick in 47 days, joining his three-piece against Florida on Jan. 16, the winger is now knocking on the door of what will be his ninth 20-goal season in 11 NHL campaigns.

Deadline Day...

The NHL's trade deadline is set for 3 p.m. today. Carolina will not have a morning skate before then.

Stay tuned to Hurricanes.com throughout the day for coverage on any potential moves. General Manager Eric Tulsy will speak to the media later in the afternoon.

In Net...

Starting a back-to-back set this evening, the Canes will need both Brandon Bussi and Frederik Andersen over the next 48 hours.

Wednesday in Vancouver wasn't Bussi's sharpest showing to date, but he found a way to emerge victorious, picking up his 25th win in his 29th NHL start. It was also the 27-year-old's ninth consecutive win, making him the first goalie to have multiple win streaks of nine games or more in his first season in the league since 1943-44 (Bill Durnan, MTL).

When Andersen gets tapped again, he'll be looking to bounce back from his first regulation loss since Jan. 3, which came on Monday at Climate Pledge Arena.

On The Other Side...

In a tight Pacific Division race, the Oilers are adding pieces ahead of Friday's trade deadline. Acquiring Connor Murphy and Jason Dickinson over the last few days, Kris Knoblauch's group is trying to win a third consecutive Western Conference title.

Edmonton is led, of course, by Connor McDavid, who paces the league with 105 points in 62 games this season. His partner in crime, Leon Draisaitl, follows closely behind with 90 points in 59 showings.

Second among all teams with their 3.55 goals per game, the other side of the coin hasn't gone as smoothly, though. Their season-long .881 save percentage sits 30th among all teams, only ahead of Vegas (.880) and Ottawa (.873).

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 will wrap up their Alberta back-to-back on Saturday in Calgary against the Flames.

Next Game: Saturday, March 7 at Calgary | 10:00 p.m. ET | FDSNSO

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



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Canes secure 6-4 win over Vancouver, Bussi makes history — again

By: Haley O'Neill

The Carolina Hurricanes found a gem.

A 6-4 win over the Vancouver Canucks allowed goaltender Brandon Bussi to make history once again. He recorded his 25th win in just 29 games, becoming the fastest goalie in the NHL to reach that mark.

The Canes (39-16-6) and the Canucks (18-36-7) took turns holding the lead, but ultimately, the Canes were too much to handle. Sitting 31st in goals per game with 2.51, Vancouver nearly doubled its average and almost came out with a win, but couldn't find the back of the net.

The game-winner and the game-tying goal came less than a minute apart from one another. The game-winner, the second goal of the night for winger Nikolaj Ehlers, was set up by defenseman Sean Walker. Sending the puck across zones, he found Ehlers on the move. Showcasing his stick-handling skills, Ehlers skated around the defense and let off a slap shot from the circle into the back of the net.

57 seconds prior, the Hurricanes took possession and counterattacked into their offensive zone. Keeping the puck out of reach from the Canucks, the Canes passed around the zone until they found an open lane. Center Seth Jarvis placed the puck on the stick of center Sebastian Aho, who backhanded it past goaltender Kevin Lankinen. After scoring its fourth goal, Vancouver's coach tried to spark a change by pulling Lankinen and putting in goaltender Nikita Tolopilo.

Winger Andrei Svechnikov lit the lamp for Carolina just 77 seconds after the opening whistle. A tripping penalty to center David Kämpf gave the Canes an opportunity on the man advantage that they didn't let go to waste. Svechnikov, crashing the net, received the puck from Jarvis and hammered a one-timer past Lankinen.

Late in the first period, defenseman Alexander Nikishin was called for interference and sent to the box, giving Vancouver its first power-play. The Canucks capitalized, passing around the defense until they had a lucky break. Center Marco Rossi, from the goal line, threw the puck into the paint. Defenseman Jaccob Slavin, in an attempt to clear the puck, mishandled it and knocked it through the legs of Bussi, giving Vancouver its first goal.

With less than a minute left in the second period and defenseman Jalen Chatfield in the penalty box for tripping, defenseman Filip Hronek and Rossi connected passes before finding winger Brock Boeser across the paint. Boeser, on a one-timer, slammed the puck past Bussi to score the Canucks' second power play goal.

In attempts to tie the game and force overtime, Vancouver pulled the goalie to bring on an extra skater. Ehlers took advantage and netted his third of the night, recording his seventh-career hat trick with 11.6 seconds remaining — his second hat trick of the season.

The Hurricanes continue their road trip and head to Edmonton to suit up against the Oilers on Friday, March 6, at 9 p.m.



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The Hockey News

Sebastian Aho Further Cementing Himself As One Of Finland's All-Time Greats

By: Ryan Henkel

Sebastian Aho achieves another Finnish NHL milestone, joining legends with eight 60-point seasons and climbing all-time scoring lists.

Sebastian Aho made history Wednesday night.

With a goal in the second period against the Vancouver Canucks (a pretty sick one might I add), Aho became the fourth Finnish-born player in NHL history to have at least eight seasons reaching the 60 point marker.

Aho joined Mikko Rantanen (8), Teemu Selanne (12) and Jari Kurri (13) as the only other Finns to reach that milestone.

Earlier in the year, Aho also became the fourth Finish player in league history to record 10 straight 20-goal seasons, joining Barkov (10), Kurri (10) and Selanne (11).

Fresh off of winning an Olympic bronze medal, the Carolina Hurricanes franchise centerman is already one of the all-time best Finnish players ever in NHL history, as he ranks eighth in career points (692) and fifth in goals (306) amongst his fellow countrymen.

Add in the fact that he's also just 28 years old, and it's pretty clear that he'll continue to add to those totals.

LINKS

<https://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/article314938011.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/7089447/2026/03/06/nhl-trade-board-bobrovsky-trocheck-ekman-larsson/>

<https://nsjonline.com/article/2026/03/hurricanes-await-trade-deadline/>

<https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/preview-march-6-at-edmonton>

<https://technicianonline.com/157107/sports/canes-secure-6-4-win-over-vancouver-bussi-makes-history-again/>

<https://thehockeynews.com/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/players/sebastian-aho-further-cementing-himself-as-one-of-finland-s-all-time-greats>



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SportScan

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

1381703 Carolina Hurricanes

Tom Dundon to sell 12.5% of Hurricanes at \$2.66 billion valuation, report says

Chip Alexander 3-3 minutes 3/5/2026

Carolina Hurricanes owner Tom Dundon has agreed to sell 12.5% of the NHL team at a \$2.66 billion valuation, it was reported Thursday by Sportico.

Sportico, a sports business website, said there were three minority partners, but did not identify them, citing a request for anonymity.

Dundon, a Dallas multi-billionaire, bought the NBA's Portland Trail Blazers last August for \$4.2 billion and there have been unsubstantiated reports the past few months of him looking to sell off part of the Hurricanes to help finance the NBA purchase.

Dundon could not be reached Thursday for comment.

Dundon began negotiations with former Canes owner Peter Karmanos about buying into the Hurricanes in the fall of 2017. He became the majority owner, buying 52% of the team for \$420 million, in January, 2018.

Dundon quickly installed Rod Brind'Amour as the team's new coach and has been willing to spend to the salary cap to make the team competitive. The Canes have reached the playoffs each year under Brind'Amour and have won Stanley Cup playoff rounds but have not reached a Stanley Cup final.

Dundon's agreement and the size of the valuation further underscores how valuable major league sports franchises have become.

The news Thursday came a day before the NHL trade deadline as the Hurricanes, who lead the Eastern Conference, try to gear up a deep Cup run.

News Observer LOADED: 03.06.2026

1381885 Websites

The Athletic / NHL trade board 9.0: The latest on all the top targets on Deadline Day eve

By Chris Johnston

March 5, 2026 Updated 3:24 pm EST

What really separates this NHL trade deadline from those that have come before is the number of players with term remaining on their contracts who are in play.

As we count down to 3 p.m. ET on Friday, it appears we'll see more "hockey" moves than usual.

That's why the top of our latest Big Board has such a unique look. Where normally it's dotted with pending unrestricted free agents being peddled for draft picks, there's more variety being offered this shopping season.

No one better illustrates that than No. 1 target Robert Thomas, a mid-career No. 1 center with five seasons remaining on his contract.

Based on the prices already paid in recent days for depth help down the middle, it's going to take some big offers to get the dominoes to start falling at the top of our 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 March 4. Goals saved above expected (GSAX) are via Evolving-Hockey, also through March 4. Contract info is via PuckPedia.

1

Robert Thomas

ST. LOUIS BLUES

FORWARD

CENTER

2

Vincent Trocheck

NEW YORK RANGERS

FORWARD

CENTER

3

Nazem Kadri

CALGARY FLAMES

FORWARD

CENTER

4

Simon Nemec

NEW JERSEY DEVILS

DEFENSEMAN

RIGHT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN

5



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Colton Parayko
ST. LOUIS BLUES
DEFENSEMAN
RIGHT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN
6
Ryan O'Reilly
NASHVILLE PREDATORS
FORWARD
CENTER
7
Steven Stamkos
NASHVILLE PREDATORS
FORWARD
WINGER
CENTER
8
Oliver Ekman-Larsson
TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS
DEFENSEMAN
LEFT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN
9
Justin Faulk
ST. LOUIS BLUES
DEFENSEMAN
RIGHT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN
10
Sergei Bobrovsky
FLORIDA PANTHERS
GOALIE
11
Blake Coleman
CALGARY FLAMES
FORWARD
WINGER
12
Bobby McMann
TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS
FORWARD
WINGER
13
Jordan Kyrou
ST. LOUIS BLUES

FORWARD
WINGER
14
Rasmus Ristolainen
PHILADELPHIA FLYERS
DEFENSEMAN
RIGHT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN
15
Zach Whitecloud
CALGARY FLAMES
DEFENSEMAN
RIGHT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN
16
Scott Laughton
TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS
FORWARD
CENTER
WINGER
17
Teddy Blueger
VANCOUVER CANUCKS
FORWARD
CENTER
18
Erik Haula
NASHVILLE PREDATORS
FORWARD
CENTER
WINGER
19
A.J. Greer
FLORIDA PANTHERS
FORWARD
WINGER
20
Conor Garland
VANCOUVER CANUCKS
FORWARD
WINGER
21
Dougie Hamilton
NEW JERSEY DEVILS



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DEFENSEMAN	30
RIGHT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN	Patrik Laine
22	MONTREAL CANADIENS
Johnathan Kovacevic	FORWARD
NEW JERSEY DEVILS	WINGER
DEFENSEMAN	31
RIGHT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN	Gustav Nyquist
23	WINNIPEG JETS
Ilya Mikheyev	FORWARD
CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS	WINGER
FORWARD	32
WINGER	Nicolas Deslauriers
24	PHILADELPHIA FLYERS
Evander Kane	FORWARD
VANCOUVER CANUCKS	WINGER
FORWARD	33
WINGER	Brayden Schenn
25	ST. LOUIS BLUES
Jesper Kotkaniemi	FORWARD
CAROLINA HURRICANES	WINGER
FORWARD	CENTER
WINGER	34
CENTER	Jonathan Marchessault
26	NASHVILLE PREDATORS
Michael Bunting	FORWARD
NASHVILLE PREDATORS	WINGER
FORWARD	35
WINGER	Evan Rodrigues
27	FLORIDA PANTHERS
Stuart Skinner	FORWARD
PITTSBURGH PENGUINS	CENTER
GOALIE	WINGER
28	36
Luke Schenn	Mario Ferraro
WINNIPEG JETS	SAN JOSE SHARKS
DEFENSEMAN	DEFENSEMAN
RIGHT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN	LEFT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN
29	37
Troy Stecher	Andrew Peeke
TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS	BOSTON BRUINS
DEFENSEMAN	DEFENSEMAN
RIGHT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN	RIGHT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN



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38

Warren Foegele

LOS ANGELES KINGS

FORWARD

WINGER

39

Shane Wright

SEATTLE KRAKEN

FORWARD

CENTER

WINGER

40

Logan Stanley

WINNIPEG JETS

DEFENSEMAN

LEFT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN

41

Simon Benoit

TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS

DEFENSEMAN

LEFT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN

42

Jordan Binnington

ST. LOUIS BLUES

GOALIE

43

Ryan Strome

ANAHEIM DUCKS

FORWARD

CENTER

44

Jake DeBrusk

VANCOUVER CANUCKS

FORWARD

WINGER

45

Trevor van Riemsdyk

WASHINGTON CAPITALS

DEFENSEMAN

RIGHT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN

46

Nick Jensen

OTTAWA SENATORS

DEFENSEMAN

RIGHT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN

47

David Kämpf

VANCOUVER CANUCKS

FORWARD

CENTER

48

Nick Bjugstad

NEW JERSEY DEVILS

FORWARD

CENTER

49

Mason Lohrei

BOSTON BRUINS

DEFENSEMAN

LEFT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN

50

Braden Schneider

NEW YORK RANGERS

DEFENSEMAN

RIGHT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN

51

Brennan Othmann

NEW YORK RANGERS

FORWARD

WINGER

52

Calle Järnkrok

TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS

FORWARD

WINGER

53

Elias Pettersson

VANCOUVER CANUCKS

FORWARD

CENTER

54

John Carlson

WASHINGTON CAPITALS

DEFENSEMAN



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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RIGHT-SHOT DEFENSEMAN

The Athletic LOADED: 03.06.2026

1381886 Websites

The Athletic / 16 stats: This is shaping up to be the most unpredictable NHL season in recent memory

By Dom Luszczyszyn

March 5, 2026 6:00 am EST

With 20 games left, the 2025-26 NHL season is shaping up to be one of the most chaotic and improbable seasons in the past decade.

Going into the season, the six least likely teams to make the playoffs according to oddsmakers were Anaheim (+250), Boston (+375), Seattle (+550), Pittsburgh (+600), San Jose (+1200) and Chicago (+1600). Four of those teams currently sit in a playoff spot and one, San Jose, is just outside the cutoff line. Just a little above those teams in the bottom 10 were the Islanders (+220) and Red Wings (+230), who also sit in a playoff spot.

That's potentially a 60 percent hit rate for the bottom 10, which is somehow higher than the hit rate for the 18 teams that started the year as playoff favorites: 50 percent. Toronto, Florida, New Jersey, Los Angeles, Washington, Winnipeg, Ottawa, St. Louis and the Rangers all started the season as probable playoff bets. They all look increasingly likely to miss instead.

We all know hockey is incredibly unpredictable, more so than any other sport, but this level of chaos is pretty unprecedented. It's extremely unusual for this many projected favorites to miss and this many expected bottom-feeders to make.

Over the past decade, the average playoff make percentage for favorites is 69 percent according to Sports Odds History, with the lowest being 59 percent in 2017-18. The average playoff make percentage for bottom-10 teams is 22 percent, with the highest being 50 percent in 2014-15. If everything holds, this year will be the most unusual year on record based on preseason playoff lines.

An interesting layer to that is how playoff prognostication has improved since 2017-18. Models and oddsmakers have only gotten better since that season, which is what makes this year's collective miss so fascinating. If one were to bet \$100 on every favorite to miss and every underdog to make, they wouldn't have had one winning season from 2018-19 to 2024-25, losing \$711 per year on average. This season, that naive system would've won \$2,400.

That's obviously not betting advice, especially considering this year is probably an outlier. It's simply a way to frame just how unusual this season has been from a prediction perspective. Oddsmakers have a financial incentive to set the right expectations and usually do so with ease. That they haven't this season is not necessarily a sign that they're "wrong," but it is yet another reminder about how wacky and random this sport can be. That's part of the charm and why they play the games — even in hockey's least chaotic seasons, there are always plenty of surprises along the way.

This year's chaos is one reason that the playoff race still feels so wide open. If you've noticed some of the "unlikely" playoff contenders still aren't playoff locks, it's precisely because of how unlikely it would've seemed at the start of the season. Every day, each team's priors are updated as they play well and bank points. But with hockey being so

unpredictable, it's always a safer bet to keep every team's prior track record in mind and not put complete focus on this season alone.

That adds some caution as to whether or not they'll actually pull it off, but with 20 games left, it's becoming more and more probable that the surprise teams many expected to land in the bottom 10 will actually land in the playoffs instead.

It's going to be an exciting race to the finish in what has been the most unpredictable season in recent memory. Now we wait and see if this season's unlikely heroes can make it across the finish line.

16 stats

1. Always expect more from Boston

One of Boston's consistent calling cards is its ability to get the most out of its chance differential. This year, the Bruins are on track to have a goal differential that's 50 goals better than expected for the fifth time in the analytics era. It's something that has only happened 12 other times, with no team doing it more than twice. Perhaps just as shocking: The Bruins have had a negative goal differential above expected just as many times as they've been plus-50 (assuming they get there this year).

One of those seasons was last year, which is part of what made it difficult to expect the Bruins to play at this level this season. Considering their history, though, it's last year that was probably closer to outlier territory. Since 2007-08, Boston's goal differential is 450 goals above expected, 77 more than Washington in second and nearly 200 more than St. Louis in third.

2. Cautionary regression tales

As much as we should respect Boston's consistent ability to beat expected goals, the Bruins still find themselves within a heavy regression zone. Boston has a goals percentage nearly eight percentage points above expected, joining Seattle (8.6 percent), Colorado (8.3 percent) and the Islanders (5.1 percent) as the four teams above five percentage points.

While their ability to outscore more than expected may continue all year, that's still an important indicator going forward. Since 2007-08, there have been 42 teams whose goal percentage was five percentage points higher than expected. Of those 42, 37 saw a drop of 4.4 percentage points on average the following season.

Some teams do have an innate ability to finish or save better than expected, but there's usually a limit.

3. The worst teams below expected

The four worst teams in goal difference above expected in the analytics era should be of no surprise: Ottawa, Carolina, New Jersey and San Jose. All four are 250 goals below expected.

4. Carolina's record with Jacob Slavin

The Hurricanes' loss on Monday to the Kraken was notable for one key reason: It was the team's first regulation loss with Jacob Slavin in the lineup. The Hurricanes are 15-1-4 with Slavin playing this season and 23-15-2 without. The team's xG is slightly stronger, but it's their ability to actually outscore opponents (60 percent with Slavin compared to 52 percent without) with every defender properly slotted that really makes a difference.

As for Slavin himself, he's earning every bit of his defensive reputation this season. In 20 games, he has a plus-3.3 Defensive Rating, a plus-13.6 pace that would lead the league.

5. Anthony Mantha's breakthrough

With 21 goals and 45 points in 60 games, Anthony Mantha is on pace for 29 goals and 62 points, both of which would be career highs. The only time he's paced better than that was in 2019-20, seven seasons ago.



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Perhaps even more striking is that Mantha has played 60 games, not missing a single one. That's a big (and welcome) surprise for a player who came into the year missing at least 15 games in seven of 10 seasons.

Mantha finally figuring things out at age 31 and staying available for every game is a major reason the Penguins have surprised this season. He flaunted this potential back in Detroit; now he's finally realizing it.

6. Jim Hiller's long-overdue firing

The Kings finally did what fans have been clamoring for ever since a botched goalie challenge in the postseason last April tanked the team's playoff hopes: They fired Jim Hiller. Under Hiller, the Kings had an anemic offense, a middling ability to possess the puck and struggled to do anything except get to overtime, where they usually lost. The stagnation of Quinton Byfield and the puzzling usage of Brandt Clarke were also key points of issue. While management hasn't done the team many favors, the Kings should be a lot better than this: A team that's five points out of a playoff spot with a minus-24 goal differential.

While it's not too late for the Kings to claw back thanks to having the league's easiest schedule going forward, they haven't left themselves a whole lot of wiggle room waiting this long to do the obvious. The Kings still have a 47.5 percent shot of making the playoffs and are the eighth likeliest team in the West, but it's time to actually start stringing some wins together.

7. Edmonton's buy high, sell low

At the time of the deal, it was very strange how much the Oilers had to add to Stuart Skinner in order to acquire Stuart Skinner East, aka Tristan Jarry. While Jarry was playing better hockey at the time (0.54 GSAx per game to Skinner's 0.16), both goalies had a strong tendency to run hot or cold and the Oilers seemed to time the deal at the worst possible time. Jarry was at the height of a hot streak, Skinner was in a lull.

There's still time for things to turn around, but so far the trade has gone roughly as expected. Skinner's play improved, while Jarry cooled off. Since the deal, Skinner has saved 0.21 goals above expected per game, while Jarry has allowed 0.46 per game. The difference ends up already being worth three standings points, enough to make Edmonton's playoff spot a little more precarious than it needs to be.

8. Can Connor Murphy improve Edmonton's defensive game

Lost in the goalie trade debacle was that part of Edmonton's real problem wasn't all goaltending to begin with. The defense in front of them hasn't been very helpful. Skinner's expected save percentage in Edmonton was .885, while Jarry's wasn't much better at .883. Both are among the lowest marks in the league.

That's an area where Connor Murphy may be able to help in terms of limiting chances to begin with. This season, he has a plus-2.9 Defensive Rating, which led Chicago's defenders. Since moving Brett Kulak, the Oilers currently only have one defenseman with a positive Defensive Rating this year, Ty Emberson. Murphy is an upgrade on both.

As good as Evan Bouchard and Mattias Ekholm still are, they've struggled a lot defensively this season. Getting a stopper was something the team badly needed.

9. Vancouver's wretched penalty kill

We all know the Canucks have one of the league's worst penalty kills, but they've taken things to brand new lows in the new year. Since Jan. 1, the Canucks have allowed 17.9 goals against per 60, four goals worse than the next-worst team. For the old school crowd, that means teams are converting on 42 percent of their power plays over Vancouver's last 21 games.

10. Filip Hronek surviving fine without Quinn Hughes

Before the Quinn Hughes trade, Filip Hronek had a 47 percent xG while scoring at a 42-point pace. After the Hughes trade, Hronek has a 47 percent xG while scoring at a 45-point pace. While it's certainly not ideal that Hronek is now the team's best defenseman, the idea that he was completely carried by Hughes doesn't really hold up with his numbers staying steady since Hughes' departure. And that's with Hronek taking on more of a matchup role now.

There are no silver linings during this horrible Canucks season, but Hronek continuing to play like a No. 2 guy, even without Hughes, is close.

11. Matt Boldy's new level

When Matt Boldy broke onto the scene as a rookie, he was immediately electric with 39 points in 47 games, a 68-point pace. But in the three years after that, his progress felt incremental. This year, he's finally hitting that next level, and he's been extra special of late.

Boldy sandwiched a strong Olympic showing with a couple of four-point games and is now on an 11-game point streak, where he's scored 22 points. Boldy is starting to look like a franchise winger — there aren't many better than him. This year, only Nikita Kucherov, Jason Robertson and teammate Kirill Kaprizov have a higher Net Rating than Boldy's plus-14.9.

12. Dallas's top-three defensemen are cooking

As badly as Dallas needs a top-four defenseman (and I'm skeptical that Tyler Myers is the answer to that problem), the team's big guns have been dominant of late, which mitigates the problem.

Miro Heiskanen may not be a Norris frontrunner, but he's once again in the conversation with his ability to produce, eat tough minutes, move the puck and defend; he's the whole package. Esa Lindell is having the best season of his career and his plus-10 Defensive Rating leads all players. And then there's Thomas Harley, who started slow but has started to come around of late. Over his last 12 games, he has 11 points, a 63 percent xG, and 67 percent of the goals, earning an average Game Score of 2.08. That's third best behind only Rasmus Dahlin and Heiskanen.

With Lindell being just as special, it's no wonder the Stars have been the top five-on-five team during that time frame, with 64 percent of the expected goals. That's 7.5 percentage points higher than second, a big reason they've been winning so many games. After starting the season with some question marks regarding their underlying numbers, the Stars are surging at the right time.

13. Pavel Buchnevich turning the corner

Too little, too late for the Blues this season, but it's been nice to see the Pavel Buchnevich of old come back over the last little bit. Buchnevich has six goals and 13 points in his past 10 games while being one of the team's top forwards at five-on-five.

14. Ottawa's playoff chances

The Senators are on the outside looking in and feel like the scariest of the threats to make a run. Over their past 10 games, they've taken their possession prowess to new heights with a 58 percent xG and they're starting to get the goaltending to match that, which has led to the team scoring 61 percent of the goals. With a power play that's clicking and a penalty kill that's bleeding less, I like Ottawa's chances.

One important factor: A below-average remaining schedule where the average Net Rating of teams they'll face is minus-0.8. That compares favorably to Pittsburgh (plus-21.9), Boston (plus-11.9) and Detroit (plus-8.1). This race isn't over yet.

15. Goodnight, Florida

After losing five of six heading into the break and three of four immediately after, it's safe to say it's over for the Panthers. Their playoff



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chances on Jan. 25 were 70 percent before that skid; they now sit at eight percent.

During that stretch, the Panthers had 53 percent of the expected goals and 37 percent of the actual goals as their finishing and goaltending have abandoned them at the same time. On the latter front, Sergei Bobrovsky's minus-21 GSAx this season is better than only Jordan Binnington's this season. The Panthers needed him to hold the fort and instead, he's been the primary reason for the team's downfall.

16. The below-average Maple Leafs

It's obvious to anyone watching, but it's important to note that the last domino has fallen: Even Dom's Biased Model now views the Leafs as a below-average hockey team with a minus-six Net Rating. And that still doesn't feel low enough, as there's still some reverence reserved for the team's prior track record. How they're playing now falls well below that mark. It's the first time since Auston Matthews' rookie season that the Leafs have been rated this poorly — and for good reason. The once-dominant possession team is now a distant memory as the Leafs rank 26th in xG this season and 31st in shot attempts.

And no, Mitch Marner's departure is not the sole reason the Leafs have sunk so low. Marner's been worth 2.7 wins this season, which would not be enough to make up the nine-point gap between the Leafs and a playoff spot. It's a massive indictment on management that they've turned a perennial contender into a team that's not even a superstar away from making the postseason at all.

A lot of that is coaching, and some of that is injuries. But even with that in mind, what Brad Treliving has built is simply not good enough. That he's being lapped by a Pittsburgh retool built off the scrap heap by the guy he replaced is an extremely bad look.

The Athletic LOADED: 03.06.2026

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The Athletic / NHL trade deadline: Grading all the big deals completed this trade season

By The Athletic NHL Staff

March 5, 2026 Updated 1:58 pm EST

NHL trade season is well underway. There have been significant trades going back to the fall but the "trade season" really kicked off in a big way in December when the Vancouver Canucks sent Quinn Hughes to the Minnesota Wild.

We've been dishing out Trade Grades analysis ever since. Here they all are so far, with many more to come ahead of the 3 p.m. ET deadline on March 6.

Live coverage | Trade board

Maple Leafs get a win in sending Nicolas Roy to Avalanche

Avalanche get: Center Nicolas Roy

Maple Leafs get: First-round pick in 2027 (top 10 protected), conditional fifth-round pick in 2026

Maple Leafs grade: A+

Avalanche grade: C

Oilers make win-now bet on Jason Dickinson, Blackhawks get great return

Oilers get: Centre Jason Dickinson, forward Colton Dach

Blackhawks get: Forward Andrew Mangiapane, first-round pick in 2027

Oilers grade: B-

Blackhawks grade: A-

Mammoth make a smart bet on MacKenzie Weegar, boosting their blue line

Mammoth get: Defenseman MacKenzie Weegar

Flames get: Defenseman Olli Määttä, prospect Jonathan Castagna and three 2026 second-round picks

Mammoth grade: A-

Flames grade: B+

Tyler Myers fills an obvious need for Stars at a reasonable price

Stars get: D Tyler Myers

Canucks get: Second-round draft pick in 2027, fourth-round pick in 2029 (also retain 50 percent of Myers' remaining contract)

Stars grade: B+

Canucks grade: B+

Wild pay big for size and grit of center Michael McCarron

Wild get: Center Michael McCarron

Predators get: 2028 second-round draft pick

Wild grade: C+

Predators grade: A+

Connor Murphy worth the price to improve Oilers' blue line, penalty kill

Oilers get: Defenseman Connor Murphy

Blackhawks get: Second-round draft pick in 2028 (and retain half of Murphy's \$4.4 million salary-cap hit)

Oilers grade: A-

Blackhawks grade: B+

Avalanche pay a premium to get Brett Kulak from Penguins

Avalanche get: Defenseman Brett Kulak

Penguins get: Defenseman Samuel Girard, second-round pick in 2028

Penguins grade: A

Avalanche grade: B+

Artemi Panarin is the offensive threat the Kings needed

Kings get: Left winger Artemi Panarin

Rangers get: Prospect Liam Greentree, conditional third-round pick

Kings grade: B+

Rangers grade: D

Devils clear cap space with Palat trade, Islanders get depth, draft capital

Islanders get: Ondrej Palat, 2026 third-round pick, 2027 sixth-round pick

Devils get: Maxim Tsyplov

Devils grade: A-

Islanders grade: B-



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Sharks get Kiefer Sherwood from Canucks without giving up a first-rounder

Sharks get: Left wing Kiefer Sherwood

Canucks get: Second-round pick in 2026, second-round pick in 2027, defenseman Cole Clayton

Sharks grade: B+

Canucks grade: B

Andersson adds punch to Vegas' blue line, but did Flames get enough?

Golden Knights get: Defenseman Rasmus Andersson, with 50 percent salary retained

Flames get: Defenseman Zach Whitecloud, 2027 first-round pick (top-10 protected), conditional 2028 second-round pick (will become a 2028 first if the Golden Knights win the Stanley Cup in 2026), prospect defenseman Abram Wiebe

Vegas grade: A-

Calgary grade: B-

Phillip Danault makes sense for Canadiens — despite obvious red flag

Canadiens get: Forward Phillip Danault

Kings get: 2026 second-round pick

Canadiens grade: B+

Kings grade: C+

Wild get Quinn Hughes, enter win-now mode with a great but costly deal

Wild get: Defenseman Quinn Hughes

Canucks get: Forward Marco Rossi, forward Liam Öhgren, defenseman Zeev Buium and a 2026 first-round draft pick

Wild grade: A

Canucks grade: C+

Oilers make a big goalie move, but Tristan Jarry isn't the answer

Oilers get: Goalie Tristan Jarry, forward Samuel Poulin

Penguins get: Goalie Stuart Skinner, defenseman Brett Kulak, second-round pick in 2029

Penguins grade: B+

Oilers grade: D

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The case for and against each NHL wild-card playoff hopeful

By Shayna Goldman

March 5, 2026 Updated 12:39 pm EST

The big-picture plan for all 32 NHL teams revolves around one ultimate goal: Winning the Stanley Cup. But as each season rolls on, the pool of teams actually in contention thins out.

There is still a solid mix of teams vying for one of 16 coveted spots. So who will ultimately make it?

Each hopeful, both in the bubble and just outside, is building a case for and against a postseason berth. While there can always be surprises and wild swings down the stretch, for our purposes, those hopeful include teams on the fringes of the playoff picture, and outsiders within five points of the eighth seed.

Eastern Conference

Boston Bruins

The case for: David Pastrnak continues to prove that he is one of the best wingers in the world, no matter his surroundings. Whether he is skating alongside Morgan Geekie, who has already matched last year's goal-scoring total with 33 in 59 games, Elias Lindholm, or Marat Khushnutdinov, Pastrnak is an elite offensive force. Pair that with a bounce-back season from Jeremy Swayman, who has given the Bruins a chance to win with 31 quality starts in 40 appearances this season. After saving 3.35 goals above expected against the Penguins on Tuesday, he is up to a GSx of 34, which ranks third in the league.

Between those core performances, a red-hot power play, some two-way improvements at even strength and some solid supporting performances from players such as Hampus Lindholm, Viktor Arvidsson and Fraser Minten, among others, it's made for a really strong 2026 so far in Boston.

Since New Year's, the Bruins boast a 13-3-3 record and a .763 point percentage, which has helped them stay in the playoff picture. And there is a lot of substance behind that, as the team's value has jumped by a plus-18.4 Net Rating over the last month.

The case against: As well as the Bruins have played this year, the team has been very streaky across the 59-game schedule. And really lucky: At five-on-five, this team is shooting 10.6 percent, and has a .914 save percentage. So the team has to find ways to add substance while taking on one of the most difficult schedules to close out the regular season.

To do that, the Bruins likely need some reinforcements to address roster holes. But this is where things can get tricky, because Boston technically never completed the retool started last spring. So, unless management can add some of the younger players available on the trade market, this team could go right back to mortgaging the future for a return to the playoffs.

Washington Capitals

The case for: The Capitals' roster may not compete with the top teams in the league, but its combination of home-grown talent and savvy acquisitions has made for a deep team over the last couple of seasons. Management has done a really good job of identifying reclamation projects and potential fits, while Spencer Carbery and the coaching staff have maximized those players. The coaching has earned a lot of credit for helping this team operate above the sum of its parts. So if the Caps take a swing in the coming days, it's a safe bet that the coaches can push the right buttons with any additions.

The return of Pierre-Luc Dubois was basically an internal addition for the Caps, since he only played six games before returning in early February. Since rejoining the team, he has earned six points and an average Game Score of 1.94, giving the second line a real boost.

The case against: As much as the Caps have embraced a deeper approach and have six players above the 40-point mark, having a 50-point scorer lead the way is less than ideal.

As much offense as Washington has created — at a rate of 3.03 xG per 60 at five-on-five, which ranks fifth in the league — it just hasn't translated to the scoresheet enough. That extends to the power play as well; the Caps' scoring chance generation hasn't been perfect on the advantage, but even more glaring is a lack of finish.



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The Caps' team defense has been far from perfect, too, but the goaltending has done a lot to mask weaknesses.

Goal differential isn't everything, but it's generally a good temperature check of a team in the playoff mix. The Capitals rank eighth in the East with a plus-10 differential. Part of why that isn't enough to move up the standings is that Washington has struggled in tight games, and Tuesday's 3-2 loss to Utah was another example of that.

The fact that the Islanders keep cooking, with an 8-2-0 record in their last 10, and that the Penguins are also holding firm in the top-three in the Metro (with three games in hand), has only complicated things further for Washington.

Columbus Blue Jackets

The case for: The Blue Jackets have made a ton of progress over the last two years. Zach Werenski's elite all-around game is at the heart of that, along with growth from players such as Kirill Marchenko and Adam Fantilli. Some solid veterans, such as midseason addition Mason Marchment and defensive ace Charlie Coyle, have added some support.

But the big story now, of course, is the new coach bump. The Blue Jackets have gone 12-2-1 since making a change behind the bench. Rick Bowness was brought in to help stabilize Columbus's defensive zone play. So far, the team has improved its shot and scoring chance suppression over the last 15 games, compared to the first half of the season under Dean Evason, which is giving Jet Greaves more help.

All of that has contributed to a 30 percent jump in the Blue Jackets' playoff odds over the last month. And management has the means to build on that, with cap space and trade assets at its disposal.

The case against: As much as Columbus has improved under Bowness, the team still has to work on defending leads. Last Saturday, the Blue Jackets blew a 2-0 lead to the Islanders and lost in overtime. While they took home two points on Monday, it was only after blowing a 4-0 lead to the Rangers.

The Blue Jackets may be one of the hottest teams in the league, but it still isn't clear if they will be a buyer or a seller. Columbus could stand pat and hope that the new-coach bump is enough to jump into eighth place. But that may not be enough, despite improvements under Bowness. The Blue Jackets could use more two-way support, whether it's reinforcements on defense or some finishing talent to kick the team's scoring rate closer to last year's levels.

But management could also take a more realistic approach with the long game in mind, and flip players such as Coyle, Marchment and Boone Jenner to load up for next season.

Western Conference

Edmonton Oilers

The case for: A team led by Connor McDavid, Leon Draisaitl and Evan Bouchard should be too strong to fall out of the top eight in the West. Besides, the Oilers are notorious for having rocky starts and turning it on when it matters most.

Edmonton's offense is red hot, both at even strength and on the power play. The core is the driving force behind that, and Zach Hyman's rebound has been clutch. Matt Savoie is finding his footing lately, and Kasperi Kapanen's return has helped boost the supporting cast.

Paul Coffey's return behind the bench should help stabilize the Oilers' defense. So should the addition of Connor Murphy, who defends the rush well and brings an element of stability to the blue line.

The case against: The Oilers may be two points away from first in the Pacific, but this team is also two points out of the playoff picture entirely.

It shouldn't be this difficult to build a contender around McDavid, Bouchard and Draisaitl. Instead, management tied up over \$9 million in Tristan Jarry and Trent Frederic's contracts, and already traded away its next two first-rounders.

The Jarry addition is the most damning because it comes with another two full seasons, which lines up with McDavid's next contract. The Oilers' chaotic defense has only put a brighter spotlight on an already volatile situation in net. Darnell Nurse continues to be unpredictable on the back end, while Mattias Ekholm's game has declined.

So while Murphy was a solid addition, this team likely doesn't have enough cap flexibility (or creativity from this front office) to fix all of its problems.

Instead, the Oilers have to keep betting on their big guns to outscore their problem. Sure, that worked on Tuesday night after Edmonton allowed two quick second-period goals to go down 4-2, and were ultimately saved by Draisaitl's five-point night. But that isn't a sound, sustainable strategy for success.

Utah Mammoth

The case for: The Mammoth are dynamic offensively, led by a really exciting group of rising stars. This could legitimately be the fourth-best team in the Western Conference.

From Clayton Keller and Mikhail Sergachev to Dylan Guenther, JJ Peterka and Logan Cooley, there is a lot to be excited about in Utah. This group plays with a lot of pace and thrives in transition; since New Year's, it's added up to a 3.02 xG per 60 and 3.13 goals per 60, which both rank sixth in the league. The supporting cast is only improving on the fly, too. John Marino has been great on both ends of the ice this season. Daniil But was emerging into a two-way threat before getting sent back to Tucson.

Since moving to Utah, ownership has given management the room to take bold swings and go big game hunting. And that could be the key to solidifying its playoff standing, because this team has the assets to bring in a real difference-maker.

The team already used its deep asset pool to bring in MacKenzie Weegar, and still has the pieces to add a forward.

The case against: Of course, to take a big swing, the Mammoth have to win bidding wars. And that is obviously the unpredictable part of the trade deadline, because there are only so many top-end talents available. Utah could still afford to bolster its center depth, but that tends to be in high demand this time of year.

One other potential area of concern is Utah overworking Karel Vejmelka. While he has proven that he can do a lot of heavy lifting — he did start down the stretch last year, after all — it is a risky strategy that could lead to fatigue or injury. Vitek Vanecek has been fine as a backup, but could derail a lot of this team's progress in a bigger role.

But maybe the biggest case against Utah is the fact that it's wild card or bust — and that's why the Mammoth are featured here, while the seventh-place Canadiens aren't in the East. At this point, it's next to impossible to break into the top three in the Central Division, with a 14-point gap separating the Wild and Mammoth. While Utah has a four-point lead on ninth place, there are still a few teams in the mix here.

Seattle Kraken

The case for: Joey Daccord and Philipp Grubauer's consistency has given Seattle a balanced crease to lean on; the two have each saved 20-plus goals above expected this season and rank in the top-15 in the league. The two have combined for a .903 save percentage that ranks third in the league, behind only the Wild and Avalanche.

The Kraken are getting timely saves and converting on their five-on-five chances. And, like the Mammoth, have the means to improve to add



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more layers below that. While the Kraken haven't been buyers in years past, it's no longer Ron Francis managing the team, either. Francis moved up the chain last spring, and Jason Botterill has taken over as GM. So this team could break the mold this year, and actually make some noise at the deadline to better its chances of disrupting the playoff picture.

The case against: While the Kraken have shown that a depth approach can work, with their 2023 playoff run, this team still lacks serious star power. Matty Beniers has the chops to become a top-end two-way center, but few others on this roster have that upside. Having Jordan Eberle's 41-points lead the way is a red flag.

Seattle may have the assets and cap space to do some damage at the deadline, but there are only a handful of needle-movers available — and the Kraken don't have a track record for making these splashy moves, either. Without outside help, this team may not be able to pull above break-even in xG down the stretch, or give the power play a boost. And that is concerning, considering the road ahead. The Kraken have one of the most difficult remaining schedules moving forward, while two teams in the mix for the same playoff spots have a much easier path.

San Jose Sharks

The case for: Just when it seems like the Sharks have come back down to Earth, they respond with three straight wins.

And two of those wins were bangers — a 5-4 win over the Oilers and 7-5 against the Canadiens.

Those wins highlighted some of the best that the Sharks have to offer. Macklin Celebrini, at just 19, is having an MVP-caliber season, which is the reason this team is even in the conversation. Add in some growth from up-and-comers such as Will Smith, Collin Graf and Michael Misa, and the present and future are only getting brighter for the Sharks.

Now, the Sharks are only a few points back of the Oilers and Kraken with games in hand — and this team has one of the easiest schedule strengths moving forward.

The reality is, the Sharks aren't ready to contend. But after a few seasons of savvy asset management, the team has some leeway to add a little more deadline support to 1) reward this team for exceeding expectations, and 2) push this young team to gain experience playing meaningful hockey in the spring.

The case against: Since the Sharks' chances of doing any damage in the playoffs are slim, management's focus has to stay on the big picture — even if it hurts this team's postseason chances this year.

As fun as the Sharks are, the reality is that this team has way too many holes. The defense is far too leaky and is a key reason why San Jose is below the break-even mark in expected goals at five-on-five.

The Sharks are over-reliant on goaltending to make up for their lapses, too, and that is especially true in short-handed situations. As excellent as Yaroslav Askarov was earlier this season, his level seriously dropped off after a star-powered November. His December was disastrous, and his play over the last two months has been streaky and inconsistent.

Maybe this team just isn't ready yet.

Los Angeles Kings

The case for: The Kings have the most favorable remaining schedule. The road ahead includes a lot of games against teams contending for these same wild-card seeds: the Mammoth, Predators, Kraken and Oilers. So there is a real opportunity for L.A. to do some damage and solidify its playoff chances.

With Artemi Panarin in the fold, the Kings have the potential to make some noise. As much as his scoring ticked down in New York this

season, he has the dynamic skill set this team craves between his transition game and elite passing.

L.A. has the assets to keep adding around core players such as Adrian Kempe and Anze Kopitar, too.

On the back end, Brandt Clarke is progressing in more meaningful minutes. And while Darcy Kuemper's return to play was rough, he has generally been above-average this season.

The case against: The Kings continue to look outmatched by the best in the West — and recent losses to the Golden Knights, Oilers, and Avalanche only highlighted that. Some of Ken Holland's offseason signings are a driving force behind that. Take Monday's matchup against the Avs, where the Kings were outshot 34-11 in Cody Ceci's 22 five-on-five minutes, only earned a 17 percent xG rate, and were outscored 2-0.

The team's aging defense hasn't been sharp enough, especially in short-handed situations. The Kings have been giving up a lot of scoring chances on the penalty kill, and the goaltending hasn't been able to contain that.

And the offense isn't high-powered enough to negate that, either. It would be one thing if the Kings had both Panarin and a healthy Kevin Fiala in the lineup. That would seriously help an underwhelming power play, and a struggling five-on-five offense that has only mustered 1.86 goals per 60 in 22 games since New Year's.

The Kings have lost ground in the playoff race over the last few months. A new coach bump may not be enough to turn that around. How much meaningful change can D.J. Smith make midseason? He doesn't exactly have the best reputation for building an uptempo offense or a stout defense.

Nashville Predators

The case for: The Predators still have elite talent to build around at each position. Filip Forsberg's goal scoring is back on the rise this year, with 27 goals in 61 games; he is on pace for a 36-goal campaign. Roman Josi has made an impact since returning to the lineup and boosted the Preds' scoring by 0.46 goals per 60. While Juuse Saros' play has been far from perfect this season, his play for Team Finland was a reminder of his ceiling.

Luke Evangelista has emerged as a real bright spot with his ability to set up scoring chances. Ryan O'Reilly is still a very good two-way center. And Steven Stamkos, after a tough start to the season (and his overall Preds' tenure), has found his scoring touch again. And since those veterans aren't racing out of Nashville, they can keep contributing to a turnaround back into the playoff picture.

The case against: A team can't be eliminated from the playoffs a quarter into the season, but can dig a hole that is impossible to get out of. Nashville's start was absolutely brutal again this year. On Dec. 1, they sat dead-last in the league with an 8-13-4 record and 20 points. As much as the Predators have turned things around, with a 19-13-4 record since, it may not be enough. Of all of the teams mentioned today, Nashville's playoff odds are the lowest at just 16 percent, despite having one of the most favorable schedules ahead.

So even if veterans such as Stamkos and Jonathan Marchessault opt against waiving their no-movement clauses, management is still likely to sell any other movable players. As much as this team needs whatever support it can get to stay in the playoff race, management has to keep the big picture in mind because the long-term trajectory is not very bright.

— Data via Evolving-Hockey, HockeyViz, HockeyStatCards, All Three Zones, Dom Luszczyzyn, and Natural Stat Trick. This story relies on shot-based metrics; here is a primer on these numbers

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ESPN / NHL trade grades: Report cards for biggest deals of 2025-26 – ESPN

Ryan S. Clark, Kristen Shilton, Greg Wyshynski

The 2025-26 NHL trade season continues to pick up steam as the deadline looms at 3 p.m. ET Friday.

The day before the deadline, the Colorado Avalanche built up their forward group by adding Nicolas Roy, sending two conditional draft picks back to the Toronto Maple Leafs in exchange. Later, the Dallas Stars traded for Michael Bunting, sending a third-round draft pick to the Nashville Predators.

Some other big deals that have happened so far this season:

Two defensemen moved on Wednesday: Tyler Myers is headed to the Dallas Stars, with a pair of draft picks taking his place for the Vancouver Canucks, and MacKenzie Weegar joined the Utah Mammoth in exchange for a package that includes Olli Maatta heading back to the Calgary Flames.

The Chicago Blackhawks traded Jason Dickinson to the Edmonton Oilers for Andrew Mangiapane and a conditional first-rounder in 2027.

The Colorado Avalanche added to their blue-line group, adding Brett Kulak from the Pittsburgh Penguins.

The Los Angeles Kings acquired Artemi Panarin from the New York Rangers.

The Vancouver Canucks sent Kiefer Sherwood to the San Jose Sharks in exchange for a pair of picks and defenseman Cole Clayton.

The Calgary Flames traded defenseman Rasmus Andersson to the Vegas Golden Knights for a package that included defenseman Zach Whitecloud, draft picks and a prospect. The Flames are retaining 50% of Andersson's salary.

The Vancouver Canucks traded Quinn Hughes to the Minnesota Wild for Zeev Buium, Marco Rossi, Liam Ohgren and a 2026 first-round pick.

The Pittsburgh Penguins sent goaltender Tristan Jarry and forward Sam Poulin to the Edmonton Oilers for goaltender Stuart Skinner, Kulak and a 2029 second-round pick.

Up until Friday's deadline, ESPN reporters Ryan S. Clark, Kristen Shilton and Greg Wyshynski will be grading each side on all of the big swaps, with the latest deals highest up on this page.

Read on for more, and keep this page bookmarked as the trade volume rises throughout the season.

Jump ahead: Roy to COL

Bunting to DAL

Dickinson to EDM

Weegar to UTA

Myers to DAL

Kulak to COL

Panarin to LA

Sherwood to SJ

Andersson to VGK

Hughes to MIN

Jarry to EDM

March 5: Stars add to forward depth with Bunting

A day after adding defenseman Tyler Myers, the Dallas Stars stayed busy on Thursday, trading for forward Michael Bunting from the Nashville Predators. The Stars sent a 2026 third-round pick the other way to the Predators.

Here's a quick look at what it means, and what kind of value both GMs added to their respective teams.

Stars grade: B+

Bunting gives the Stars another top-nine scoring option, going into a playoff run the length of which might well be determined by scoring depth.

The Stars already have eight players who have reached double figures in goals this season; Bunting gives them a ninth, with 13 goals and 31 points through 61 games.

The veteran could be used in their middle-six winger group, an addition that comes as the Stars are the hottest team in the NHL with a 10-game winning streak.

It's a streak that has been done in parts without three forwards -- Radek Faksa, Roope Hintz and Mikko Rantanen -- on injured reserve, while Tyler Seguin, who last played Dec. 2, will sit out the rest of the season because of a knee injury.

Getting a healthy version of Faksa, Hintz, and Rantanen back into their lineup, in addition to Bunting, adds to the belief that the Stars could reach a fourth straight Western Conference finals and their first Stanley Cup Final since 2020.

Predators grade: B

Losing three straight games and five of their last six was clearly enough for the Predators' front office staff to start thinking about the future.

The Bunting trade is the latest deal in a week that has seen them move on from defenseman Nick Blankenburg, as well as forwards Michael McCarron and Cole Smith.

All of the deals thus far have been made for draft picks, a tidy piece of business for GM Barry Trotz.

The Preds now have 12 picks total for the 2026 draft, including five in the first three rounds. And looking ahead a bit, they now have 33 total selections from the 2026 through 2028 drafts.

Whether they'll end up using all of those picks -- or using them to add players, or as part of a bigger trade involving other current Preds -- remains to be seen. -- Clark

March 5: Avs land Roy from the Maple Leafs

Let's get this out of the way, shall we? The Colorado Avalanche just traded for someone whose last name is Roy.

Now for the actual news: The Toronto Maple Leafs traded Nicolas Roy to the Avalanche on Thursday in exchange for a conditional 2027 first-round pick and a 2026 fifth-round pick.

Here's a quick glance at what it all means for both clubs.

Avalanche grade: A

Adding a third-line center was a priority, and the Avs traded for perhaps the strongest available option ahead of the deadline.

During Roy's time with the Vegas Golden Knights, he emerged into a legitimate bottom-six anchor who could provide a team with more than 10 goals and 30 points per season and could be trusted to play in various game situations.



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At 6-foot-4, 201 pounds, he's a player with a physical component to his game, and he can also be used on the penalty kill.

But what made him particularly attractive to the Avalanche (and others) was what he did during the Golden Knights' Stanley Cup run in 2023, when he had three goals and 11 points in 22 games while playing a versatile role for the champs.

Adding Roy to Nathan MacKinnon and Brock Nelson at the center position adds to the belief that this could be the Avs' year to win the fourth Stanley Cup in franchise history.

What's more, he's in the first of a two-year contract that's worth \$3 million annually, so having him will be an asset for Colorado next season as well.

PuckPedia projects the Avs now have \$6.94 million in deadline cap space if they want to make one more move.

Maple Leafs grade: A-

Roy landed in Toronto after the Mitch Marner trade and signed a two-year contract. The fact that he was traded away less than a year later says everything about the Leafs' current situation.

Of course, there's something to be said for how they parlayed a player who cost them \$3 million for two years into a conditional first-round pick and a 2026 fifth-rounder.

There's no denying that the Leafs are going to be concentrating on their future. Figuring out what path they will take to reach their desired destination is the mystery.

Toronto came into the day without its first-round pick for 2026 or 2027. Both were traded last year; one for Brandon Carlo, the other for Scott Laughton. All those years of trying to push for a deep playoff run meant the Leafs have held on to their first-round pick just twice since 2021. Now they'll at least have one in next year's draft (although it is top-10 protected). The way the Avalanche are built for next season suggests it would take something drastic for the Leafs to not get that pick.

This also makes the fifth-round pick significant. As of now, the Leafs won't pick until the third round and won't pick again until the fifth. Getting an extra fifth-rounder means they'll have four picks at this draft, with two of them originally belonging to other teams.

That's a bit of a difficult spot to be in for a team that went from fighting to win the Eastern Conference to now challenging for a lottery pick, as Toronto entered Thursday with the 12th fewest points in the NHL.

The decision for Leafs GM Brad Treliving to move on from Roy could be just the start. Treliving has a roster that has six players who are entering the final year of their contracts. -- Clark

March 4: Oilers deal a first-rounder for Dickinson

Why have only one deal between the Chicago Blackhawks and Edmonton Oilers when you could have two in the days before the trade deadline?

The Oilers received center Jason Dickinson and forward Colton Dach in a swap that sent recently waived forward Andrew Mangiapane and a conditional 2027 first-round pick to the Blackhawks. The Blackhawks will retain 50% of Dickinson's salary.

Let's look at what it means for both teams and how each side performed.

Oilers grade: A-

From signing a two-year deal worth \$3.6 million annually to being waived months later and being traded days after being waived. This chaotic description of Andrew Mangiapane's 2025-26 campaign further reinforces why Oilers general manager Stan Bowman needed to find answers before the trade deadline.

Not that Mangiapane was expected to solve for all of the Oilers' bottom-six concerns. But what he cost the Oilers -- a team that was already having to carefully manage its salary cap -- meant they were paying for consistency. The version they signed was on pace to score 11 goals -- which would have been the lowest return since his rookie campaign.

That's what made the need to find an alternative on a cheaper contract rather important. It appears that the Oilers have done that with Dickinson and Dach.

The Blackhawks retaining 50% of Dickinson's salary means the Oilers have two forwards on their roster earning a combined \$2.95 million from the team.

It's a savings of more than \$500,000 in cap space vs. Mangiapane, with the bonus of Dickinson being an unrestricted free agent at the end of the season while Dach will be a restricted free agent under team control.

Dickinson gives the Oilers someone they can use as their third-line center behind Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl. He also provides the Oilers with one more forward who can be used down the middle or on the wing. It's a group that also includes Trent Frederic, Adam Henrique and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins.

The 30-year-old can also kill penalties, as he has logged more than 100 shorthanded minutes for a fourth straight season. Dach, a second-rounder in 2021, has nine points through 53 games in a limited role.

PuckPedia projects the Oilers have \$475,000 in cap space after moving Curtis Lazar to LTIR. So the savings accrued from this trade are even more important, with the notion they'll need to clear even more should they seek to make another move by Friday's deadline.

Blackhawks grade: A-

Trading Connor Murphy to the Oilers on Tuesday left the Blackhawks with one salary retention spot remaining, with the other committed to Seth Jones for the next four years after this season.

Any deal that would involve using that final spot needed to be worth it, and what they received for retaining Dickinson's salary was a first-round pick.

Landing the Oilers' first-round pick in 2027 (top-12 protected) has set the Blackhawks up for a sixth straight draft cycle with multiple first-round picks.

No, seriously.

They had three first-rounders in 2022 that were used to select Kevin Korchiński, Frank Nazar and Sam Rinzel. They had two first-round picks in 2023 they used to take Connor Bedard at No. 1 and Oliver Moore at No. 19.

Chicago had three more picks in 2024 that it used to take Artyom Levshunov at No. 2 along with Sacha Boisvert (No. 18) and Marek Vanacker (No. 27). The Blackhawks had three more first-round picks in 2025, allowing them to take Anton Frondell at No. 3, Vaclav Nestrail No. 25 and Mason West at No. 29.

They have two first-round picks in the 2026 draft, with their latest trade setting them up to now have two more first-rounders in 2027.

For those who didn't count all of that, it comes out to a total of 15 first-round picks from 2022 through 2027.

As for Mangiapane? It's possible they could use him on their roster this season and help revive his game. If it works, he can help as they build back into a contender -- or he can be the latest veteran the Blackhawks trade to get more draft capital in return for a trade next season. -- Clark

March 4: Mammoth add Weegar



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You might have noticed that there seems to be a theme with defensemen moving ahead of the trade deadline.

MacKenzie Weegar became the latest to join that club with the Calgary Flames trading him to the Utah Mammoth in exchange for defenseman Olli Maatta, prospect forward Jonathan Castagna and three second-round picks in 2026.

Let's examine how both sides did.

Mammoth grade: A-

Mammoth general manager Bill Armstrong was able to achieve two things with this trade: adding a versatile puck-moving defenseman to strengthen his team's top-four setup, and doing it without giving up any of Utah's top prospects.

What made Weegar so important for the Mammoth is that his style fits the profile of what has allowed them to be in a wild-card spot: control.

The Mammoth entered Wednesday ranked fourth in shot-share as one of the best teams in the NHL when it comes to puck possession.

Couple that with other defensive metrics: They are giving up the fourth-fewest shots per 60, the seventh-fewest scoring chances per 60 and are just outside the top 10 in fewest high-danger chances allowed (12th).

One of the methods in which the Mammoth have become adept at controlling play goes back to having defensemen such as Sean Durzi, John Marino and Mikhail Sergachev -- all of whom have a puck-moving component to their games.

Now they have another in Weegar. The Mammoth entered Wednesday with a shot-share of 53.31% in 5-on-5 play while Weegar's shot-share was 51.44%.

Another item he provides them is an experienced penalty killer. Weegar has shown he can be one of the anchors of a short-handed unit, logging more than 100 minutes in those scenarios in six straight seasons.

Weegar won't address all the issues with the Mammoth's penalty kill, but he was one of three defenseman who logged more than 100 short-handed minutes for a Flames' kill that is seventh in the NHL with an 82.4% success rate. The Mammoth are 22nd at 77.7%.

That's what he provides in the interim. As for the long term? The 32-year-old is in the third year of an eight-year deal worth \$6.25 million annually. He becomes the seventh player on the Mammoth to have a contract that's more than three years in length.

And with control being at the heart of why the Mammoth went after Weegar, they could still have even more with PuckPedia projecting they will have \$25.7 million in deadline cap space.

Flames grade: B+

The stark reality for the franchise's current condition is that Weegar is the second, top-pairing defenseman the Flames have traded this season (see Rasmus Andersson) with the idea they could trade another top-four option in Zach Whitecloud (who was also part of the Andersson trade).

That's one way of looking at this trade. Another is by comparing what the Flames received compared with other teams that parted ways with one of their top-four defensemen.

Connor Murphy netted the Chicago Blackhawks a 2028 second-round pick. Tyler Myers brought the Canucks a 2027 second-round pick and a 2029 fourth-round pick.

Weegar led to the Flames receiving a player they can use right now in Maatta, a prospect for the future in Castagna and three-second round picks that can be used this summer to strengthen their prospect depth.

The Flames appear to be on top of the leaderboard when it comes to what might be the strongest return a team has received ahead of the 3 p.m. ET Friday trade deadline.

Getting Maatta, who has two more years left on his contract, means the Flames also saved an additional \$2.75 million in cap space now that they shed Weegar's contract. They also made a deal work without having to use their third and final salary retention spot -- the others were used in the trades for Andersson and Jacob Markstrom.

Calgary now has six picks in the first two rounds of this year's draft, and eight picks in the first three rounds. That comes with the possibility they could add even more depending upon what happens with the trio of Stanley Cup-winning trade targets on their roster in Blake Coleman, Nazem Kadri and Whitecloud, among others. -- Clark

March 4: Stars add Myers to bolster blue line

It has become an annual tradition: the Dallas Stars adding a big, right-shot defenseman ahead of the trade deadline.

The Stars traded for Tyler Myers on Wednesday, sending the Vancouver Canucks a 2027 second-round pick and a 2029 fourth-round pick. The Canucks will also retain 50% of Myers' salary.

Here's a look at how both front offices performed in the swap.

Stars grade: B

Salary retention is critical for any contending team around the trade deadline. What makes this even more crucial for the Stars is Myers still has a year remaining after this season on a contract worth \$3 million annually.

Adding a 6-foot-8, 229-pound, right-shot defenseman that can log more than 20 minutes per game for a \$1.5 million average annual value is the sort of value that could help the club in the coming days should general manager Jim Nill elect to make more moves.

PuckPedia now projects that the Stars will have \$5.51 million in deadline salary cap space before the 3 p.m. ET Friday cutoff.

So will this be the move, or rather the first move ahead of the deadline that can help the Stars reach the Stanley Cup Final?

The Stars went down this path back in 2024 when they traded for Chris Tanev. It happened again in 2025 when Cody Ceci was part of the Mikael Granlund trade. Neither addition got them back to the Cup Final.

Myers provides depth and size to a team that already had plenty. The Stars entered Wednesday as the third-tallest and fourth-heaviest roster in the NHL, per Elite Prospects. And that was before the trade.

He has also averaged more than 150 short-handed minutes in six straight seasons, which gives Dallas another option on its 12th-ranked penalty kill (80.6%).

Ultimately, Nill's mission is to win the Stanley Cup, and this trade will influence those chances both this year and potentially next.

Canucks grade: B

Some might debate whether the Canucks could have received more for Myers -- especially when they are retaining 50% of his salary.

But what will dictate how this trade is viewed depends upon what happens between now and when the deadline strikes at 3 p.m. ET Friday.

Myers was one of a handful of right-shot defensemen -- such as Justin Faulk, Dougie Hamilton and Zach Whitecloud -- who are expected to be traded this week.

One challenge facing the Canucks here was attempting to receive substantial draft capital for a player of a certain profile, while also trying to predict the market when there are other options. Vancouver got one



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data point when Connor Murphy was dealt to the Oilers for a 2028 second-round pick earlier this week.

Another is the fact that Myers had a no-movement clause, meaning there was a limited amount of trade partners.

With Vancouver making its trade first, this could set the parameters for the going rate. If and when we see those deals, we'll have a better sense whether the Canucks could have received more.

Bottom line: The goal for the Canucks with this or any trade before the deadline is about positioning toward their future.

Vancouver has two first-rounders and two second-rounders in the 2026 draft. It has six picks in the first four rounds in 2027, and five picks in the first four rounds of 2029.

Moving on from Myers was the first step in what is expected to be an active deadline, with players such as Teddy Blueger, Evander Kane, and David Kampf, among others, set to be unrestricted free agents at the end of the season.

Vancouver now has one final salary retention spot remaining with the idea it could be used to broker a deal for Kane, who is earning \$5.13 million this season. -- Clark

Feb. 24: Avalanche add Kulak from the Penguins

Brett Kulak is on the move again this season, with the Colorado Avalanche being his latest employer as part of a trade that saw Samuel Girard and a 2028 second-round pick go to the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Here's a glance at how both teams fared in the deal that saw them each get a new defenseman.

Avalanche grade: B+

As the Avalanche move on from one of the longest-serving players on their roster, it's another example of how multiple things can be simultaneously true.

Girard had one more year remaining on a seven-year contract worth \$5 million annually. The Avs signed him to that deal at a time in which he was playing top-pairing minutes. His role, however, has gradually changed over time, with a defense that would see Cale Makar and Devon Toews become arguably the top pairing in the NHL.

Eventually, they added other defensemen such as Josh Manson and Brent Burns, the latter of whom arrived as a free agent last summer, which made the Avalanche stronger on the back end. But it also meant Girard alternated between being a second- or third-pairing option.

All told, it made Girard the Avs' third highest-paid defenseman while playing the fifth-most minutes -- and having the fewest points of any defenseman in the Avs' top-six group.

Getting Kulak allowed them to add a third-pairing defenseman for a fraction of the cost. The veteran is in the final year of a contract that pays \$2.75 million annually.

Kulak, who is 6-foot-2, also allowed the Avs to get bigger on the back end now that they have parted ways with Girard, who is 5-10. That now leaves Sam Malinski as the lone defenseman in the Avs' core defensive group that is shorter than six feet. Furthermore, Kulak gives the Avs another option on their penalty kill.

Altogether, it's the type of trade that offers both value and savings that the Avs could possibly apply elsewhere as the NHL trade deadline approaches on March 6.

Brett Kulak lights the lamp for Penguins

Penguins grade: B

The Penguins can use Girard either on their second or third pairing. What makes his situation in Pittsburgh different than that of the one in Colorado comes back to necessity.

Pittsburgh has gone through a revolving door in trying to solidify what first-year coach Dan Muse believes to be his strongest six options on defense on a nightly basis.

Kris Letang, Erik Karlsson, Ryan Shea and Parker Wotherspoon have been constants. They've each played in more than 50 games this season, and have been instrumental in why the Penguins exit the Olympic break in a playoff spot.

But this has also been a season in which the Penguins have shuffled through nine defensemen to fill those last two spots. Some of the challenges they've faced in that venture has been due to injuries, such as the one that limited Connor Clifton to 26 games this season.

Granted, they might have had their six -- with Kulak -- before the trade. But Girard gives them another proven puck mover from the back end, who further complements what they already have with Letang and Karlsson. Shea, who came into the season with six career points in 70 games, already has 22 in 56 games, while Wotherspoon has set a new personal best with 19 points after having 16 points in 108 career games entering this season.

Then there's the draft capital. Getting that second-round pick from the Avs has the Penguins set up quite well for the next few draft cycles. The Penguins now hold 16 combined picks in the first three rounds between the 2026, 2027 and 2028 drafts, which can be used or moved to acquire more immediate help. -- Clark

Feb. 5: Rangers deal Panarin to Kings

Los Angeles Kings acquire winger Artemi Panarin from the New York Rangers for a conditional third-round pick (2026), a conditional fourth-round pick (2028) and forward Liam Greentree. The Rangers retained 50% of Panarin's \$11,642,857 cap hit.

Rangers grade: B

I know Rangers fans are going to look at this grade and groan and start chanting "fire Drury" at their screens, but let's consider the facts:

- Panarin had a full no-movement clause. And not one of those NMCs that teams give away like samples at a mall food court, but a legitimate one they needed to give Panarin in 2019 to lure him as a coveted free agent going to a then-rebuilding team.
- He had a desire to go to a team willing to give him a contract extension now, so he wouldn't have to go through the headaches of unrestricted free agency this summer.
- According to NHL sources, he would waive the no-movement clause and sign an extension for only one team: the Kings. (OK, probably two, considering the team Panarin really wants to play for, the Florida Panthers, didn't have anywhere near the cap space flexibility to welcome him to the South Beach party. As one NHL executive speculated, the Panthers not getting deep into the Panarin pursuit probably means they expect Aleksander Barkov to be using his cap space again this season.)

The way the Panarin trade derby worked: Rangers general manager Chris Drury opened the process to teams that were willing to trade for him and extend him, which is what Panarin wanted. They made their pitches, but one source told ESPN that it was essentially a group of teams trying to persuade him not to sign with Los Angeles, the desired location for Panarin and his family. No one was able to get Hollywood off his mind.

So the market was essentially one team. Drury's options were trade Panarin (and retain 50% on his salary, which is fine in a lost season) for whatever the Rangers could conjure up from a team that had all the



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leverage, or have him walk away for nothing this summer, having already declared he wasn't going to be part of the team moving forward.

I know this isn't going to be popular, but considering those circumstances, I think the Rangers did OK here.

Greentree was ranked second among the organization's prospects in Corey Pronman's prospect pipeline rankings for The Athletic last August. Greentree was drafted 26th in 2024 and is in his fourth season with the OHL Windsor Spitfires, coming off a 49-goal, 119-point campaign last season.

His calling card is his size: The 20-year-old winger is 6-foot-4 and upwards of 215 pounds. Greentree is a power forward in dimension but not always on the ice, where he is more a skilled winger than a tractor trailer. I've heard comparisons to Matt Boldy stylistically, which the Rangers would take any day.

Greentree has a high ceiling, but there are red flags. His 45 points in 34 games shows regression this season in Windsor. He hasn't played pro hockey yet. Plus, the Rangers haven't exactly had the greatest success in maximizing the potential of their prospects. But they certainly view him as a high-end prospect internally.

The conditional third-rounder will be the better of the Kings' and the Dallas Stars' in the 2026 NHL draft unless Los Angeles wins a playoff round, in which case it becomes a second-rounder. Expect a prayer circle later this season at Madison Square Garden that the Kings don't meet the Edmonton Oilers again in the first round.

The Rangers get a 2028 fourth-round pick if the Kings win two playoff rounds this season. They probably could have asked for more in that scenario, but again, that's the reality of the trade market.

The Washington Capitals, Carolina Hurricanes and Tampa Bay Lightning were among the teams in the mix for Panarin, but he wanted to live and play in Los Angeles, so Drury had no other options.

There are reasons for Rangers fans to chant "fire Drury" to their heart's desire, what with the team last in the East and on its second rebuild in eight years. Bellow until you're hoarse. But save your breath on this deal involving a no-movement clause he didn't hand out and a player wielding it to go to one destination only. There was no winning this trade.

Kings grade: A-

Of course, Panarin's decision to narrow his preferred destinations to Los Angeles and only Los Angeles meant he couldn't exactly dictate terms to the Kings. One NHL executive believes that's why the process went down the wire ahead of Wednesday's Olympic trade deadline: Panarin was weighing longer-term contract options from other teams.

I think the two-year term was Panarin's way of enticing the Kings to trade for him. Sure, they loved his game and wanted to add his star power. But there's a give-and-take here. Any hesitancy about the Kings acquiring a player of his age for this season and four more -- his rumored ask -- was soothed by Panarin opting for a two-year deal.

This trade was already a win for getting a dynamic point-producing winger for conditional picks and an expendable (in their eyes) prospect. To not have to extend a player who turns 35 in October for the term he was reportedly seeking was a huge reason I'm grading this a little higher than I might have otherwise.

Panarin remains an elite playmaking winger. He has 57 points in 52 games on a terrible team this season, after 89 points in 80 games last season. He is sixth in the NHL in points over the past three seasons (266 in 214 games) and seventh in goals (105) during that span -- the kind of elite offensive talent who is as deadly setting up goals as he is finishing chances.

The Kings are 28th in goals per game this season (2.57). Whether that's on coach Jim Hiller's system or a lack of overall talent, bringing Panarin

on should obviously trend that higher. If nothing else, a player who is ninth in power-play points over the past three seasons (87) should be a boon to a power play that's clicking at 15.6% this season in L.A.

Holland was hired by the Kings to span two eras: the final season for Anze Kopitar and then the post-Kopitar seasons with a core of Quinton Byfield, Kevin Fiala, Adrian Kempe, Brandt Clarke, however long Drew Doughty wants to play and Darcy Kuemper in goal.

In the short term, Panarin at a minimum gives the Kings a boost to make the playoffs in a competitive race and then a puncher's chance to get out of the first round for the first time since winning the Stanley Cup in 2014. As modest as that sounds, that was essentially the mandate given to Holland.

"When I reflect back on the growth of the Detroit Red Wings when I was there and then I reflect back on the building of the Edmonton Oilers and where they are today, in the Final Four two straight years in a row, you've just got to stick with it," he said at his introductory news conference. "You've got to find a way to win a series, and every time you can get a little more confidence from accomplishing something it builds you going forward. I think you've just got to stick with it. There are no magic wands or tricks."

After this season, they have Panarin at \$11 million average annual value with the cap going up and Kopitar (\$7 million) coming off it. That's a good chunk of change and does impact their flexibility to do other things, which is concerning because this team needs more than Panarin to challenge for a Stanley Cup. Between Panarin, Fiala and Kempe, the Kings have nearly \$30 million on the wing next season and need to replace their No. 1 center. Woof.

But the two-year term, after Panarin was seeking double that? That's a win for Holland and team president Luc Robitaille, who I understand pushed hard for Panarin.

I realize there's a nihilistic response to this trade that asks, "Why make it?" when the Kings aren't nearly as good as the Avalanche, Wild or Stars, and probably not the Golden Knights, and they've lost to the Oilers in four straight seasons. So, what, don't add the sixth-best scorer of the past three seasons for picks you won't miss and an unproven prospect at 50% retention? Rebuild? Fold the team?

The cost of acquisition and the term of the contract make this worth doing, even if the AAV on Panarin's next deal doesn't do the team any favors in roster construction. It's a three-year window play for Kings GM Ken Holland. After that, it probably won't be his problem anyway. -- Wyshynski

Jan. 19: Sharks land Sherwood from Canucks

The Vancouver Canucks couldn't wait any longer. The post-Quinn Hughes rebuild/retool is on.

GM Patrik Allvin lowered his first-round pick asking price for Kiefer Sherwood, and moved the forward to the San Jose Sharks for a pair of second-round selections (in 2026 and 2027) and defenseman Cole Clayton. Sherwood -- a pending unrestricted free agent -- had been available via for months before Allvin settled on a trade partner.

Let's take a look at how the trade benefits both sides.

Canucks grade: B+

Vancouver knows where it's at, and that's currently 32nd in the NHL. Sherwood is a player who several teams coveted, and Allvin worked out quite a deal with San Jose GM Mike Grier.

The incoming draft selections give the Canucks two second-round picks in 2026 to go along with a pair of first-round choices. And they were missing a second-round pick in 2027, so this deal replaces that as well.



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Allvin had to do his part in making it a smarter transaction for Grier, which is why he takes on Clayton's contract. Still, the 25-year-old is a right-shot defenseman who will immediately report to Vancouver's AHL team in Abbotsford but could potentially develop into a useful player for the Canucks as they go through a retooling phase.

This is another step for Vancouver in moving forward into its next era.

Sharks grade: B-

This was an interesting decision by the Sharks. Perhaps the grade here really should be "incomplete." Because San Jose has traded for an injured player (Sherwood hasn't been available since Jan. 10 due to an undisclosed ailment) who is set to become an unrestricted free agent in July. While San Jose is in the mix for a wild-card spot, parting with high-end draft capital for a forward they may not even keep for six months is more aggressive than you'd expect the Sharks to be.

However, you have to appreciate the vote of confidence Grier is giving his group. Sherwood is a superb utility player who can slot into a middle-six role as an effective playmaker who throws his body into any oncoming traffic -- he is second in the NHL this season with 210 hits. He's not an elite scorer, but has 17 goals and 23 points in 44 games, and should punch up the Sharks' forward depth when he's back and healthy.

The Sharks would definitely score higher here if there was an extension already for Sherwood. If that does happen, and he's a player who pushed the Sharks firmly to a postseason slot, then this is a tidy piece of work by Grier. -- Shilton

Jan. 18: Andersson traded to the Golden Knights

Trading for a top-pairing defenseman from the Calgary Flames is something the Vegas Golden Knights have done before, landing Noah Hanifin in 2024.

They did it again Sunday, acquiring Rasmus Andersson in a deal with the Flames in exchange for defenseman Zach Whitecloud, a 2027 first-round pick, a 2027 second-round pick that becomes a first-round pick if Vegas wins the Stanley Cup, and prospect defenseman Abram Wiebe. The Flames are retaining 50% of Andersson's salary, and his contract expires after this season.

Let's take a look at how each front office performed in the NHL's latest trade.

Golden Knights grade: B+

This trade had quite a few angles. It starts with why the Golden Knights felt it was necessary to trade for the most sought-after defenseman weeks before the Olympic break.

Vegas is without Alex Pietrangolo for what could be the rest of the season, if not his career, which forced the Golden Knights to navigate the first half of the season without a proven, top-four right-handed defenseman who can be trusted to play in every situation.

Their underlying metrics show that their defensive structure was finding success. They entered Sunday giving up the fewest shots against per 60 minutes, the second fewest high-danger chances allowed per 60, and the ninth fewest scoring chances allowed per 60.

It's one of the major reasons they enter this week sitting atop the Pacific Division standings, with the eighth-most points in the NHL.

The disconnect has been with their goaltending throughout most of the season. The Golden Knights have a .884 team save percentage in all situations, tied for the third-lowest percentage in the NHL.

Maybe more could have been done in net -- with the idea that there's still time ahead of the March 6 deadline. Alternatively, they might believe they have the answer in Akira Schmid, considering he has 15 wins, a 2.45

goals-against average and a 2.90 goals saved above average that is 26th among the 56 goalies with more than 700 minutes played.

But there's another question: Is there such thing as a team being too good on defense? Especially when there has been a need to find more consistency in net?

That presents another reality within all the angles of this deal: the Golden Knights' presumed second defense pairing is good enough to be a top pairing elsewhere.

Adding Andersson to the mix means they'll likely reunite him with his former Flames defense partner in Noah Hanifin. Andersson and Hanifin were the Flames' top defense pairing for two-plus seasons before the latter was traded to the Golden Knights during the 2023-24 season.

Using that duo did more than just give the Flames a trusted top partnership. It gave them two defenseman who could each score more than 10 goals, facilitate the puck, and be trusted to play in every possible situation.

But the trade does raise at least some concern about risk.

Sportsnet reported that the Boston Bruins removed themselves from the Andersson race because there was no extension as part of the deal, with the idea that the Golden Knights believed they could eventually get a new deal done at some point before this summer.

ESPN's Emily Kaplan reported Sunday that Andersson, who is in the final year of his current contract, made it known that Vegas was his preferred destination. If so, it creates an expectation that he and the Golden Knights will eventually find common ground on a new deal.

It's a similar situation the Golden Knights had a few years ago with, you guessed it, Hanifin before he signed an eight-year contract extension worth \$7.35 million annually.

Let's say Anderson does end up signing an extension. This trade would become another one that lands the Golden Knights front office an "A" grade in their win-at-all-costs pursuit for the second title in franchise history.

Flames grade: B+

It's becoming an all-too familiar script for the Flames over the past five or so years: moving on from some of their best players with the mission of finding a deal that helps the franchise in the short and long term.

With Andersson entering the final months of his contract, it was the latest example of that dynamic. What further reinforced the reality of the second part is that the Flames came into Sunday as one of five Western Conference teams within seven points of the final wild-card spot.

So, finding a return for Andersson that could help them now and in the future was crucial. It appears that this particular trade could help them accomplish that mission.

Whitecloud helps them now, in that they get a proven right-shot, top-four Stanley Cup winner who can play heavy minutes. He has two years left on his contract after this season, worth \$2.75 million annually. It's the sort of contract that allows the Flames to explore a few options.

The first is that they keep him given his experience and contract value for a team that now has \$8.545 million in salary cap space, per PuckPedia. The second is they could seek to trade him either this season or in the future to a contender in need of defensive help; again, he provides extensive Stanley Cup playoff experience at a team-friendly price.

Another detail that has proved important for the Flames and other teams in their situations is draft capital. That's why it was so crucial for them to get a first-round pick when they traded Hanifin. That's what also made it necessary to do the same for any team that wanted Andersson.



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Now they have two first-round picks in 2026 and again in 2027, with both of those extra first-rounders coming by way of the Golden Knights. (And potentially another one down the road if Vegas wins the Cup.)

Wiebe was a seventh-round pick in 2022 who is currently in his third year at the University of North Dakota. The 6-foot-3 Wiebe has three goals and 14 points in 24 games for UND. He becomes added defensive depth for the Flames' system. -- Clark

Dec. 12: Wild land Hughes in a December blockbuster

Everything was quiet Friday ... until it wasn't. Because that's when the first blockbuster trade of the season happened, with an expected name going to an unexpected place.

The Vancouver Canucks traded captain and star defenseman Quinn Hughes to the Minnesota Wild with defenseman Zeev Buium, forward Liam Ohgren, forward Marco Rossi and a 2026 first-round pick going in the other direction.

How did both general managers perform in what is easily the biggest trade of the season to this stage?

Greg Wyshynski breaks down why he loves the trade of Quinn Hughes to the Minnesota Wild.

Wild grade: A-

In recent years, the Wild built one of the best farm systems in the NHL. Investing in their system and in player development gave them options ... and they used three of those options to land one of the NHL's best defensemen.

Hughes gives the Wild a Norris Trophy winner who can be used in every situation, starting with the offensive zone. Finding ways to consistently score goals has been a challenge for the Wild over the past few seasons.

Not that Hughes can single-handedly solve for that one problem. But he can definitely help, considering he has had four straight seasons of more than 60 assists and is projected to finish with 56 having missed a portion of this season with an injury.

How crucial is that for the Wild? Hughes' 60 assists alone would have been tied for second on the team in points last season. His 76 total points also would have led the Wild outright in that category. The 21 assists that he has this season would already be the most if he played the whole season for the Wild, and his 23 points are tied for the third most on the roster.

Hughes also provides the Wild with another option -- in addition to Brock Faber -- who can be trusted to play in every key situation for long periods. The Wild could even pair them together if needed to form a combination that can defend and then quickly break out into transition.

The Wild's top-four defensive unit also features Jonas Brodin, Jared Spurgeon and Faber, while Jake Middleton is logging more than 18 minutes per game.

Of course, adding Hughes came with a premium package going the other way. Buium was in his first full NHL season, having been a first-round pick in 2024. Ohgren was a first-round pick in 2022, and Rossi was a first-round pick in 2020.

The thought was that Buium would be part of the long-term plan, whereas Ohgren was a bit more of a work in progress given he had spent part of the season in the AHL. Rossi re-signed with the Wild having just spent the 2024-25 season and the early portion of the offseason as a possible trade target before agreeing to that new deal.

But there was also the matter of where those three fit into the Wild's current lineup. Buium was on the third pairing, with the idea that he could be elevated into the top four at some point. Ohgren was playing amid the

Wild's injury crisis -- Rossi and others had been on IR this season -- but has zero points in 18 games.

Parlaying a sizable part of their future to get Hughes signals that the Wild are intent on breaking into that collection of teams that are in a championship window. Two of them -- the Colorado Avalanche and the Dallas Stars -- are ahead of the Wild in the Central Division standings right now.

Hughes has one more year left on his current contract at \$7.85 million before hitting free agency in the summer of 2027, but he can sign an extension as of July 1, 2026. Whatever happens between now and then could play a role in defining one of the biggest trades in Wild franchise history.

Canucks grade: A

Going from being a game away from the Western Conference finals in 2024 to potentially winning the lottery over a two-year period prompted some difficult questions in Vancouver.

Figuring out whether the franchise needed to move on from Hughes might have been the most difficult.

Speculation about Hughes' future ramped up significantly this offseason, when team president Jim Rutherford said that Hughes wanted to play with his brothers, Jack and Luke, who are on the New Jersey Devils.

Eventually, the Canucks were playing out two hypotheticals: one in which they kept Hughes, attempted to turn things around but ran the risk of losing him in free agency with nothing in return at the end of the 2026-27 season, and another in which they moved on from him at some point, commanding the sort of trade package that could help them now and in the future.

They went with the second option, which has a chance to potentially start paying dividends now for a franchise that entered Friday with the worst record in the NHL -- but that is also the owner of two first-round picks in this summer's draft.

Buium projects as a top-pairing, puck-moving defenseman who could be used in various situations. He joins a top four that includes Filip Hronek, Marcus Pettersson and Tyler Myers. He gives the Canucks another young defenseman for the future, in a young group that also includes Elias N. Pettersson and Tom Willander. He's in the second year of his entry-level contract and will become a restricted free agent at the end of the 2026-27 season.

Ohgren is a potential top-nine option who has shown promise with what he has done at the AHL level. By skating more minutes with the Canucks, he could possibly find offensive consistency. He has two years remaining before becoming an RFA.

Rossi has a chance to establish himself as the Canucks' second-line center upon his return from injury. Trading J.T. Miller last season created a void that was slated to be filled by a player who came over in that deal, Filip Chytil. Chytil had three goals through six games before sustaining an upper-body injury that has kept him out of the lineup since Oct. 19.

Rossi, who is in the first year of a three-year bridge deal, could return as soon as Sunday to provide the Canucks with another top-six option down the middle. -- Clark

Dec. 12: Oilers land Jarry, send Skinner to Penguins in goalie swap

The Edmonton Oilers finally addressed their multiple-season problem in goal by acquiring Pittsburgh Penguins netminder Tristan Jarry.

The Oilers sent goalie Stuart Skinner, defenseman Brett Kulak and a 2029 second-round pick to Pittsburgh for Jarry and forward Sam Poulin.

How did both GMs do in this deal? Let's dive in.

Penguins grade: B+



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This trade is primarily about Jarry, of course. But it's about someone else, too: Sergei Murashov.

The 21-year-old, who was a fourth-round pick by the Penguins in 2022, has grown into potentially their most promising prospect. He starred in the MHL, the premier Russian junior league, for two seasons after he was drafted. He also won four of his seven KHL games while posting a .928 save percentage in those stints.

Murashov came to North America last season where he posted a .922 save percentage over 26 ECHL games before a .913 mark in the AHL in 16 games. He has a .943 save percentage in 11 AHL games this season, while having a .912 save percentage and a 1.90 goals-against average in four games with the Penguins.

It's the sort of trajectory that makes it evident that the Penguins have found their goalie of the future -- who could be playing right now. Even more so given Murashov has a chance to be the latest Russian goalie to make an impact in what has been a golden age for Russian netminders.

Murashov has one more year left on his contract at a team-friendly \$861,000. Arturs Silovs and Skinner, who are both on the NHL roster, are in the final years of their deals. Together, they cost the Pens a combined \$3.45 million in cap space, with Silovs set to become a restricted free agent this coming offseason.

Skinner does provide them with an experienced option in net, given that Murashov is in just his second season of North American hockey while Silovs has only 32 games, with a career-high 13 of those performances coming this season.

It creates the sort of environment that allows the Penguins to continue developing Murashov with the idea that they can give him the necessary minutes, rather than trying to juggle his workload versus that of a goalie such as Jarry, who was a significant financial investment with two more years left on his contract at north of \$5 million annually.

Getting Jarry's contract off the books means the Penguins can now pave the way for Murashov to receive more playing time. They are now also armed with the sort of cap space that will allow them make other moves in their bid to reach the playoffs for the first time in three years.

PuckPedia projects that the Penguins have \$9.164 million in salary cap space after the trade, which could give the Penguins an advantage entering the trade deadline. They entered Friday in the second Eastern Conference wild-card spot in a race that has 10 teams separated by six points.

Adding Kulak in the deal gives the Penguins an experienced top-six defenseman and someone who could anchor their bottom pairing. The Penguins have a clearly established top four, but have shuffled through their bottom-pairing options; they've had five defensemen who have played more than nine games and who have logged close to or more than 15 minutes per game. Kulak is averaging 17:42 in ice time per game this season.

Kulak can also provide the Penguins with another option on their penalty kill, as he has logged more than 100 short-handed minutes in two of his three most recent seasons.

Oilers grade: B

Any personnel decision the Oilers make is going to be viewed through the prism of whether it can help them win the Stanley Cup now. Trading for Jarry -- or any goaltender -- while moving away from Skinner reflects that reality.

There had been more than enough evidence in place to suggest that the Oilers needed a change in net. Advancing to the Stanley Cup Final in consecutive seasons made it extremely clear that the Oilers are in a championship window. Constantly having to press the proverbial reset button on Skinner in both of those runs to the Cup Final, however, played

a significant role in what made their chances of winning a title rather murky by comparison.

Skinner recovered the first time the Oilers pulled him and brought him back during the 2024 playoffs. He finished with a save percentage greater than .900 in eight combined Stanley Cup Final and Western Conference playoff games. Last postseason, Skinner had four games with a save percentage greater than .900 in the Cup Final and conference finals -- with three of those games coming in the conference finals.

It's an even more damning reality with the consideration that the Oilers have possessed one of the strongest defensive structures in the NHL since hiring Kris Knoblauch in November 2024. The last two years have seen the Oilers rank in the top eight in allowing the fewest shots per 60 minutes, the fewest scoring chances per 60 and the fewest high-danger scoring chances allowed per 60, according to Natural Stat Trick.

Only to then have the ninth-lowest team save percentage in 5-on-5 play over that same span.

This season has been no different. The Oilers are a top-10 team in terms of the fewest shots allowed per 60 and the fewest high-danger scoring chances allowed per 60. That's why they entered Friday in the first of the two Western Conference wild-card spots.

But despite that strong defensive structure, they are last in team save percentage in 5-on-5 play. That's also why they entered Friday in a wild-card spot instead of sitting atop the Pacific Division -- granted, they're just five points behind first place.

Another item that hinted that a change could be coming was the fact that Skinner and Calvin Pickard are in the final season of their respective contracts, at figures that could be moved. Skinner is earning \$2.60 million this season, while Pickard is at \$1 million.

Jarry provides the Oilers with a two-time All-Star goalie who they believe can give them the consistency that's been missing. Five of his six most recent campaigns have seen Jarry finish with a save percentage of more than .900.

He will also be under contract for two more years after this one, at \$5.38 million annually. That means he'll come off the books after the 2027-28 season -- the same time that superstar captain Connor McDavid's two-year extension will be over and could potentially see him hit free agency for the first time.

Will the Oilers have won a Cup by then? Or will the next two years see them get close only to fall short again? -- Clark

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ESPN / NHL trade deadline rankings tiers: Which players could move? -- ESPN

Greg Wyshynski

The NHL needs two things for an entertaining trade deadline: demanding contenders who have delusions of Stanley Cup grandeur, and enough teams willing to part with their current players to provide supply.

There are roughly eight teams that are probably out of the playoff hunt as the March 6 trade deadline approaches.

The New York Rangers already sent their letter to fans signaling a "retool" and traded Artemi Panarin to the Los Angeles Kings. Teams



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around the league are waiting to see how dramatically the Calgary Flames, St. Louis Blues and Vancouver Canucks compensate for disappointing seasons. Two of those clubs got into the trade game already the week of the deadline, with MacKenzie Weegar and Tyler Myers being dealt.

Meanwhile, a change in recent fortunes for some teams might change their thinking. Take the Columbus Blue Jackets, who have surged up the standings under new coach Rick Bowness. A month ago, players like Boone Jenner and Charlie Coyle would have been found in the trade tiers below. Now, it sounds like there's a better chance they could be extended than moved -- or at least kept around for a playoff push.

This list was compiled through conversations with league executives and other sources, as well as media reports. ESPN insiders, including Emily Kaplan, added their input as well. Salary figures are from PuckPedia.

With huge names such as Quinn Hughes and Panarin already off the board, let's start with some other shocking possibilities before diving into pending free agents, players with term left on their deals and some glue guys.

Jump ahead: Shockers

Elite pending free agents

Elite forwards with term

Elite D-men with term

25-and-under tier

Goalies | Glue guys

Shocking possibilities tier

Sergei Bobrovsky, G, Florida Panthers

Jordan Kyrou, RW, St. Louis Blues

Simon Nemec, D, New Jersey Devils

Colton Parayko, D, St. Louis Blues

Elias Pettersson, C, Vancouver Canucks

Morgan Rielly, D, Toronto Maple Leafs

Robert Thomas, C, St. Louis Blues

Alex Tuch, RW, Buffalo Sabres

It was hard to gauge how deep the Blues were willing to cut with a trade deadline retool after a disastrous season, but the answer is apparently "to the bone." Thomas, the Blues' 26-year-old No. 1 center, is very much in play for those teams willing to meet GM Doug Armstrong's considerable asking price: a young impactful current NHL player, a blue-chip prospect and a first-round draft pick or a player comparable to one. St. Louis reportedly went long into talks with Buffalo before no deal was struck.

Thomas' contract has an \$8.125 million average annual value, but his annual salary declines or plateaus every season after this one. There still might be time for the Utah Mammoth, Detroit Red Wings, Boston Bruins, Montreal Canadiens, Seattle Kraken or another team to ante up big for a player in his prime.

Born out of those Sabres-Blues talks was Buffalo's near trade for Parayko, which would have involved WHL defensive prospect Radim Mrtko. Parayko nixed the move to Buffalo with his no-trade clause. He's signed through 2029-30 at a \$6.5 million annual cap hit. Now that Armstrong has made it clear he's not in the Blues' long-term plans, where would the 11-year veteran and Stanley Cup winner accept a trade?

Kyrou would only be shocking because the window seems closed on when the Blues could deal the 27-year-old winger. His no-trade clause

started this season, and he remains in St. Louis despite some reports about his availability heading into last season's draft. Kyrou is signed at \$8.125 million annually through 2030-31.

The Panthers had an 18% chance of making the playoffs coming out of the break, according to our latest NHL Bubble Watch. Stathletes now has that at 4.7%. Is it possible Bobrovsky becomes someone else's playoff hero this season?

ESPN's Kevin Weekes said it's a situation worth watching, particularly because Bobrovsky is a pending unrestricted free agent who has yet to receive a contract extension. He has two Vezina Trophies and two Stanley Cup wins to his credit. He makes \$10 million against the salary cap, but only \$6 million actual dollars this season, with trade protection. He's also 37 years old.

What do the Panthers want to do here? A short-term contract to backstop a veteran team that's back to full strength next season would seem like one avenue. But they do have 26-year-old Daniil Tarasov -- who, for what it's worth, has outplayed Bobrovsky this season. As Weekes said, this is something to watch. One interesting option with the necessary cap space: The San Jose Sharks, contending in the West and with a young Russian goalie in Yaroslav Askarov that could use the tutelage.

Much like the Panthers, the Devils didn't expect to be sellers at this point. While a number of players could be on the block, the one name getting attention is Nemec. The 22-year-old was drafted second overall in 2022 and is in the final year of his entry-level contract. He has scored 21 points in 48 games, and skated 19:41 per game on average.

So why move him now? First because he's a restricted free agent after this season, and the Devils might not be up for that contract fight. Second, because he's a young, right-shot defenseman in a market that's put a premium on that position. It's not like he's an untouchable: Nemec was rumored to have been a part of the Devils' pitch for Quinn Hughes in December.

It would be shocking if the Canucks finally did trade Pettersson considering his contract AAV (\$11.6 million through 2031-32) and protection (full no-move), as well as the fact that he may no longer be considered an offensive star in the NHL. Even after Vancouver removed the friction of the J.T. Miller situation, Pettersson still hasn't hit his marks: His past two seasons were his lowest in points per game for his career.

Rielly is one of several Maple Leafs with trade protection, in his case a full no-movement clause. He's signed through 2029-30 at a \$7.5 million AAV. He has 31 points in 54 games, skating 21:34 of ice time per game. Could the Leafs decide to reshape their blue line by convincing the 13-year veteran it's time to move on, as another member of the "Core Four" leaves Toronto? As Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment president and CEO Keith Pelley told season-ticket holders in a recent letter: "We will do whatever is needed for this team to make the next step."

Then there's Tuch. The Sabres are in a playoff seed. Tuch has 24 goals and 28 assists in 60 games. He plays in every situation and is an absolute catalyst for the team. He's saying things like, "We're not just going to go for the playoffs, we're going to go for the Cup."

It's hard to imagine Buffalo trading that kind of player while seeking their first postseason berth since 2011, but Tuch and the Sabres have been talking contract for a long, long time with no long-term extension to show for it: first with former GM Kevyn Adams, now with Jarmo Kekalainen. Even without that extension, one assumes the Sabres would be comfortable keeping Tuch through the deadline with the playoffs in reach. But Kekalainen has always been a pragmatist.

Elite pending free agent tier

Jordan Eberle, RW, Seattle Kraken

Patrik Laine, LW, Montreal Canadiens



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Evander Kane, LW, Vancouver Canucks

Nick Schmaltz, C, Utah Mammoth

Jaden Schwartz, F, Seattle Kraken

Kane is going to be traded, and the Canucks are going to gobble up a chunk of his \$5.125 million AAV to make it happen. He has a 16-team no-trade list, but the only requirement for Kane to agree to a move to his sixth NHL franchise is that it's a playoff team. The Dallas Stars have been a frequently mentioned fit, but don't discount a move back East for Kane, either.

The Kraken's playoff bubble is starting to burst, with a 41.2% chance of making the cut in the latest Bubble Watch, buoyed by Money Puck's outlier of a 68.4% probability. So what then happens to their unrestricted free agents, as GM Jason Botterill attempts to put his stamp on the team? Eberle (\$4.75 million AAV, no-trade clause) and Schwartz (\$5.5 million AAV, limited no-trade clause) seem primed for a move to a contender seeking scoring help on the wing. Eberle is the team captain and leading scorer through 54 games, with 20 goals and 38 points.

Schmaltz is a funny one. He has clearly endeared himself to Mammoth fans and has played a huge role in their push for a playoff seed with 53 points in 57 games, centering star Clayton Keller. But the 30-year-old is in line for a significant raise from his \$5.85 million AAV, and talks haven't exactly been sunshine and roses in the past. Dave Pagnotta of Daily Faceoff noted that last summer, Schmaltz and the Mammoth discussed possible trade destinations where he'd be willing to sign an extension. Given Utah's playoff potential, it likely only makes sense to deal Schmaltz in a "hockey trade" for a significant roster upgrade.

What is Laine's value right now? He was limited to five games this season due to injury after a nice comeback season in 2024-25 with Montreal (20 goals in 52 games). The Canadiens would obviously have to pick up part of his \$8.7 million AAV to facilitate a trade. Laine is nearing a return from the IR. Is there someone who believes in a potential return to form enough to overlook his inability to remain in the lineup?

Elite forwards with term tier

Blake Coleman, C, Calgary Flames

Jake DeBrusk, LW, Vancouver Canucks

Conor Garland, RW, Vancouver Canucks

Nazem Kadri, C, Calgary Flames

Jonathan Marchessault, C, Nashville Predators

Ryan O'Reilly, C, Nashville Predators

Brayden Schenn, C, St. Louis Blues

Steven Stamkos, C, Nashville Predators

Ryan Strome, C, Anaheim Ducks

Owen Tippett, RW, Philadelphia Flyers

Vincent Trocheck, C, New York Rangers

You could build two pretty good center groups with the players available in the middle at this deadline -- in theory, at least.

Trocheck wasn't here in our last trade board because the Rangers were still feigning to be a contender at that point. Now that they're in the retool again, it's hard to imagine they won't move Trocheck for the benefit of both parties. He's as versatile a player as you'll find: someone who can average 0.76 points per game over the past two seasons, but also be a key defensive player, a role he served well in helping the United States win Olympic men's hockey gold.

Speaking of which: More than a few observers around the NHL believe Trocheck will end up with the Minnesota Wild, a team with a need in the middle and a general manager in Bill Guerin who built the aforementioned Team USA. Trocheck has a 12-team no-trade list.

The biggest name here is Stamkos, the 36-year-old star who started the season horrifically (one goal in 14 games) and then caught fire right as the Predators started moving up the standings. He had 16 points in 13 games leading up to the Olympic break and now has 28 goals on the season, proving his worth both to Nashville and the rest of the league. Complicating things is his contract: \$8 million annually through 2027-28. "I have a full-move clause, so I get to make a decision whenever it comes down to that. But I haven't had any conversations about that," he told The Athletic recently.

The Predators have two other big names in the middle. Marchessault has a full no-movement clause and makes \$5.5 million against the cap annually through 2028-29. He has 17 points in 38 games and has skated to a minus-18 in 38 games. His defensive game has deteriorated in Nashville, but the 2023 Conn Smythe winner can add some offensive pop to a contender.

O'Reilly, Nashville's other Conn Smythe winner, has a friendly cap hit (\$4.5 million AAV) on a contract with two years left on it. While the 2019 Cup winner doesn't have trade protection, GM Barry Trotz will work with O'Reilly on finding a preferred destination. O'Reilly has been awesome this season: 20 goals and 36 points in 57 games, winning 55.3% of his faceoffs, on par with his career mark. He's 35 years old but could be a "final puzzle piece" guy for the right contender.

Kadri is another "last piece" guy as a second-line two-way center with snarl, which is what he provided the Colorado Avalanche in winning the Stanley Cup in 2022. The 35-year-old makes \$7 million against the cap annually through 2028-29. He has a 13-team no-trade list but didn't exactly shoot down reports that he would be open to working with the Flames to facilitate a swap. Calgary loves what Kadri brings to the team, but the time might have come to maximize his return.

Complicating things: The Flames have only one slot to retain salary, after keeping a percentage in the Rasmus Andersson and Jacob Markstrom trades. If they use that for Kadri, they couldn't use it on Coleman. The 34-year-old forward has two years left at \$4.9 million annually, and a 10-team no-trade clause. He has 13 goals in 44 games and can help kill penalties, having won two Stanley Cups with the Lightning.

Schenn has a 15-team no-trade clause, making \$6.5 million against the cap annually through 2027-28. He has been in St. Louis for nine seasons and has 24 points in 57 games this season, skating to a ghastly minus-25. That said, the 34-year-old Stanley Cup winner is a coveted player around the league for his leadership, toughness and offensive upside. Assuming the Blues are in seller mode, he'll have plenty of attention and the Blues could get a hefty return for him.

Depending on how deep the trading goes in Vancouver, Garland and DeBrusk could be part of it. Garland hasn't even started the six-year, \$36 million deal he signed in July. He has 25 points in 46 games for Vancouver. DeBrusk, 29, has a full no-move clause and five more years on his contract at \$5.5 million AAV. He's not having the offensive season he had in 2024-25 (28 goals), but he's a solid winger that can slide into a team's middle six.

Is Tippett's name being out there just noise or something more palpable? His trade protection kicks in during the 2026-27 season. He makes \$6.2 million against the cap annually through 2031-32. He has had three straight 20-plus-goal seasons and has 19 goals in 56 games this season. Everything we've heard is that the Flyers might move him in the right "hockey trade" to help the club.

Whenever a veteran's ice time dramatically falls, one assumes a trade can't be too far off. Strome, the 32-year-old who has another year left at



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\$5 million AAV, averaged 16:41 last season and is down to 12:05 this season, with eight points in 32 games.

Elite defensemen with term tier

Justin Faulk, D, St. Louis Blues

Dougie Hamilton, D, New Jersey Devils

Rasmus Ristolainen, D, Philadelphia Flyers

The Devils were poised to trade Hamilton before Luke Hughes went down with an injury in late January -- please recall Hamilton being scratched in favor of defenseman Johnathan Kovacevic earlier in the month. With their season all but over and Hughes nearly back, one assumes Hamilton Watch begins again.

He has a 10-team trade list and a \$9 million cap hit that the Devils probably have to keep a portion of to facilitate a deal. (Although he's only owed \$13.65 million in real dollars over the last two years of his contract.) Hamilton isn't the offensive player that he once was, but he could easily fill someone's need for a veteran puck-moving defenseman on their second pairing. One intriguing possibility: a reunion with the Carolina Hurricanes, whom Hamilton left as a free agent in 2021.

Ristolainen might be an alternative to Weegar. The 31-year-old right defenseman has no trade protection and two years left on his deal at \$5.1 million AAV. Anthony Di Marco of Daily Faceoff reports an uptick in interest for the Flyers defenseman during the Olympic break, as he was doing his thing for Team Finland.

Faulk has been in St. Louis for seven seasons. He has two years left at \$6.5 million AAV (with some trade protection), but his front-loaded contract means he's making \$4.5 million in actual dollars this season and next. He has 30 points in 57 games, skating 22:29 per game on average. Three teams to wonder about there: Boston, Detroit and Dallas.

The 25-and-under tier

Brad Lambert, C, Winnipeg Jets

Alexis Lafreniere, LW, New York Rangers

Mason Lohrei, D, Boston Bruins

Pavel Mintyukov, D, Anaheim Ducks

Brennan Othmann, LW, New York Rangers

Nick Robertson, F, Toronto Maple Leafs

Braden Schneider, D, New York Rangers

Jesper Wallstedt, G, Minnesota Wild

Shane Wright, C, Seattle Kraken

Some of these players aren't likely to move unless it's to bring something significant back to their teams. Players such as Lohrei, Wallstedt and Wright -- whose availability has been trumpeted by Nick Kypreos of Sportsnet -- fit that description.

It gets a little more complicated for Lafreniere and Schneider, who could end up being part of the solution for whatever the Rangers' retool produces. Schneider is a restricted free agent this summer -- please recall the team traded defenseman K'Andre Miller last summer before having to do the RFA dance with him. Lafreniere, the first overall pick in 2020 who has yet to find another level in his NHL career, is in the first year of a seven-year extension that carries a friendly cap hit (\$7.45 million AAV) and an eight-team no-trade list. Othmann is also in this boat.

Lambert and Mintyukov have both expressed a desire for a change of scenery. Robertson's tenure has always been tenuous.

The goalie tier

Jordan Binnington, St. Louis Blues

Michael DiPietro, Boston Bruins

Elvis Merzlikins, Columbus Blue Jackets

Sam Montembeault, Montreal Canadiens

Alex Nedeljkovic, San Jose Sharks

Stuart Skinner, Pittsburgh Penguins

Think about this: Canada lost in the gold medal game to the United States -- and no one was saying it was Jordan Binnington's fault? Not many would have predicted that, given all the hand-wringing over the Canadian goaltending depth and Binnington's putrid season in the NHL, where Money Puck had him at minus-24.9 goals saved above expected in 32 games.

He's a big-game goalie. The Blues won't be playing any of those this season. But teams like the Hurricanes, Oilers, Golden Knights, Canadiens and Ducks all might. Binnington has a 14-team no-trade list and a \$6 million AAV. He has one more year on his deal after this one, with his salary dropping to just \$4.5 million.

Montembeault could move in a trade and has one more year on his contract. Nedeljkovic is a pending UFA for the Sharks and makes \$2.5 million.

One of the most interesting names here: Skinner, whom the Penguins acquired from the Oilers in the Tristan Jarry swap. Does Pittsburgh keep him around for their playoff push or do they trade the pending UFA, hoping that his extensive playoff experience outweighs other concerns for acquiring teams?

Help up front tier

Paul Cotter, F, New Jersey Devils

Ryan Hartman, C, Minnesota Wild

Erik Haula, C, Nashville Predators

Calle Jarnkrok, F, Toronto Maple Leafs

Jesper Kotkaniemi, C, Carolina Hurricanes

Matias Maccelli, F, Toronto Maple Leafs

Ilya Mikheyev, LW, Chicago Blackhawks

Gustav Nyquist, F, Winnipeg Jets

Evan Rodrigues, C, Florida Panthers

Yegor Sharangovich, F, Calgary Flames

Eeli Tolvanen, F, Seattle Kraken

Three players in particular getting buzz lately:

Haula had an outstanding Olympic tournament for Finland, with three goals and three assists in six games, including a big one against Canada in the semifinal. The 34-year-old has a six-team no-trade list and can be a boon to someone's bottom-six forward group.

Rodrigues was a solid player on the Panthers' back-to-back Stanley Cup winning teams. He has no-trade protection and a \$3 million AAV through next season. Sportsnet speculated that the veteran forward could be moved so Florida can create cap space, should the Panthers believe they still have a shot at the playoffs this season.

Help on the blue line tier

Brandon Carlo, Toronto Maple Leafs

Ian Cole, Utah Mammoth



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Mario Ferraro, San Jose Sharks

John Klingberg, San Jose Sharks

Timothy Liljegren, San Jose Sharks

Jamie Oleksiak, Seattle Kraken

Luke Schenn, Winnipeg Jets

Brady Skjei, Nashville Predators

Zach Whitecloud, Calgary Flames

It wouldn't be a proper trade deadline if Schenn's name wasn't floated. The 18-year NHL veteran has played for nine teams in his career, including five since 2021, because he's a quintessential defensive defenseman with two Stanley Cup rings from the Lightning.

Another strong defensive defenseman is Carlo, whom the Maple Leafs acquired last trade deadline when ... well, when Toronto was in a different mode of contention. Carlo has an eight-team no-trade list with a \$3.485 million AAV through next season. They've checked the market on him.

Ferraro used to be in our elite tier until enough people told us that was a misclassification. He's likely to remain in San Jose, but he's a pending free agent with a \$3.25 million cap hit.

One more defenseman to WATCH: Whitecloud, whom Calgary acquired from Vegas in the Rasmus Andersson deal. There's probably a market for a 29-year-old right-shot defenseman with a Stanley Cup ring and a \$2.75 million AAV through 2027-28 if the Flames want to explore it.

Bargain-beauty contracts tier

Simon Benoit, D, Toronto Maple Leafs

Teddy Blueger, C, Vancouver Canucks

Erik Gustafsson, D, Detroit Red Wings

David Kampf, C, Vancouver Canucks

Scott Laughton, C, Toronto Maple Leafs

Ryan Lomberg, LW, Calgary Flames

Bobby McMann, F, Toronto Maple Leafs

Lukas Reichel, LW, Vancouver Canucks

Logan Stanley, D, Winnipeg Jets

Kevin Stenlund, C, Utah Mammoth

Oskar Sundqvist, C, St. Louis Blues

All the players in this tier make \$2 million against the cap or less. Their king, Kiefer Sherwood, was traded earlier this season by the Canucks. But Vancouver has three more low-AAV forwards to offer up at the deadline: Blueger (\$1.8 million), Kampf (\$1.1 million) and Reichel (\$1.2 million), who is buried in the AHL but played well for Germany in the Olympics.

The Leafs have three interesting options, too. Laughton was sought after last trade deadline for having a low cap hit (\$1.5 million) with term; now, he's got a low cap hit with an expiring contract. Benoit is a big, physical defenseman who is signed through next season at a \$1.35 AAV. But it's McMann who has gotten the most attention. The late bloomer (age 29) is on the verge of a second straight 20-goal season. The versatile forward makes just \$1.35 million on an expiring contract. That could help a contender.

And there are so many contenders right now. But as the tiers above indicate, there is plenty of supply to meet their demand.

ESPN LOADED: 03.06.2026

1381891 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Trade Deadline Thoughts: Could Leafs be persuaded to move Matthew Knies?

Elliott Friedman

Quickie blog with the NHL's trade deadline less than 24 hours away:

- Toronto is all about adding assets. Young players, prospects, picks. You name it, they want to hear about it. There aren't a ton in the system, so they want to accumulate. Then, they can start figuring out their future — maybe use what they get to chase bigger fish.

The chances of Auston Matthews getting traded now are equal to John Blatarsky's grade-point average. William Nylander and John Tavares aren't going anywhere. I heard some Matthew Knies, and that, to me, is the Maple Leafs seeing if there's a massive offer they can't turn down. That is the only way I see it happening.

- If not a first for Bobby McMann (and contenders are running out of them to trade), then Toronto would consider two seconds, which is what Vancouver got for Kiefer Sherwood.

- Prior to trading for Nicolas Roy, Colorado and Calgary did discuss Nazem Kadri. I have to assume the same picks Toronto received (a first and a fifth) were available, and there was an understanding of some level of retention. Never got over the finish line.

- Kadri has stuck to his no-trade list, so far.

- One of Thursday's bigger stories was Colton Parayko declining to waive his no-trade for Buffalo. That's his right. Blues GM Doug Armstrong spoke to his leadership group; told them he's trying to make changes. He let them know they might be asked, so they'd be mentally prepared. It's hard to know exactly — there are always semantics — but I do not believe Parayko's trade is the only one that has been vetoed. That, or players have indicated there are certain teams they will not go to. But the Blues have not given up, and continue to work at things — including Jordan Binnington, Justin Faulk and Jordan Kyrou.

- I believed Utah was the best match for Robert Thomas, but so far they have balked at the ask. It's poker. Detroit is believed to be in there, too.

- Detroit was also involved in conversations about Vincent Trocheck, as is Carolina. (There are always teams I don't see coming.)

- I am not expecting the Mammoth to trade Nick Schmaltz. I've heard there's been positive movement in contract negotiations, and chances are dropping he reaches free agency.

- New Jersey made all defencemen available besides Luke Hughes and Brett Pesce. Simon Nemeč switched agents, always a bad sign for an incumbent. That's one reason he's out there.

- Quiet on Elias Pettersson. Interest in Teddy Blueger. Not a coincidence Jesperi Kotkaniemi was back in the Carolina lineup on Wednesday night, but not convinced the Canucks will do it. (This would not be a Pettersson deal.)

- Ryan O'Reilly continues to express his desire to stay in Nashville. (He has a verbal no move.) As of earlier Thursday, it was quiet around Steven Stamkos — although I am terrified of absolute proclamations around this time. I do believe there are serious efforts to find Jonathan Marchessault a new home.

- Vegas is always a stealth team, but another one could be Anaheim. Ducks are interested in wingers, for sure.



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• Seattle has interest in Florida's Mackie Samoskevich. Good young player, but Panthers will make them pay a high price. Shane Wright wouldn't move in that trade, but they continue to discuss him for either an elite scorer or a younger talent that needs a change. (Just me, but does Wright for Kent Johnson make any sense? Would reunite Johnson with college buddy Matt Beniers.)

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 03.06.2026

1381892 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / What to expect from every team at 2026 NHL trade deadline

Rory Boylen 40-51 minutes 3/5/2026

The NHL trade deadline is upon us and after a slow start to the week deals are starting to roll in and set the tone for what we'll see on Friday.

The Toronto Maple Leafs have started to be a seller, sending Nicolas Roy to Colorado. Utah, anticipated to be a big-time buyer, has brought in MacKenzie Weegar, but are now on the prowl for a scoring forward.

And some of the biggest action hasn't unfolded yet.

Vancouver, the N.Y. Rangers and St. Louis haven't moved out some of the bigger names who are still rumoured to be available. Montreal and Detroit haven't yet made any big moves that might change the picture in a crowded Atlantic Division race. And then you have teams like Seattle, Carolina, Anaheim and Dallas who are the wild cards that could be the story of the day, or remain generally quiet.

And, of course, there's always a chance that a team we don't see coming dives into the blockbuster pool.

The rumours are picking up and the time is running thin. Teams have until Friday at 3:00 p.m. ET to decide what they're going to do with their rosters this season.

Here, we give you an outlook for everyone, with cap space, possible trade candidates and needs. We'll show you what Sportsnet's Elliott Friedman has said about some of these teams on the 32 Thoughts Podcast, anything the team's GM has said recently, and a general overview of everyone's situation.

All cap numbers and draft-pick information come via PuckPedia. You will notice some very high "deadline day cap space" totals in some places. That's because, if a team has been under the cap, it accumulates space, and the longer it does this the more room it'll have to play with at the trade deadline.

At this time of year, a traded player is paid the remaining percentage of his salary by the acquiring team, and the remaining cap charge is actually added to its total — the former team has paid everything up until this point. But, to make it simple when looking at the salary-cap charts, what the "deadline day cap space" number shows is simply the full, season-long AAV a team can add on March 6.

And there are two other important wrinkles new to this year's deadline. First is the "projected playoff cap space" which you can see on every team's page at PuckPedia. New rules this season demand every team be cap compliant in the playoffs with the 20 players they dress for any given game. No longer can you take advantage of regular season LTIR to then return everyone healthy and ice a playoff roster that's over the cap.

The rules on salary retention have also changed. Teams can still keep up to 50 per cent of a cap hit, but you won't see any double retention trades that involve a third team on Friday. That's because it's required that 75

days must pass between deals where a salary is retained, so for someone to have had double retention at this deadline, they would first have had to have been traded by Dec. 2.

How much will these two new CBA rules impact the 2026 trade deadline? We're about to find out.

To get you ready for the action ahead, here is our trade deadline primer, with an overview of each NHL team.

ANAHEIM DUCKS

Status: Buyer

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$44.43 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Right-shot defenceman, backup goalie, scoring forward with term, defensive forward

Potentially Available: Ryan Strome, Frank Vatrano, picks

What the GM said: "I'm not sure at this point. I think there's a lot of avenues we can go down, but I'm not 100 per cent committed to doing anything, not 100 per cent committed to not trying to do something." - Pat Verbeek on Jan. 27.

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "Verbeek is a tough one to read. I heard he made a non-extension pitch at Panarin, I heard he liked Whitecloud, mindful of big contracts."

Outlook: Three wins upon returning from the Olympic break extended the Ducks' winning streak to five, though they did lose the next two. Still, with help from Edmonton and Vegas struggling around them, Anaheim is second in the Pacific with a real shot at the regular season division title. The goal heading into this season was playoffs, and that's looking more likely with each passing day. Their weakness is team defence. Anaheim is 31st in the league in GAA and 28th in expected goals against at 5-on-5, putting immense pressure on Lukas Dostal. So, their top priority may be to add at the edges of the roster to improve defensive responsibility.

They are transitioning from a rebuild into a winning window, and have tons of assets and cap space, so we can't rule out the possibility that they are a surprise actor. However, keep in mind, big extensions are due to Cutter Gauthier and Leo Carlsson this summer, while Jackson LaCombe begins his \$9 million AAV contract next season. They have less cap space to work with than it seems.

BOSTON BRUINS

Status: Small-time buyer

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$5.069 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Right shot defenceman, maybe a forward

Potentially Available: Viktor Arvidsson, Andrew Peeke, draft picks

What the GM said: "In all likelihood it'll be a little different than last year. Not necessarily as aggressive and active, but we would like to continue to improve our hockey club if possible...We'd like to give them a bump because they've earned that. But it's an eye towards obviously this year, but moving forward as well." - Don Sweeney on March 2.

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "We know they tried Rasmus Andersson, so I could still see them being on the D market. I've heard they want to add a forward if they can."

Outlook: This time last season the Bruins were retooling at the deadline and brought in a couple of first-round draft picks and Fraser Minten, who is off to a great start in his NHL career. They're back in the playoff hunt, hanging on to the East's second wild-card spot, but not all the way back



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as a contender. Boston gets to the deadline perhaps looking to round out its blue line, or add some depth to its forwards, but we shouldn't expect them to spend any big assets on a rental player. The long-term view is still in mind here. James Hagens may yet be on this roster when Boston College's season ends. If an impactful player with term could be had, maybe then we'll see Sweeney push in some of his chips, but since the playoffs are far from a guarantee, it's more likely that Boston will be looking to add at the edges.

BUFFALO SABRES

Status: Intriguing buyer

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$5.08 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Physical and defensive defenceman, top-nine forward

Potentially Available: Draft picks, prospects, Alex Tuch, Josh Norris, Owen Power

What the GM has said: "We want to make our team stronger. We have a lot of skill on our team, a lot of ability to score. Really good defence, our goalies have played well this year, so we have a lot of strengths but we want to make them stronger. We're looking at all the avenues to do that whether it's a role player or somebody who has some special skills we need. We haven't been great in the face-offs. We're talking." - Jarmo Kekalainen on Feb. 25.

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "I'm actually really interested in Buffalo. This is going to be a really interesting deadline for them because they're going and they look good."

Outlook: It's been a long time since the Sabres were a trade deadline buyer to watch, but here we are. Since Dec. 1, Buffalo is 26-8-2 with a .743 points percentage that is tops in the NHL over that timespan. They are rolling and don't need to mess much with what's got them here, but we can't rule out a blockbuster. New GM Jarmo Kekalainen can put his stamp on Kevyn Adams' team by adding something significant like Robert Thomas, and he's got a reputation of being a bold manager.

He already tried to add Colton Parayko from the Blues, but the player rejected the move with his no-trade clause. So now Buffalo looks at other options. Reuniting with Rasmus Ristolainen might be a possibility. Kekalainen may also look to pick up a forward to play on the second or third line, someone with a little quickness and a strong forechecker. Alex Tuch is still unsigned, which makes him a possibility to get traded, but keeping him as an own-rental probably makes the most sense. Buffalo can snap the NHL's longest playoff drought, and may also make some noise this post-season.

CALGARY FLAMES

Status: Sellers

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$47.083 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Draft picks, prospects, young NHL-ready players

Potentially Available: Nazem Kadri, Zach Whitecloud, Blake Coleman, Devin Cooley, Ryan Lomberg

What the GM has said: "We have to do what's best for the organization. If that's making a move like today with (MacKenzie Weegar) or if it's just not there we can't force things that aren't there. I know people just want to do stuff we have to do things with a purpose and that we think will make us better in the next few years. We'll be fielding calls and see where teams are at and if it makes sense we'll look hard at it." - Craig Conroy on March 4.

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "The biggest challenge I think the Flames will have is that all of their guys have competition. I think people love Kadri the player, I'm not sure they're crazy about the term and also there's other centres available. People like Coleman, people like Weegar, but there are other players around then. And Conroy has shown he's not afraid to be patient."

Outlook: The Flames are deep in a rebuild with plenty of veterans they could trade, but since every one of them (with the exception of Ryan Lomberg) have term on their contracts, GM Craig Conroy doesn't have to be overly active at the deadline. Still, the goal here should be to accumulate future assets and take advantage of the value some of their early-to-mid-30s players still have. With a new arena opening in 2027-28, Calgary will be trying to position itself to be on the upswing again by then. Calgary has one unused salary retention slot remaining, will they use it to help beef up someone's trade return?

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Status: Buyer, blockbuster potential

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$40.349 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Forwards, possibly another goalie

Potentially Available: Jesperi Kotkaniemi, draft picks and prospects

What the GM said: You never know what's going to happen; it takes both sides. It's hard to control the market. But, we are shopping very aggressively, trying to find ways to bring in the pieces that will help us take steps forward." - Eric Tulsky on Feb. 12.

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "Always looking to add."

Outlook: Over the past two seasons Tulsky has made big trades for Jake Guentzel and Mikko Rantanen in the final season of their deals, but neither stuck around with the Hurricanes. While Guentzel walked, Rantanen was flipped again and so you can see a pattern of big-game hunting Carolina might continue pursuing in 2026. In the playoffs, it often comes down to scoring for the Hurricanes, so maybe they'll be a surprise landing spot for Robert Thomas in a true blockbuster. Or perhaps they'll look to re-acquire Vincent Trocheck in a move that would require fewer assets going the other way, but comes with long-term, age-related concerns about the player. Their Cup window is wide open and the Eastern Conference is there for the taking. Carolina will add, but will they be the biggest dealer of deadline day?

COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS

Status: Leaning buyer, could stay quiet

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$40.48 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Depth, experience, leadership.

Potentially Available: Elvis Merzlikins, Charlie Coyle, Boone Jenner, Danton Heinen

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "I know they've got some UFAs everybody's kind of wondered about. I think there it's they want to make the playoffs, or try to."

Outlook: A 13-2-1 run since mid-January makes Columbus one of the NHL's hottest teams for the past two months, and they're in the middle of a playoff race behind Boston now. They have two more games ahead against the Bruins as well, so the Blue Jackets figure to be in this thing until the end. With the playoffs such an uncertainty, the Blue Jackets aren't likely to be the biggest spender at this deadline. Instead, they may elect to keep their pending UFAs, such as Coyle, Jenner and Mason Marchment, instead of offloading them.



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CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS

Status: Seller

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$61.483 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Young NHL players or players on the cusp of the NHL

Potentially Available: Ilya Mikheyev, Nick Foligno, Sam Lafferty, Matt Grzelcyk, Kevin Korhinski

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "I've heard they've got Mikheyev out there. I think they tried to sign him at one point."

Outlook: Chicago hoped to be in the same boat as San Jose and Anaheim at this point in the season, turning the corner out of a rebuild, hanging in the playoff race, and looking to add to their group. But losing nine of their past 11 games killed those chances, and so now the Blackhawks will be looking to keep stocking up and reset for next season. Outside of veterans on expiring contracts, one young name that surfaces in rumours is Kevin Korhinski, the seventh-overall pick of the 2022 draft. In the games he has played, ice time has been limited and so the Hawks may look to go in a new direction and move the young, left-handed defender. Will the value be worth it, though?

COLORADO AVALANCHE

Status: Buyer

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$6.94 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Winger, maybe another centre

Potentially Available: Draft picks

What the GM said: "We're going to leave no stone unturned, like we usually do, if it makes sense," MacFarland said. "We've got some cap space to play with, and we'll see if there's the right fit. It's got to make sense from the asset acquisition cost, but if we can improve the team, we'd like to try to do that." - Chris MacFarland on March 3.

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "I do think Colorado's looking at a centre. I don't know if they can pull out one of the big ones, like a Trocheck, and I don't know where they fit on the map for Trocheck — he doesn't want to go far west — but I think they're looking at that group of centres and they'd like to do something. But their cap situation and also, what do they have to move especially after all they did to get Brock Nelson last year?"

Outlook: Last year the Avalanche acquired two centres ahead of the deadline, Brock Nelson and Charlie Coyle. Nelson is still with the team and having a heckuva season, while Coyle was traded to Columbus in the off-season. Colorado added the third-line centre it needed on Thursday by bringing in Nicolas Roy. That was their most glaring need, so they may be done. Aside from that, the Avs already addressed some depth on the back end by bringing in Brett Kulak. Artturi Lehkonen was injured Tuesday night, so that could lead the Avs to also be on the lookout for a scoring bump on the wing.

DALLAS STARS

Status: Buyer

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$1.96 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Centre

Potentially Available: Futures

What the GM said: "I don't see us doing a big splash. First of all, the salary cap still comes into play more than ever, not only for this year, but

for next year. I've got some very good players, and very good players eventually make big money." - Jim Nill on March 1.

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "They don't like the idea of (adding players with) term until they sort out Jason Robertson."

Outlook: They officially shut down Tyler Seguin for the regular season and playoffs, and so get the maximum space allowable under the new LTIR rules. That will push them into the centre market, where there is plenty to choose from. The Stars will try and hold out for any prices to drop. With Robertson's RFA situation hanging over the team, it's unlikely they'd be in on a centre with a heavy contract and lots of term (like Nazem Kadri) so look for something shorter. All Cup contenders like adding defensive depth at this time of year, and Dallas went out and got theirs with the Tyler Myers trade.

DETROIT RED WINGS

Status: Buyer, potential for a blockbuster

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$55.43 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Centre, defence

Potentially Available: Draft picks and prospects

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "I've wondered about Trocheck for them."

Outlook: Is the Yzerplan finally coming together? Detroit is seven points into a playoff spot and just three points behind Tampa Bay for the division lead, but they are 11th in the East with a minus-2 goal differential. Their most glaring need is at centre, where Andrew Copp and Marco Kasper fill the middle-six role and this is where Yzerman may push in some of his chips. Detroit has been linked to Elias Pettersson and Robert Thomas, among others, in rumours so the potential to go big is there. Last season Yzerman only added Petr Mrazek in a quiet deadline season, and Dylan Larkin voiced his disappointment the front office didn't give the team more help. This time, the sense is the Wings will be active.

EDMONTON OILERS

Status: Buyer

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$475,000

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Depth defence, goalie

Potentially Available: Alec Regula, Ike Howard, picks, prospects

Outlook: Edmonton thought it was addressing one of its needs earlier this season when it traded for Tristan Jarry, but he has not stabilized the goaltending and, in fact, has been second-best on the team behind Connor Ingram. If Game 1 of the playoffs were today, smart money would be on Ingram being the starter. Does that mean Edmonton will be looking to add another goaltender? There are a few out there, but the sense is the Oilers already made this bed and have to spend the remaining hours of trading filling in other needs.

With Connor Murphy acquired from Chicago this week, the immediate need for a defenceman is over, though they may still add someone for further down the depth chart. Attention turned to a bottom-six centre, and Jason Dickinson was acquired on Wednesday to fill that role. Andrew Mangiapane was dealt, but Edmonton had to attach a first-round pick to do it. Some mistakes have been made to force them into that scenario, and now it has to pay off with a Cup.

FLORIDA PANTHERS

Status: Seller



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Deadline Day Cap Space: \$2.187 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Accumulate assets to help next season's roster

Potentially Available: Sergei Bobrovsky, Daniil Tarasov, A.J. Greer, Tomas Nosek

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "I can't get a good handle on this Bobrovsky situation. The one thing I've been waiting for in Florida is do they wave the white flag and do guys get shut down? I think they wanted to see if they could make a charge in a week."

Outlook: Well, well, well, the Panthers surely didn't expect to be here. A post-Olympics bump has not happened and now Florida is among the bottom-10 teams in the league — if they end up with a top-10 pick after the lottery, they will keep it this year and send their 2027 unprotected pick to Chicago to complete the Seth Jones deal. That seems like the best-case scenario for the back-to-back champs.

They'll look to offload their pending UFAs for assets that they can later use to improve next year's roster, because they certainly have designs of returning as a contender in 2026-27. The mystery here is Bobrovsky. The 37-year-old pending UFA is wrapping up a contract that paid \$10 million AAV and so while a payout is in order, how much that should be might get complicated. If no extension is reached by Friday, it's possible he could be moved, though it will be tricky given he's not had a great season. Florida signed AHL goalie Louis Domingue to a two-way contract for the rest of this season on Wednesday, raising eyebrows that they may be preparing for one of their NHL goalies to depart by week's end. Bobrovsky only has partial trade protection.

LOS ANGELES KINGS

Status: Neutral, leaning buyer

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$18.158 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Centre, puck distributor

Potentially Available: Corey Perry, futures

What the GM said: "I'll work the phones. 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." - Ken Holland on March 1.

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "I do think Holland's gone pretty hard after Trocheck and I've heard Trocheck's preference is to stay east, although it's not locked in. I think Holland badly wants to add someone who can get his scorers the puck and Fiala's a big loss...I don't know if it's going to be so simple for them to trade their way out of this one."

Outlook: Since trading for Artemi Panarin the Kings have won a single game and lost top-line winger Kevin Fiala for the rest of the season. Not how Ken Holland planned for this to go. Los Angeles is now an unlikely playoff team, with their chances down to around 25 per cent. The cap space and draft picks are there to still add, and maybe the Kings do dabble as a pot-committed buyer. Time may be better spent thinking ahead a year.

MINNESOTA WILD

Status: Buyer

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$11.252 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Centre

Potentially Available: Futures

What the GM said: "I always like to be confident, but you just don't know. It's a crazy time. You might think you have something and you don't, and you might think you're done and something big comes across your desk. We're continuing to try and improve the team and help. We'll see at what level we can do that." - Bill Guerin on March 3.

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "Bill Guerin, he talked about it when he made the Quinn Hughes trade, he comes in with his offer and is like 'this is my offer.' I think he's done that with the Rangers (on Vincent Trocheck)."

Outlook: This might be the best team the Wild have ever iced and that makes them a Stanley Cup contender. But their path is as tough as it can get. Minnesota is a top four team in the NHL, but are third place in the Central Division and might have to go through both Colorado and Dallas just to get to the conference final. The Quinn Hughes blockbuster trade in December is the biggest move anyone will make this season. A perfect trade season would culminate in the Wild now acquiring a centre.

MONTREAL CANADIENS

Status: Buyer, blockbuster potential

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$1.49 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Second-line centre, top-four defenceman, possibly a goalie

Potentially Available: Patrik Laine, Jayden Struble, Oliver Kapanen, Zach Bolduc, Alexandre Texier

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "I don't see them being in the big rental game. I think Montreal is a gatherer. Give us somebody who will be around for a while. Somebody who's going to be part of our group. Maybe a middling rental if they had to. But someone who will grow with the rest of them."

Outlook: It feels like the Stanley Cup window is opening for Montreal and though some of their core players still have their peak years ahead of them, the Eastern Conference is so wide open that Montreal could position itself for a run. The timing might even be perfect for them to make a big swing, so the Canadiens should be included in a pool of teams (with Utah, Detroit, and Buffalo) that could pull off a blockbuster.

NASHVILLE PREDATORS

Status: Neutral

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$34.358 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Young players, picks

Potentially Available: Steven Stamkos, Jonathan Marchessault, Erik Haula, Ryan O'Reilly

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "I've had people say to me O'Reilly's not going to move, I've had others say 50-50. I don't know what to make of it. Also you've got a new owner now who's starting to go public a bit, I think it's hard when you're a new owner and the team makes a charge for the playoffs, to wave the white flag."

Outlook: At one point this season the Predators looked like sure sellers who had a few big-name veterans on the block. But as their season turned around the their playoff chances improved, now they are in a more neutral position. Yes, the Predators still want to get some younger bodies into the organization and so they'll be more a seller than a buyer. So far that has meant trading away Michael McCarron and Cole Smith. Another UFA or two might follow, but it now seems less likely they'll move Stamkos, Marchessault or O'Reilly — but we can't rule it out. The Predators are still in a playoff race and none of these players are on expiring contracts. Bigger changes can be saved for another day.



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NEW JERSEY DEVILS

Status: Seller

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$2.935 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: A re-tool

Potentially Available: Dougie Hamilton, Simon Nemeč, Nick Bjugstad, Brenden Dillon

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "I think they have some of their D out there. Not Luke Hughes. I don't know about (Simon Nemeč). I don't think Pesce. Maybe some of the other D."

Outlook: New Jersey has had an up-and-down few seasons and as promising as 2025-26 started, it will end on a down note and well out of the playoffs. This was a first-place team in their division at American Thanksgiving and now they're well-placed to pick a top prospect early in this draft. They could undergo some kind of shake up, though Luke Glendening is the only regular starter on an expiring UFA contract, and he hasn't scored a goal all season.

NEW YORK ISLANDERS

Status: Buyer

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$6.021 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Top-six forward

Potentially Available: Futures, a cap hit

What the GM said: "I'd love to get another scorer, but everyone does, they don't grow on trees. And the ones that have them don't want to get rid of them. Easier said than done. I have two first round picks, I have no problem moving one of them for a player that makes sense. Not just for this year, but for a few years going forward." - Mathieu Darche on Feb. 18.

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "The Islanders have a lot of bodies. And I think they want to reward their guys. They've having a magic season."

Outlook: With the East wide open for the taking and since Ilya Sorokin is having a marvellous season, the Islanders may see this as an opportunity for some aggression. Some rumours have linked them to Jordan Kyrou and/or Robert Thomas out of St. Louis. Sitting 21st in goals per game and 31st in power-play percentage, the Isles would do well to add a big point producer like either of those guys. If they use up a lot of assets to bring one in, expect that player to have term.

NEW YORK RANGERS

Status: Declared seller

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$9.71 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Draft picks, prospects, new young players

Potentially Available: Vincent Trocheck, Alexis Lafreniere, Adam Fox, Braden Schneider, Taylor Raddysh, Conor Sheary

Outlook: Ever since The Letter, Part II came out earlier this season, the Rangers declared their intention to retool and that started by sending Artemi Panarin to the Kings before the Olympic break. That's not going to be the end of it though. Trocheck is likely to follow and might be the most likely centre to move of the many that have come up in rumours. From there, we'll see what sort of offers the Rangers get. Schneider, a young defenceman, has been on Nick Kypreos' trade board for some time. If the Rangers want to go really big, Fox could become the surprise of the day

following some comments he recently made about the team's struggles and how he sees the future. However, that is likely a conversation for another day.

OTTAWA SENATORS

Status: Buyer

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$13.08 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Top-four right-shot D, scoring forward

Potentially Available: Carter Yakemchuk, Ridly Greig, Fabian Zetterlund

What the GM said: "At this point in time typically when you look at where you are in the standings you say well maybe it's better to prepare for next season, but that hasn't been my approach. I'm looking for every opportunity to try and help this team with anything I can do." - Steve Staios on March 4.

Outlook: Lots of the Atlantic Division's rebuilding teams have taken steps forward this season. But while Montreal, Buffalo and Detroit are all in playoff positions, the Senators are going to have to come from behind and are right now six points out of the wild card. Better goaltending from Linus Ullmark would go a long way in getting them there, but some work at the deadline from GM Steve Staios would help. The Sens were reportedly in on MacKenzie Weegar before he was dealt to Utah, but it's that type of defenceman they need most. Some help in the middle of the forward lineup could be useful as well, since the Senators might need to outscore some of their goaltending concerns.

PHILADELPHIA FLYERS

Status: Seller

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$31.315 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Core player to push forward with, futures

Potentially Available: Owen Tippett, Rasmus Ristolainen, Trevor Zegras, Bobby Brink

What the GM said: "You know, what matters for us is obviously the future. We're still building for the future." - Daniel Briere on March 3.

Outlook: Six points out of the playoffs, perhaps the Flyers still have a chance to make a race out of this, but a more realistic approach might be to take a step back, acquire assets, and try to return better next season. Kevin Kurz of The Athletic reported the Flyers had checked in on Robert Thomas with St. Louis, but that the price was much too high for their tastes.

The top trade candidate they have is Ristolainen, a big, top-four defenceman who has another season left on his contract. As defencemen start to get moved, however, the market might be shrinking for this player and the Flyers could always run it back with him and explore moving him as a rental in 2027. There is also a logjam of wingers in the organization. This isn't something they have to deal with now, but the possibility exists. Tippett is on Nick Kypreos' trade board and doesn't necessarily have to go to a contender — he could be the source of a hockey trade with anyone. Tippett doesn't have any trade protection for now, but a partial clause is introduced to his contract after this season.

PITTSBURGH PENGUINS

Status: Buyer

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$49.325 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Middle-six centre, right shot defenceman



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Potentially Available: Stuart Skinner, Ryan Graves, Kevin Hayes, Sam Girard

What the GM said: "In terms of acquisitions, I think where we look is both up front and on defence. I think the ideal acquisition for us will be a player that's in their 20s, closer to their mid-20s, that has some team control. Either they're signed, or they are a pending restricted free agent, where they're not a rental. That said, if we get closer to Friday and there's a chance to add to the team with someone who is a rental, we could look at that, too." - Kyle Dubas on March 4.

Outlook: Few would have predicted the Penguins would be in this position, but as they sit second place in the Metropolitan Division, GM Kyle Dubas could help his roster. Without Sidney Crosby, hurt during the Olympics, the Penguins have earned five of a possible eight points, so they're staying afloat without their captain, who will still be out a few weeks. Not upgrading this roster in any way might put the Penguins in danger of slipping behind the chasing teams who might be buyers at this deadline. They are only in a playoff spot by five points, with Columbus pushing hard. Dubas has done well to start restocking the prospect pipeline and adding draft picks. He'll want to keep most of that for the years ahead, but there are an abundance of assets to pull from if they can find the right upgrade.

SEATTLE KRAKEN

Status: Buyer, blockbuster potential

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$22.066 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Scoring

Potentially Available: Shane Wright, draft picks, prospects

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "I don't think they've given up on a big offensive player or somebody who juices their lineup offensively. And that's Shane Wright to me and we'll see where that goes."

Outlook: The Kraken made a big attempt to get, and sign, Artemi Panarin but that didn't come to pass. We shouldn't expect them to quit there. The Kraken have a real shot of getting back to the playoffs, either through the wild card, or in a top-three spot in a weak Pacific Division. However, among any team in a playoff spot right now, the Kraken struggle to score the most and it's been an area of need for years now. They won't want to just make it and be overwhelmed by more skilled teams — the Kraken are a motivated buyer to try and get some winning momentum in their young NHL market. This is not a team that tends to act boldly — will that change now?

SAN JOSE SHARKS

Status: Small buyer

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$614,345

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Defensive defenceman, preferably with term

Potentially Available: Mario Ferraro, John Klingberg, Timothy Liljegren, some futures

Outlook: A three-game winning streak has the Sharks back in the hunt, three points out of the wild card with two games in hand of both Utah and Seattle. A leaky defence and a still-maturing goalie are two things that probably will hold San Jose back from making any real noise in the playoffs if they did get there, so while this season has been a big step forward for the group, GM Mike Grier is probably not ready to get very aggressive. You might say he already made his big move by acquiring, then signing, Kiefer Sherwood.

Still, Grier only has one NHL defenceman under contract for next season and that is an area of the roster that needs improvement. The long-term view is still important here, but if a helpful player can be added without a significant cost to the future, the Sharks could be a player.

ST. LOUIS BLUES

Status: Possibly the biggest seller of the day

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$2.574 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Futures, young players, re-tool

Potentially Available: Robert Thomas, Colton Parayko, Jordan Binnington, Jordan Kyrou, Justin Faulk, Brayden Schenn

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "Everybody knows they've been out there for a while but the prices are big. The price for Thomas is very high, either a younger player than Thomas who's a potential 1C or a Quinn Hughes-type deal. I think the price on Kyrou is high. The price on Faulk is the Rasmus Andersson trade. There's been talk of Binnington. I think they'd consider just about anything but the price is high."

Outlook: There are many rumours floating around the Blues, but we should be cautious for a few reasons. First is that we've heard this about them before. GM Doug Armstrong put his group on notice last season too, but they turned it around and made the playoffs so no significant shift happened. This time playoffs won't be part of the equation. Second, the asking prices for these players is enormous and since none of them are on expiring deals, the Blues could wait it out and try again in the summer. A Parayko deal to Buffalo nearly happened. Will the Blues be a source of a deadline day blockbuster...or two?

TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING

Status: Quiet buyer

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$2.207 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Winger, depth defenceman

Potentially Available: Depth player, futures

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "They don't have a lot of holes there. I'm beginning to wonder if they almost just say this is our team and we're pretty good."

Outlook: The Lightning have limited cap space, no glaring holes, and they aren't overloaded with picks or prospects so they could stand pat. However, that's not to say they have nothing to trade. They have all of their second- and third-round picks, Sam O'Reilly is a first-round pick having a good OHL season, so it's possible they could find a move. They will be the team to beat in the Eastern Conference though so, at the very least, we should maybe look for the Lightning to bring in depth.

TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS

Status: Sellers

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$7.183 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Draft picks, prospects, young NHL players

Potentially Available: Scott Laughton, Anthony Stolarz, Matthew Knies, Bobby McMann, Oliver Ekman-Larsson, Max Domi, Calle Jarnkrok, Matias Maccelli, Brandon Carlo, Morgan Rielly

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "I think the Maple Leafs are asking themselves some questions here. And that is: Is this a one year thing? Do we have to consider doing more than we thought we were going to



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do? Can we turn it around a little quicker like Boston has? I think right before the Olympics they were like 'OK this is not going to be our year and let's talk about the UFAs.' And now it's 'this is not going to be our year and it's really not our year' and you get to a point where you almost say 'let's just say to teams talk to us about our guys.' I do think Toronto wants to know what the market is for their guys."

Outlook: We have to wonder if the best years of the Auston Matthews era are over in Toronto. The longest active playoff streak is set to come to an end this season and now the Leafs have to think about the ramifications. No doubt they'll have designs of getting back to the playoffs next season, but that's going to take a lot of work on the NHL roster. Nicolas Roy has already been moved for a first-round pick, which is either a starting point to a re-tool, or a flippable asset in the summer for a more immediate need. Expect more of that heading into the deadline. The Leafs could be one of the more active teams towards the deadline, but the bigger questions about the future of this group will come in the summer.

UTAH MAMMOTH

Status: Potential big-time buyer

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$24.813 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: A star forward under contract

Potentially Available: Any combination of picks and prospects

What the GM said: "When we're acquiring someone we're looking at age, we're looking at length of contract, and can they move with the club. We're not at the point where we're risking it all for rentals to come in. We're a lot the same, but probably a little more aggressive. Each year we go by, our team becomes a little more cemented in and you can kinda go after what your needs are. Our best team is not here yet. There's still more young prospects to come in and play." - Bill Armstrong on March 4.

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "I think they were around on Panarin and made a serious pitch so I look for them to add, or at least try to."

Outlook: After years of struggle to just stay afloat in Arizona, the Utah Mammoth can now change the trajectory of their team with a big trade deadline. No team has made more draft picks in recent years, so GM Bill Armstrong is flush with tradeable assets that could bring immediate improvement to this team. They already made a big trade for MacKenzie Weegar, adding a needed top-four defenceman. Now they could go for a big forward and have been one of the teams linked to Robert Thomas. Can they get it done in time to help this year's playoff push?

VANCOUVER CANUCKS

Status: Seller

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$11.82 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Futures

Potentially Available: Elias Pettersson, Jake DeBrusk, Brock Boeser, Evander Kane, Teddy Blueger, David Kampf

What the GM said: "Could be busier leading up to the draft for sure. Have in mind what we did earlier. I think we did a couple big moves here and probably didn't help other teams by setting the market so high. They definitely could be something we'll be looking at in the summertime too leading up to the draft. We gotta have a good team here next year too. I think it's important for the future that we surround the young players with some leadership and continue to build." - Patrik Allvin on March 4.

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "There's been some reports that it's hot around Pettersson, I haven't heard that. I've heard it's been quiet and I've heard that the Canucks are not willing to retain on him."

Outlook: It's officially a rebuild for Vancouver, who should easily have the best odds to pick first overall at the draft this season (good luck Canucks fans!). Jim Rutherford is no shrinking violet when it comes to huge hockey trades and the Canucks already made one earlier this season when Quinn Hughes went to Minnesota. Nothing they do from here will be bigger than that, but they could radically change the direction of this team if even a few of the rumoured trade candidates do get moved. Any pending UFA should go, but can palatable trades be found for their players with term? Is this finally the end of Pettersson with the Canucks, after so much promise early in his career? A disaster of a season arrives at the trade deadline, where management needs to carefully maneuver into a rebuild people can believe in.

VEGAS GOLDEN KNIGHTS

Status: Buyer, of course

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$1.503 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Goaltending

Potentially Available: Futures, Akira Schmid

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "The one thing about Vegas is their goaltending hasn't been very good this year, so we'll see."

Outlook: This team has been so active on the trade market in recent seasons that their collection of assets is thin and their roster needs are few. The on-ice results were expected to be better this season, but they're still leading the Pacific and likely to make the playoffs. If there is a weakness, though, look to the net. The Golden Knights are last in the NHL in 5-on-5 save percentage and starter Adin Hill is 87th out of 92 goalies in Goals Saved Above Expected. Might they try to jump on one of the available goalies and upgrade here? That might be easier said than done, but Vegas has surprised us at the deadline before. You can never count them out.

WASHINGTON CAPITALS

Status: Straddling between buying and selling

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$26.28 million

Draft Picks

Team Needs: Top-six winger

Potentially Available: Trevor van Riemsdyk, futures

What the GM said: "For us, we view our biggest need as a higher-end skilled winger. Those aren't always available at the deadline. When they become available, they become available. So, we're going to keep trying to pursue those guys if they're out there." - Chris Patrick on Jan. 16

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "It's going to be a tough battle for them to make the playoffs, so if they add, I think their preference is to add someone they can keep for a while."

Outlook: The Caps already traded out Nic Dowd and on the surface there's no reason to believe they'll do any substantial selling. They are in a playoff hunt, but have played more games than any team they're competing against so have a disadvantage in trying to make up ground. They'd like to add another scoring winger and that player probably has to have some term on their contract as opposed to being a rental. The most likely conclusion is that Washington plays a neutral role at this deadline.

WINNIPEG JETS

Status: Should be a seller

Deadline Day Cap Space: \$14.85 million

Draft Picks



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Team Needs: Picks and prospects to flip this summer; second-line scorers

Potentially Available: Jonathan Toews, Gustav Nyquist, Tanner Pearson, Cole Koepke, Ville Heinola

From the 32 Thoughts Podcast: "I wouldn't be surprised if the Jets look at it like a lot of this year was a bad year, everything went wrong, maybe we're not as good as we were a year ago, but we're better than we showed this year. I don't expect a fire sale."

Outlook: It just didn't happen for Winnipeg this season, but they have every reason to believe they can come back and compete in 2026-27. The biggest need for Winnipeg is to build a scoring second line that can properly support the top unit, but that won't be accomplished by Friday. What can be done, however, is trading out any expiring contract on a player who can bring back a draft pick or two, with the idea that those assets can then be used to acquire players in the summer. The Jets should be using this deadline to set up an active summer.

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Sportsnet.ca / 'Pissed off': Maple Leafs' embarrassing road show begs for more trades

Luke Fox

Just when you think the 2025-26 Toronto Maple Leafs have hit rock bottom, they pull a secret shovel out of their tube sock and keep on digging.

Embarrassing themselves — and blowing a pair of early leads — in Thursday's 6-2 loss against a disastrous New York Rangers squad, Brad Treliving's squad is practically begging for more trades.

Quick: Can the GM work his magic and make, say, a dozen more deals over the next 16 hours?

Yes, the white-towel-waving Leafs had dealt away third-line centre Nicolas Roy between their fifth and sixth consecutive losses, stumbling out of the Olympic break. And, true, Treliving had commissioned three regulars to the press box for this showdown of lottery teams at Madison Square Garden.

But the resetting Rangers, too, have shed talent (namely, leading scorer Artemi Panarin) recently and scratched some more on Trade Deadline Eve.

Yet they rebounded from a sluggish start and took advantage of Toronto's porous defensive play, piling on in the third period to lock up their first regulation victory since Nov. 24 (against the St. Louis Blues).

"We had five minutes of bad breaks, bad decisions, bad reads, and the puck obviously ends up in the back of your net a couple times," captain Auston Matthews told reporters in New York City. "And that's the game."

The leaky Maple Leafs have given up at least 100 more shots than every other team in the league. They are the easiest team to score against in the East. They struggle with clean exits, give up dangerous odd-man rushes, and miss coverages.

They're slow and fragile and disconnected. Something good happens early, and — not unlike their fan base — they're waiting for things to go bad late.

"Shot ourselves in the foot," Berube said. "We weren't ready to roll in the third."

Frustrated, Coach?

"Pissed off," Berube said. "The games are right there. And we don't push, as a team, hard enough to win them."

So, it makes sense. After squeezing two separate six-game losing skids into a 15-game span and mustering just two regulation wins over their past 19 attempts, no wonder they have all the confidence of the shy kid at the Grade 7 dance.

These long strings of L's, the deafening deadline noise, the cold reality of a spectacular nine-year post-season streak crashing to a halt... it weighs on all of them.

"It hasn't been easy," Matthews said.

Thing is, punching the clock will only get more difficult as the Maple Leafs are asked to skate out the string (19 more to go!) with even more Marlies and even less hope on their bench.

The Roy deal should be just the tip of Treliving's changes.

"They won't be happy about it. But, again, we put ourselves in this situation, so this is what happens," Berube said.

"It's all difficult, all this stuff."

No question. But even though there is no wild card to chase, the Leafs left to pick up the scraps and finish out Game 82 must find a way to compete for their own sake, for their teammate's.

Locate a little life. Dig in and scrounge up some resolve, something they can carry into next fall.

The Maple Leafs are bad, but they are not this bad.

"It sucks losing. It sucks being in this position," goalie Joseph Woll said.

"We have to get out of this slump, regardless of what the rest of the season looks like."

Fox's Fast Five

- Thursday marked the final night of scratches for "roster management" reasons.

A crowded Madison Square Garden press box not only saw Maple Leafs trade bait Scott Laughton, Oliver Ekman-Larsson and Bobby McMann all sitting out for the second night in a row, but key Rangers forwards Vincent Trocheck and Sam Carrick as well.

- Matthews extended his goal drought to 10 games. (He does have seven assists during this slump.)

That's easily the captain's longest dry spell since the 13-gamer he endured as a rookie in October and November of 2016.

"He is getting opportunities," Berube said. "It is tough on him and tough on the team. We need him to produce. It's not like he isn't getting his looks. They just aren't going in right now. He just has to stick with it.

"He does a lot of other good things in the game. It is not just about scoring. But he'll come out of it. I have confidence in him. Sometimes, you just have to get a greasy goal around the net."

The three-time Rocket Richard winner is tied for 29th in goals (26) and 54th in points (52) league-wide.

- Jacob Quillan got his first NHL peek since January, thanks to the trade of Nicolas Roy earlier in the day.

The Leafs centre prospect still faces an uphill battle to earn Berube's trust, though. In a tight game, Quillan skated a team-low and career-high 9:53.

"With what's going on here now, he's going to get definitely more of a look to see what he can do," Berube said of the second-year pro. "It's a



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good experience for him to come up here and use his speed. A big asset for him is using his speed and just being competitive and keep the game simple the best he can.”

• Fun fact: The oldest Maple Leaf, John Tavares, is also the only one to have appeared in all 63 of the club’s games this season.

On Thursday, Tavares reached the 30-assist mark for a 16th season. What’s troubling is that, at dash-21, he is tacking a career low in plus/minus.

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Sportsnet.ca / Canadiens' healthy environment an important factor in trade considerations

Eric Engels

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Martin St. Louis had everyone’s attention, but especially ours as he walked the Montreal Canadiens through five-on-six drills at Monday’s practice in San Jose.

For a little over four years, we’ve watched scenes like these play out countless times, but usually from behind the panes of glass that separate the Canadiens from the press.

In a much smaller bowl than the one that envelops SAP Center, over in Brossard, Que., where the Canadiens practise, there’s little benefit to sitting in the stands. Sounds bounce off the walls and become easily distorted, making only the screaming and cheering at ice level somewhat discernable. So, the warmer, quieter refuge of the seating area designated to media is generally the preferred choice.

But the seats in the big empty bowl at SAP Center were premium to hear everything we wanted to hear Monday morning. And what we heard was every word of the fascinating conversation between St. Louis and his players.

It wasn’t so much what was said that made it so interesting — most of it was about where and when to apply pressure defensively in these situations — as much as it was how it was said and responded to.

A loose puck hit the side boards with two defenders getting caught between decisions to rush it or back away from it, and then an attacking player picked it up, fed it to the point and watched as it was shot and tipped into the net. That’s when St. Louis paused the drill and asked his players which one of the two defenders should’ve rushed the puck and killed the play.

Nick Suzuki didn’t raise his hand. Without hesitation, he blurted out the answer.

St. Louis affirmed Suzuki’s response and then solicited questions from the group.

Two players asked for clarifications on different reads the situation might have required, and the coach provided them.

And then he continued eliminating a lot more of the gray that’s led the Canadiens to getting scored on 10 times at five-on-six since the start of the season.

The drill ran for roughly 10 minutes, but it involved everyone and proved very productive.

“We’re in a place where we expect to be at five-on-six at the end of games, so we have to work on that,” said St. Louis afterwards. “And it’s

not just at the end of the game; sometimes it’s from a penalty we take, and they take their goalie out in the middle of a game and we find ourselves at five-on-six. How you defend that shouldn’t be different from how you defend it at the end of the game, but I think it’s important for everyone to be comfortable in those situations. So that’s what we did today.

“It takes discussion, because some will learn from doing it, some will learn from the whiteboard or video, some will learn more through conversation, so you try to check all the boxes.”

Not every coach makes it as collaborative, but who’d argue with St. Louis’ approach?

If the Canadiens have consistently put one foot in front of the other since embarking on this rebuild, it’s been largely because of how he’s developed them. And that development has been massively stimulated by his communication skills.

Sure, St. Louis was hired to inspire. To drive growth with the passion that drove him from undrafted, unsigned and unwanted to undeniable in his rise to a Hall-of-Fame playing career.

But it turned out his perceived weakness — of jumping from the bench of his son’s bantam team to one of the most prestigious benches of the NHL without much coaching experience in between — would prove to be his greatest strength, for St. Louis immediately understood that the methodology he used with much younger players was the best one for this new generation of NHLers.

“I love to create dialogues and back-and-forth,” St. Louis said prior to Tuesday’s game against the Sharks. “I think they’re able to absorb more when they’re part of these discussions. I’ve always said I’m not a dictator, it’s not a monologue. There’s dialogue and there’s conversations and the guys know that I ask a lot of questions, so they’re more alert to get engaged, and I think it facilitates the learning.”

So does Suzuki.

“As players, you obviously don’t want to overstep,” he said. “But when he’s looking for clarification from us, I think it helps the communication between the players and the coaches. There’s little nuances that maybe someone will bring up that the coaches haven’t thought of, or vice versa, so I think it’s nice to have that open communication.”

There’s so much more of it that goes on behind the scenes — and not just with St. Louis, whose work is extremely well complemented by the coaching staff, but also with director of player development Adam Nicholas, who’s busy crafting an endless video catalog for the players to access when he’s not working with them on every single aspect of the game on the ice.

Back in December, we asked St. Louis about the synergy that’s been created between him and Nicholas.

“We bounce a lot of stuff back and forth to steer both of us in a direction to accelerate the development of our group because you can’t help these guys develop (by yourself),” St. Louis said. “It’s not just one guy. Adam plays a big part of that, for sure, but we all help each other out. It was the mandate when we came here, and I feel like we’re trying to check that box each and every day. The way we practise, the feedback that they get, the coaching, the video, he plays a huge part of that, and what drives that for me I think is just his passion for the game.

“I feel like I’ve found somebody very close to my own passion, and we have a lot of fun doing what we’re doing. And we don’t think we all have the answers, but we steer each other towards the answers, and I feel that has accelerated the development of our young group.”

We’ve seen it, too.



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But management has seen it from much closer, which puts decisions like the ones they're facing less than 24 hours from the NHL trade deadline in perspective.

On Monday, hours before witnessing that scene at SAP Center, we presented the reasons Canadiens president of hockey operations Jeff Gorton and general manager Kent Hughes should consider paying the high price St. Louis Blues general manager Doug Armstrong has set on centre Robert Thomas.

We anchored our argument to the 26-year-old being a sure bet to solidify the middle of the Canadiens' lineup — especially as an established point-per-game player on a cap-friendly contract that only expires in 2031 — and suggested it might be worth it to take that while sacrificing some "maybes" to do it.

But if Gorton and Hughes prefer to wager on top prospects Michael Hage and Alexander Zharovsky (among others) hitting their full potential, it'll have as much to do with the natural aptitude both players (and other top prospects in the system) possess as it will the environment St. Louis, the coaching staff and Nicholas have created for them to develop in.

About that environment

You can't help but notice how healthy it is, and not just because of how St. Louis, his assistants and Nicholas have fostered it.

The players often say there's something special about this group, and it's evident looking at the close relationships forged by the ones in the fiercest competitions with each other for ice time.

Jayden Struble and Arber Xhekaj are as close as it gets, and they've been fighting with each other for a permanent space in the lineup for two seasons. Zachary Bolduc and Alexandre Texier have formed a similar bond, even as both are fighting for bottom-six minutes.

There never seems to be animosity between any of them.

"I think we all share that common goal of competing and trying to win a Stanley Cup and trying to win as many games as possible," said Lane Hutson. "I think, obviously, everyone wants to play. But when you're not in, it's always nice to see that the guys who aren't in are cheering on the guys that are."

St. Louis feels it.

"It's hard to describe culture. It's a feel. And I feel like it's something I addressed early when I came in, and we talked about it, we worked on it, and I feel like it gets to a certain point where the culture takes life," he said. "And I feel like anybody who's been added to the group, they feel something. Whether it's camaraderie, whether it's selfless actions, whatever it is, there's a feeling amongst our group that they enjoy coming to the rink each and every day."

It starts with the people at the top and filters down.

"We have really good humans," St. Louis said. "When you have good humans, you're able to create this environment. You can try to create this environment, but it's going to be really hard if you don't have good humans."

Line shuffle vs. Ducks

For the first time since Game 18 of the season, Juraj Slafkovsky is leaving his line with Ivan Demidov and Oliver Kapanen for a reunion with Suzuki and Cole Caufield for Friday's game in Anaheim.

"It was a good surprise this morning," Slafkovsky said, welcoming the change after three post-Olympic games with Demidov and Kapanen didn't produce desired results.

His play reached new levels steering both rookies and he's hoping the confidence he gained from doing that turns Montreal's top line into an even more dangerous one than it's been at any point this season.

"A lot changed," Slafkovsky said. "I grew a lot as a player, and I feel like I got better carrying the puck and being comfortable skating up the ice. And I feel like it can only help playing with these guys."

Alex Newhook slides in with Demidov and Kapanen, on the line from which he produced six goals and six assists through the first 17 games before suffering a displaced fracture to his ankle.

Newhook has been flying since he returned three games ago, with two goals scored in the 7-5 loss to the Sharks Monday vaulting him quickly back into the top six.

It's what the 25-year-old was gunning for.

"Like I said, I wasn't coming back to ease into it. That's for sure," Newhook said. "I know where my game can be at, I know what I can have for an impact on this team, and I really just want to dive in and head into my return. That's been my mindset, so I'm excited for tomorrow."

Kirby Dach practised on Newhook's previous line with Jake Evans and Bolduc, while Phillip Danault remained with Brendan Gallagher and Josh Anderson.

St. Louis wouldn't confirm whether any changes would be made for Friday's game, but he did say he wants the Canadiens to play with much more "jam" up the ice to restore the pride that was dented by giving away points in two of the last three games.

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Sportsnet.ca / Will Bowman's decent deadline moves finally be enough for Oilers?

Mark Spector

EDMONTON — We may one day look back and conclude that consecutive July 1 busts are the reason this team fell one or two games short of its goal.

But in the here and now, general manager Stan Bowman can't sit around and cry over spilled milk. Or stay sour — sourdough? — over the Andrew Mangiapane signing.

The window to win a Stanley Cup is wide open in Edmonton, perhaps even more so with the state of the Pacific Division and an Eastern Conference playoff bracket that will not include the Florida Panthers.

As such, Bowman forged ahead at the deadline with some pretty decent moves, dumping Mangiapane's remaining term and salary, acquiring the heavy, right-shot defenceman that was needed in Connor Murphy, and landing the kind of third-line centre we haven't seen in this town since Michael Peca, with the arrival of Jason Dickinson.

"Just such a solid defensive centreman," is how Murphy describes Dickinson, with whom he spent the last four seasons in Chicago killing penalties and playing against opponents' best players. "The last few years, he's matched up against the top lines of every team and done a great job of it — whether it's in the faceoff circle or on the penalty kill.

"He's a leader and a veteran player that's so calm — a calm presence. He's a big, big player."

The Oilers, we know, can beat you when McDavid and Draisaitl play 26 minutes each. Or when they're paired together, the rest of the team basically watching from the bench.



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What has eluded them, however, is the ability to beat good teams consistently while rolling four lines — or even three lines.

McDavid has always played against the other team's top line. If that becomes Dickinson's role, to some extent, we would ask: Where are those minutes coming from?

"You never want to take minutes away from Connor and Leon. But, yeah, there's an element to that," explains Bowman.

He and head coach Kris Knoblauch envision a scenario where you can ice any of McDavid, Draisaitl or Dickinson for a defensive zone faceoff and not worry about who the opponent sends over the boards. In theory, Dickinson's presence also helps when Knoblauch puts 97 and 29 on the same line in a game where the goals just aren't coming.

But, mostly, a solid, defensive centreman in the No. 3-hole is just good for business. Ask any coach that had Sammy Pahlsson, Manny Malhotra, Guy Carbonneau, John Madden or Craig MacTavish at his disposal.

"In the playoffs, (where you play against the) same team, seven-game series, matchups really, really matter," Bowman said. "Now we've got three centres that we can put out there on the road in the defensive zone, and not be holding our breath that they won't put their best players on the ice."

In the process of divesting himself of first- and second-round draft picks this week, Bowman brought in pending UFAs in Dickinson and Murphy, and shipped out Mangiapane's \$3.6-million cap hit for next season as well.

But despite his foibles — the Tristan Jarry-Stu Skinner trade may yet go down as the most lopsided deal made in the National Hockey League this season — Bowman has managed to stock his roster with sub-25-year-olds. Guys like Vasili Podkolzin, Matt Savoie, Ike Howard, Josh Samanski, Ty Emberson, and now, local kid Colton Dach.

On a veteran team that doesn't hit much, Bowman brings in Dach. He led the Blackhawks in hits, and is perhaps a guy who will pair well with farmhand winger Connor Clattenburg one day soon.

"Docker has an engine and is a big guy (six-foot-four, 220 pounds). He has some poise with the puck in the corners for a young guy," said Murphy. "Coming into the league for his first year, to be able to impose his will on teams is important."

"He's one of those guys," Murphy added with a smile. "It's like a fun, goofy, young guy that gets along with everyone. He's accepted right away by all the teammates and vets, which sometimes isn't as easy to do as a young guy. That speaks a lot about his character."

This team needs some characters, to be sure. And it needs some size and guys willing to do the dirty work.

But before all that, it needs a Stanley Cup.

We're not here to say these deals make them a favourite, but they've got more than a puncher's chance out West.

And, if the goal is to distract folks from what's been happening on July 1, how about this for an idea:

Hold a parade on June 29. See if that works.

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Sportsnet.ca / Real Kyper's Trade Board 5.0: Setting up deadline week

Nick Kypreos

The first few games back from the Olympics have given teams a better idea of how they need to approach this week, with the trade deadline coming up Friday at 3 p.m. ET / noon PT.

The heat is on some teams to add significant players to their roster. That includes those we deem Stanley Cup contenders, but there are a few others farther down the standings who are feeling that pressure to buy.

There's no better example of this than the Utah Mammoth.

A huge 5-2 win over division-rival Minnesota last Friday fuelled Utah's drive to use a number of assets to try to drive the team forward. A 4-0 loss on Sunday to Chicago ended a 1-2-0 home stint before they head on the road for five games. By the time the Mammoth return to Utah next week, they could have a big name added to the roster.

Word is that there is tremendous pressure on Utah GM Bill Armstrong to help the team make the playoffs this season. With 66 points, the Mammoth hold the first wild-card spot in the West, four points clear of San Jose, Nashville and Los Angeles, who sit just outside the playoff outline.

According to some sources, one of Utah's targets is St. Louis centre Robert Thomas.

Utah has the assets that would appeal to the Blues and possibly be able to pull off this blockbuster trade.

St. Louis would like to bring back more than just an abundance of draft capital, so one could see how a deal would need to be built around one of the Mammoth's top three prospects: Tij Iginla, Cole Beaudoin or Caleb Desnoyers.

We should also keep an eye on Nick Schmaltz, who is second on Utah in goals and points, but a pending UFA this July. He and Logan Cooley are Utah's 1-2 punch down the middle, but if a deal for Thomas is made, will that change Utah's minds on re-signing Schmaltz to a new contract? For now I hear his ongoing contact negotiations are trending positively, but if Utah obtains another centre, will it change that?

For now, I'm keeping Schmaltz off my trade board, but will see how things play out this week.

Seattle, holding on to the West's second wild card with 65 points, would love to increase its chances of making the post-season. The Kraken would love to add an impact scorer like Jake DeBrusk from Vancouver to cover pending UFAs Jaden Schwartz and Jordan Eberle, who are both in their mid-30s.

San Jose had two huge wins over Edmonton and Winnipeg over the weekend, and is three points out of a wild-card spot. GM Mike Grier would love to give Macklin Celebrini, Will Smith and Yaroslav Askarov some playoff experience this early in their development, but he won't alter his longer-term objective. Because of that, the Sharks will still be taking calls on pending UFA defenceman Mario Ferraro. We should also keep an eye on Kiefer Sherwood, who the Sharks traded for earlier this season. Sherwood's ask on a contract extension remains high — in the ballpark of \$5 million — so San Jose has a decision to make on him. There are rumblings he's on the verge of being thrown back into the market.

We've gotten some clarity on Steven Stamkos, who wants to be part of Nashville's playoff push. The Predators have earned three of a possible four points since the Olympic break ended and are also three points out of the playoffs. Stamkos is coming off my trade board, as are Jonathan Marchessault and Ryan O'Reilly because, at the moment, the feeling is that they're not going anywhere. However, we'll continue to monitor how Nashville does this week and will adjust accordingly.

In the East, Montreal is similar to Utah with how many young assets and draft picks it has available to trade. Sitting third in the Atlantic, the



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Canadiens feel some motivation to make a splash and really push their competitive window forward. Montreal could compete with Utah in a possible Thomas trade, and the Blues would be targeting Michael Hage as a starting point.

And we can't rule out Detroit on Thomas either. The Red Wings are in the mix with Montreal and Utah as a team that is flush with assets and maybe being ready to push some of those chips in to try to break their nine-season playoff drought.

What about the Florida Panthers? Regulation losses to Buffalo and the Islanders hurt their outlook, and they start the week eight points out of a playoff spot. Sergei Bobrovsky's agent and the team are talking this week about his next contract and what might happen from here.

The amount of playoff hockey he's played over the past three seasons is the equivalent to a full extra season. He has the option to take care of some of the wear and tear and come back next season stronger. Whether that's with Florida or somewhere else remains to be seen. Bobrovsky, who's on an expiring contract, has a 16-team no-trade list and, while he's not on my trade board today, he's another player I'm watching this week to determine if he belongs on here.

This latest trade board will be updated all week as the market continues to develop. Many things are bound to change over the next few days, and you can find all the latest here on my trade board.

For now, on to the current list ...

There is momentum growing toward a trade here and Blues GM Doug Armstrong is trying to hit a home run with Thomas. On Sunday, Thomas played his first game in nearly two months, scoring an empty-net goal and adding an assist in a 3-1 win over Minnesota. With a no-trade clause, Thomas is in total control here. If Utah or Montreal does make St. Louis the best offer, does Thomas think about joining either of those teams? Thomas still could shut this down and revisit his options in the summer.

In some ways, Thomas is like Elias Pettersson in that they're both in the early parts of long-term contracts, but know they're not long for the teams they're on. They could put this talk to bed for 20 more games and work with the team in the off-season.

St. Louis is also not being forced into a move here, so if Armstrong can't find the big return he's looking for, he'll wait for the summer.

This may yet turn into a summer decision, but the connection with the Red Wings isn't going away. With Vancouver in full sell mode, getting a centre in his prime years with a 102-point season in his past might be an opportunity to pounce on, though the risk is obvious now. A minus-2 outing with just 14:20 of ice time in Saturday's loss was a tough look for Pettersson and may give any of the teams kicking tires a moment of pause.

There is a bit of a game of chicken going on here. There are teams asking about Kadri, including Colorado, where he won a Stanley Cup in 2022. But will the Flames be forced to retain some of his \$7 million AAV if they want to let him go? That's being explored, but it's not something Calgary wants to do.

However, the price on Kadri will be dependent on Calgary's ability to retain. Colorado could make it work at full value, but would prefer the flexibility of a lowered-cap hit. The Flames have to consider how much better the return would be by retaining money.

There are a few good centres out there and the clock is ticking on Calgary's decision with Kadri. Will salary retention be the difference in him staying or going?

There are a lot of rumblings around Sergei Bobrovsky. His contract is expiring with the Panthers and there appears to be a gap between the two sides on what an extension looks like. On Wednesday, the Panthers

signed Louis Domingue to a two-way contract for the rest of this season, giving the organization another goalie with NHL experience. Until Bobrovsky or the Panthers say he is staying put, Bobrovsky's on the trade board. He has a 16-team no-trade list.

A lot of teams would like to take a run at Tippet, and he's far from untouchable as the Flyers are looking for change. Tippet's contract is friendly enough (\$6.2 million for another six seasons) and he has top-six pedigree. He also doesn't have any trade protection this season, but a partial no-trade is introduced to his contract in 2026-27. What's interesting about Tippet is that he doesn't necessarily have to go to a contending team. This is a player anyone can use to help build out a top six over the next five years, so any team could be in on him. This is the ultimate "hockey-trade" candidate.

Fifth on the Rangers in scoring, and in Year 1 of a long-term, \$7.45 million contract, there might not be any takers for Lafreniere. However, like Pettersson, whose value is also low with a high cap hit, Lafreniere is still young enough (24) that some teams like to think they could steal him from the Rangers. He's a talented player and a new start may help.

There is still an outside chance Montreal takes a run at getting Binnington, but it's highly unlikely Edmonton is going to look at him, given they're in dire need of a top-four defenceman. Binnington has that big-game potential and could help a team get over the hump. I mentioned last week that Carolina might think about Binnington as well, even though they've re-signed Brandon Bussi. They have to have Tampa Bay, and Andrei Vasilevskiy, in mind.

The conditions for a Wallstedt trade are clear and the return has to be just right for it to happen this week. Minnesota had a big 5-2 win over Colorado after returning, but a 5-2 loss to Utah and a 3-1 loss to St. Louis serve as a reminder why it still would like to add another scorer. With Filip Gustavsson signed to a long-term contract that kicks in next season, Wallstedt is an intriguing trade asset to try to pick up that top-six forward with. Contending for the Calder Trophy, Wallstedt's GAA is 4.20 and his save percentage .877 since the start of 2026.

The Leafs aren't getting rid of everybody, but have a number of players who could be had. Max Domi, Mattias Maccelli and Calle Jarnkrok could all be moved if there are takers. But Ekman-Larsson is one of the three available Leafs (along with Scott Laughton and Bobby McMann) who could bring real value back to the team. He has another two years left on his contract and can play either side of the ice.

The Leafs are asking for a lot in an Ekman-Larsson deal. It will be tricky because of his age, and chances are if you're a contending team, you're not necessarily looking for a top-four defenceman, so what is the market for OEL? The Oilers do need a top-four addition, which is why they have been connected to Ekman-Larsson. If Toronto moves a notable defenceman, it'll be him. There is no market for Morgan Rielly, and the Leafs have Jake McCabe on an affordable long-term deal.

A highly anticipated Trocheck trade should get done this week, though he has some say in the matter. Armed with a 12-team no-trade list, Trocheck does not want to go to the West, where some teams have shown interest. The Minnesota Wild remain a team to watch here, and may have a chance since they aren't all the way out west, and because GM Bill Guerin had him on the American Olympic team.

Two more post-Olympics losses leaves no doubt that the Canucks are considering all trades, big and small, and they could be one of the most active teams this week. DeBrusk comes with the risk of acquiring him in the middle of a down season, but just one year removed from scoring 28 goals, the upside of getting him as an effective complementary scorer has teams thinking a lot about this player.

Another Blue struggling to score this season, Kyrkou turns 28 in May and has three 70-point seasons on his resume. On a long-term contract, he's another player teams might think they can try to steal, though it's hard to see Armstrong giving in to an offer that's less than a big return to set up



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incoming GM Alex Steen. If that's not out there this week, and if Kyrrou isn't persuaded to waive his no-trade clause, he will be revisited in the summer.

An all-situations, right-handed defenceman who can run a power play, Faulk's value is steady this season as St. Louis' highest-scoring blue-liner. He'll turn 34 later this month and has only partial trade protection, but the sense is growing that he is generating a market among a few Cup contenders, including Edmonton, and is likely to move by Friday.

With Luke Hughes back in the lineup, a trade focus returns to Hamilton, who scored the game-winning goal in New Jersey's 3-1 win over St. Louis on Saturday. The big challenge will continue to be his \$9 million AAV, and a contract that still has another two years left on it. That cap hit may complicate someone's playoff-cap projection and is a big number to commit to for another couple of seasons.

Even though he's not a rental until next season, Ristolainen is the type of player who is highly attractive to Cup contenders — big, right-shot, physical, top-four blue-liner who can play heavy minutes. Buffalo and Ottawa have shown interest in him, but the ask from the Flyers is a first-round pick and a prospect, much like what the Bruins got for Brandon Carlo last season.

Coleman returned to the lineup for all three of Calgary's post-Olympics games, showing prospective buyers that he's healthy and ready for the stretch drive. A depth/complementary winger who plays physical, has won two Stanley Cups and is still on pace for 18 goals after missing a month of games, the Flames have been fielding calls on Coleman for some time and it's not believed his 10-team no-trade list will hurt the chances of a deal getting done.

One of the players Toronto could move for a notable return, Laughton is a valued depth centre who can play a tough, gritty game and wins over 56 per cent of his face-offs. He's said he'd like to remain in Toronto, but the Leafs have to be real with their situation. Laughton is a rental player making just \$1.5 million with the Leafs after the Flyers retained salary in the trade that brought him to Toronto. They have to take advantage of that value and move him now.

Another Maple Leaf who would be pursued as a rental, there is still a chance Toronto keeps and re-signs McMann, if his extension would come in somewhere closer to \$4 million than \$5 million. A poor 0-3 return to NHL action has put Toronto in an even deeper hole and makes them much more likely to sell off multiple players now than they wanted to a week ago. The ideal return for McMann is a first-round pick, though it's hard to say if there's a team out there willing to pay it, seeing McMann as something more than a reliable third-liner.

Seattle had no trouble putting up five goals against Vancouver on Saturday, but managed just one goal in each game against Dallas and St. Louis earlier in the week, both losses. The Kraken are 24th in goals per game, last among any team in a playoff spot today. Though this is a top-10 team in GAA, they have a minus-6 goal differential and badly want to find a scoring driver. They made a big run at Artemi Panarin and couldn't get it done, but they're motivated to acquire that sort of player somewhere else this week. Wright, a 22-year-old centre, is an enticing young player Seattle would make available for a big move like that.

After a couple of big weekend wins, the Sharks are in the thick of a playoff race, but have only one more game (vs. Montreal) to assess their situation before the trade deadline. There is still a long-term plan here, and so with only one blue-liner signed for next season, a player such as Ferraro will be explored as a rental candidate. A left-shooting defenceman who logs a lot of PK minutes for San Jose, don't be surprised if the Sharks are a soft seller for the right return. There is a demand for defencemen and San Jose is still not sure exactly what it is this season: playoff team or not?

Montreal would be open to retaining money on Laine's expiring deal and the cost of acquisition won't be too high for him because he hasn't played

since October. Laine looks to be a low-risk pickup with decent scoring upside if healthy. Remember, he scored 20 goals in 52 games for Montreal last season.

The Rangers want to turn over some of what they have here, and while most of that attention will be on a few veterans, 24-year-old Schneider is still a potential trade candidate. Another right-shot and physical blue-liner, Schneider is early enough in his career that he's only an RFA this summer and so will be more than a rental. If a team is comfortable projecting what his extension looks like, Schneider will be an appealing target.

While the Carolina connection with Pettersson in Vancouver won't go away, neither will Kotkaniemi's association with the rumour. A bit of a project at 25 years old, but in his eighth NHL season, Kotkaniemi hasn't gotten into Carolina's lineup since the Olympic break. The fact he plays centre and is still so young makes him a moveable asset because teams are always looking to add down the middle.

There will be no problem having Vancouver retain up to half of Kane's \$5.125 million cap hit as they will look to maximize whatever return they can get for the 34-year-old who has 10 goals this season. When engaged, Kane can play physical and has complementary scoring upside. He scored 25 points in 53 playoff games with Edmonton the past three seasons.

Deslauriers had a big fight with Tanner Jeannot over the weekend. He has played in only 22 games this season and won't pull a big return, but the fact is that some teams will spend this week looking to add toughness, and that's where Deslauriers might come in.

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Sportsnet.ca / Maple Leafs' trade of Nicolas Roy only hints more moves are coming

Luke Fox

TORONTO — The goal now is to restock the cupboards, piece by piece.

And by dealing solid third-line centre Nicolas Roy to the first-place Colorado Avalanche Thursday, the Toronto Maple Leafs have recouped one of their first-round picks over the next two drafts. Probably.

The 29-year-old Roy's playoff dreams were resuscitated in a talent-shedding deal that sends Colorado's 2027 first-rounder and a 2026 fifth-rounder to Toronto. Both picks are conditional.

In the unlikely event that the Avalanche's first-rounder lands in the top 10 of the 2027 NHL Draft, Colorado will send its unprotected 2028 first-round pick to Toronto. And because Avs hold three fifth-round picks in the '26 draft, the lowest of those three picks (likely their own) will be transferred to Toronto as part of the transaction. (Colorado also owns Boston and Philadelphia's fifths this spring.)

By trading Roy — who is signed through 2026-27 at a reasonable \$3 million cap hit — Leafs GM Brad Treliving has officially waved the white flag on a disastrous campaign that has seen his intended contender tumble eight points and five teams back of a playoff spot with only 20 games to play.

The deal is the first of many Treliving and his Etobicoke-based war room will try to execute over the next 24 hours, as Friday's 3 p.m. ET trade deadline looms.



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Ironically, Roy laced 'em up in Thursday's 4-3 shootout loss in New Jersey while three of his former Leafs teammates and fellow trade candidates — Oliver Ekman-Larsson, Scott Laughton, and Bobby McMann — were scratched for "roster management" reasons.

A Stanley Cup champion in 2023, Roy was acquired in the off-season, via Vegas, as compensation for Mitch Marner. He grew up in Amos, Que., as a diehard Mats Sundin stan and spoke fondly of his 59-game Leafs tenure as rumours swirled on the day of his final game.

"It's been fun," Roy said. "I mean, growing up, I was a Leafs fan. So, for sure, really fun to be playing for this team here. Obviously, playing in Canada, big market, everybody's really involved. Really good group of people. So, really enjoying my time."

Maple Leafs coach Craig Berube said he knows what he's getting every night from Roy, who has five goals, 20 points and a 52.9 face-off percentage while contributing to the league's fourth-best penalty-killing team.

It speaks volumes that, in Toronto, Roy started a career-high 67.9 per cent of his shifts in the defensive zone and converted on a career-low 9.1 percent of his shots, yet he still managed an even rating on a team with a minus-17 goal differential.

"I know that his production is not where he wants to be, and we would like it a little higher, too. But it's not from not doing things right," Berube said. "Overall, we're pretty happy with his game."

The Avalanche, who paid a decent price to rent the 2027 UFA for two playoff runs, know what they're getting here — and they should be able to unlock a little more offence from the player.

Certainly not the offence a middle-six pivot like Calgary's Nazem Kadri would bring, but Roy's acquisition cost and term commitment was more palatable.

Watching fellow Western Conference contenders like Edmonton (Jason Dickinson) and Minnesota (Michael McCarron) beef up their centre depth, Colorado felt pressure to keep up.

Prior to getting dealt, Roy admitted that he did take outside interest in his skills as a compliment but appreciated life as a Leaf.

"I obviously have (79 games of) playoff experience, playing in Vegas for a while. So, yeah, for sure, a little bit," Roy said.

Roy's departure is a tidy piece of sell-off work from Treliving, who has been reluctant to go this route. The deal also suggests more to come.

And the more talent the Maple Leafs shed this week, the greater the team's odds of tumbling all the way to the NHL's bottom five. Just maybe, they'll have first-round picks in 2026 and 2027 before the dust settles.

"We obviously don't love where we are, but we don't stop fighting," leader John Tavares said Wednesday.

"As difficult as a spot we're in or things may seem, personally, just not too much in the mindset of looking back and feeling sorry or being super disappointed with how things have gone. Not happy with where we're at, but there's hockey to be played and we're going to keep fighting and keep moving forward and see what happens."

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1381898 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / NHL Power Rankings: Checking in on job security for all 32 general managers

Ryan Dixon

These days, NHL general managers are some of the busiest people on the planet. After the trade deadline hits at 3 p.m. ET / noon PT on Friday, though, they can settle back into a life of living and dying with the result of each game or fretting that the kid they drafted three years ago is officially a bust and might represent a tipping point in terms of remaining employed.

Honestly, these guys must blast Pepto-Bismol out of a water bottle like a goalie who just got scored on when we're not looking.

Of course, the upside to being one of only 32 people in the world to do what you do is undeniably high. On the very top level, constructing a Stanley Cup champion is something that stays on your resume forever and, in some cases, might even be something you request be etched on your tombstone.

Only six general managers in the league — Stan Bowman, Bill Zito, Ken Holland, Doug Armstrong, Julien BriseBois and Kelly McCrimmon — have a championship to their name while holding that title.

That leaves 24 men still searching for that first ring as a GM and, of course, some are much closer to realizing that dream than others.

With that in mind, and as the craziness of deadline rumours whirl all around us, we thought it prudent to use this week's Power Rankings as check-in on the GM chair for all 32 clubs.

1. Dallas Stars (38-14-9) Jim Nill is the third-longest tenured GM in the league. The Stars are set up to win the Cup now and for the next few years. They just have to actually do it.
2. Colorado Avalanche (41-10-9) Chris MacFarland took over from Joe Sakic just after the Avs won their title in 2022. Relative to last season — when he fixed Colorado's goaltending problem on the fly, traded Mikko Rantanen for Martin Necas and acquired Brock Nelson at the deadline — this has been a relatively quiet year.
3. Carolina Hurricanes (39-16-6) Eric Tulsky is in his second year on the job and the Canes are basically mentioned as a possible destination for every big offensive fish that comes on the trade market. Tulsky is an analytics expert who has to figure out how to get this team over the top.
4. Buffalo Sabres (36-19-6) The Sabres hired Jarmo Kekalainen as a senior advisor in May and, about six months later, he was the Sabres GM. Kekalainen brings much more experience to the seat than many of his predecessors in Buffalo and while it's hard to give him much credit for the team's incredible surge in the past three months, he's a man with the conviction and knowledge to meet this big moment in Western New York.
5. Tampa Bay Lightning (38-17-4) Julien BriseBois has been Tampa's GM for nearly eight years and has two rings to his credit. He feels like the right guy to keep the Bolts' window to win open as long as possible, and would it surprise anyone if he had the final say in constructing Canada's men's team for the 2028 World Cup and 2030 Olympics?
6. Minnesota Wild (36-16-10) Between acquiring Quinn Hughes and winning gold in Milan, Bill Guerin is having himself a year. This is Year 7 for him in Minny and the Wild are well-positioned to push for a title.
7. Pittsburgh Penguins (31-16-13) When Kyle Dubas landed in 2023, he was trying to immediately revive a team going the wrong way by doing things like trading for Erik Karlsson. Once the mandate became more future-focused, though, Dubas started doing a masterful job of picking up players who are making Pittsburgh's long-term outlook brighter. This team making the playoffs — especially with Sidney Crosby injured for a significant stretch — would be one of the stories of the season.
8. Montreal Canadiens (33-18-9) Kent Hughes, hired four years ago, has done a great job overseeing the total rebuild. Now comes the hard part: how to jump from being competent to true contender.



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9. Detroit Red Wings (35-20-7) Only five GMs have had their jobs longer than Wings legend Steve Yzerman in Detroit. Hired in 2019, Yzerman appears poised to finally end Detroit's extended playoff drought — which feels like it had to happen this year to avoid some hard questions — and trading for John Gibson last summer is a major factor in that.

10. Anaheim Ducks (34-24-3) Pat Verbeek just passed his four-year anniversary as Ducks GM and the team is as well-positioned for future titles as any in the league. Choosing Leo Carlsson and Beckett Sennecke high in the draft when the team could easily have gone in other directions is a feather in Verbeek's cap.

11. Columbus Blue Jackets (31-21-8) Don Waddell is in his second year on the job in Columbus. The Jackets missed the playoffs by a hair in Year 1 and are on the outside looking in. Say this, though: it's hard to argue with Waddell's decision to replace Dean Evason — who, granted, was also hired by Waddell — with 70-year-old Rick Bowness. Columbus is 12-2-1 since Bowness took over in January.

12. Boston Bruins (34-21-5) Don Sweeney, now on the job for more than a decade in Boston, leaned into a hard sell at this time last year and his B's are back challenging for a playoff spot. Acquiring Fraser Minten from Toronto 12 months ago looks like a sizable 'W.'

13. New York Islanders (35-22-5) Mathieu Darche has been on the job less than a year and the Islanders are looking good for a playoff return. Yeah, that has more to do with Ilya Sorokin's fantastic goaltending and the incredible good fortune of moving up 10 spots in the lottery to draft Matthew Schaefer than anything the GM has done, but Darche got a good return for Noah Dobson and added some playoff savvy in the form of Ondrej Palat before the Olympic break. It feels like the Isles are in good hands.

14. Vegas Golden Knights (29-19-14) Kelly McCrimmon took over for George McPhee in 2019, ahead of the Knights' third season. It's always foot-to-the-floor time in Vegas, but the club has won just eight playoff games since claiming the 2023 Cup.

15. Utah Mammoth (32-25-4) The liquidating of futures has already begun in Utah with the acquisition of MacKenzie Weegar from Calgary and Bill Armstrong — hired in 2020 to run the Arizona Coyotes — will be a GM worth watching through the deadline and into the next couple seasons as the Mammoth try to make hockey memories in Utah.

16. Ottawa Senators (29-22-9) Steve Staios' best move may have come at last year's deadline, when he snagged Dylan Cozens from Buffalo for Josh Norris. That said, Staios — hired in November 2023 — is dangerously close to watching his team miss the playoffs one year after getting back in the derby.

17. Washington Capitals (31-25-7) A year ago, Chris Patrick — tabbed as GM in 2024 — and the Caps were the darlings of the league for an on-the-fly retool that seemed too good to be true. Some of that lustre has been lost in a campaign where the Caps could miss the playoffs, but they still have a quality team with good prospects like Cole Hutson coming. Even if Alex Ovechkin calls it a career in a couple months, Washington should remain competitive. It always feels worthwhile during this type of discussion to point out the Capitals have had just four GMs — David Poile, George McPhee, Brian MacLennan (current president of hockey operations) and Patrick — since 1982.

18. Edmonton Oilers (30-24-8) Stan Bowman was hired in 2024 to push the Oilers over the top. It didn't happen in Year 1 and it's fair to question some of the moves — hello, Tristan Jarry — he's made in pursuit of that goal in Year 2.

19. Seattle Kraken (29-23-9) It sure feels like Jason Botterill, promoted to the GM gig nearly 11 months ago, is itching to do something big. The Kraken went hard after Artemi Panarin and seem ready to move heaven and earth in pursuit of high-end talent the Kraken have yet to find.

20. San Jose Sharks (30-25-4) Mike Grier took over a total rebuild in 2022 and, four years later, he's at the helm of a team that looks like it can win a championship within the next two or three years. Credit Grier for looking at the standings this year and deciding to reward his team with the acquisition of Kiefer Sherwood.

21. Philadelphia Flyers (28-21-11) Hired nearly three years ago to the day, Daniel Briere finds himself a seller again in Philly. That's not necessarily the end of the world given where the team was, but it's still hard to make heads or tails of what the Flyers' future holds.

22. New Jersey Devils (31-29-2) This has been a hugely disappointing campaign in Jersey and it's fair to wonder if everything is on the table after the season. Tom Fitzgerald has been the GM since 2020.

23. Toronto Maple Leafs (27-24-11) Brad Treliving became the GM in 2023 and failed, in his first two seasons, to find the missing championship piece in Toronto. Now, as the Leafs embark on a new chapter, Treliving's job description will change and people will most certainly speculate about his job security.

24. Nashville Predators (27-26-8) What an odd two-plus year tenure Barry Trotz had as Nashville's GM. He spent big, but apparently on the wrong players and now he's made the decision to step away. Trotz will keep the seat warm until a new GM comes to town and gets to work on the huge lift of making Nashville a contender again.

25. Florida Panthers (30-28-3) Bill Zito — hired in 2020 — has built a team that went to three straight finals and won the past two titles. Nobody is going to hold an injury-ravaged gap year against him.

26. Los Angeles Kings (24-22-14) Ken Holland is in Year 1 on the job in L.A. and fired coach Jim Hiller coming out of the Olympic break. The Kings are sliding the wrong way under Holland, who is likely to go big-game hunting in the summer if he can't swing another Artemi Panarin-like deal before the deadline.

27. Winnipeg Jets (24-26-10) When Doug Armstrong sheds his GM label to move upstairs full time in St. Louis this summer, Winnipeg's Kevin Cheveldayoff — hired in 2011 — will become the longest-tenured general manager in the NHL. It sure feels like he has a job for life in Manitoba, but another season like this one might put that notion to the test.

28. Chicago Blackhawks (23-28-10) Kyle Davidson was hired in 2021 to execute a ground-up rebuild, and that does take time. However, it doesn't help that a team in a very similar position and on the same kind of timeline — the San Jose Sharks — appears well ahead of the Hawks.

29. St. Louis Blues (23-29-9) As noted, Doug Armstrong — who was hired in 2010 and has held his job longer than any GM in the league — will shuffle aside in coming month in a succession plan that sees Alex Steen take over. The latter becomes the main decision-maker at a time where just about anything seems on the table in St. Louis.

30. Calgary Flames (24-29-7) A lot of Craig Conroy's moves in recent years involved dealing veteran talent (usually on an expiring contract) for players or prospects in their early-20s. As Sportsnet's Eric Francis noted, sending MacKenzie Weegar to Utah for three draft picks represents an organizational shift for Calgary.

31. New York Rangers (23-29-8) Chris Drury has been the GM since 2021 and the Rangers have been going the wrong way for the past two years. You have to wonder how confident Blueshirts backers are in Drury being the guy overseeing another reset that — depending on how things break — could bubble into full-rebuild territory.

32. Vancouver Canucks (18-36-7) Patrik Allvin took over as Canucks GM four years ago and it seems like there hasn't been a dull moment since. At least now Canucks fans can sink in knowing the plan is to draft as high as possible the next couple Junes and completely reconstruct what's happening on the West Coast.



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Sportsnet.ca / Examining the NHL's goalie market: Will Bobrovsky contend again?

Emily Sadler

It's not often we see a bona fide No. 1 netminder with oodles of big-game experience shopped around at the trade deadline.

This year, we have two.

The Florida Panthers have gone from back-to-back champs to springtime sellers in less than a year, and pending UFA goalie Sergei Bobrovsky is suddenly their top trade chip. And then there's Jordan Binnington, whose tenure with the Blues has seen him backstop St. Louis to the Stanley Cup, but also feels overdue for a fresh start amid regular-season struggles the last few years.

Bobrovsky, a true rental, and Binnington (who still has one year of term on his deal) present two fascinating cases for trades at this year's deadline. So do two other fellow netminders in the rumour mill in Toronto's Anthony Stolarz and Minnesota's Jesper Wallstedt. Questions about Stolarz's health, and whether he can regain form as one half of a strong tandem, top the chatter around the 32-year-old, while the biggest question for Wallstedt is about whether the Wild would really consider parting with the young starter. (For the right price, maybe so.)

Together, these four goaltenders give us a pretty interesting look at the goalie market right now and the many questions it brings.

And then there's the question of whether teams actually want to make a big move in net at this point in the season. Deadline deals involving netminders tend to lean towards insurance options, with contending clubs trading for No. 2 or No. 3 options, not a No. 1 for the stretch run.

Looking back on the past few years tells us the biggest goalie trades tend to be saved for summertime.

The summer of 2024, for example, featured several major moves in net: Calgary dealt Jacob Markstrom to the Devils for Kevin Bahl and a first-round pick on the same day the Capitals sent Darcy Kuemper to L.A. in a one-for-one for Pierre-Luc Dubois; Ten days later, Washington landed a new No. 1 with Logan Thompson from Vegas. In between, the Bruins and Senators swapped netminders as Linus Ullmark went to Canada's capital with Joonas Korpisalo taking his place in Boston's tandem; Later that summer, the San Jose Sharks traded for Yaroslav Askarov in a blockbuster August deal.

Despite the Ducks shopping John Gibson throughout 2024-25, they didn't get a deal done until last summer when the Detroit Red Wings sent Petr Mrazek, a 2027 second-round pick and a 2026 fourth-rounder to Anaheim in exchange. The biggest goalie to move at last year's deadline was Spencer Knight, who was part of the haul sent to Chicago in exchange for Seth Jones as the Blackhawks got a key piece to build around. Knight was indeed an impactful deadline acquisition, but not for a contender.

When impactful goalie trades do happen in-season, recent years tell us teams tend to pull those off in the first half of a campaign to give the new guy as long a runway as possible. Take the Edmonton-Pittsburgh goalie swap this past December, for example, which saw Stuart Skinner sent to the Penguins for Tristan Jarry in a fresh-start-for-all transaction. One year earlier, the Avalanche also rebuilt their crease in-season with a pair of trades to land Scott Wedgewood and Mackenzie Blackwood — two deals

that didn't exactly shake up the market at the time but that now look like the work of a genius.

So, what should we expect as the clock ticks towards Friday's 3 p.m. ET deadline? We're looking at four distinctly different potential trade candidates that showcase just how unpredictable this deadline is for goaltending.

The true rental: Sergei Bobrovsky, Florida Panthers

This time last year, it would've been absurd to consider Sergei Bobrovsky finishing his contract anywhere but Florida. The Panthers have made a habit of going on long playoff runs, thanks in large part to Bobrovsky, who has backstopped the squad to three straight Stanley Cup Finals and back-to-back championships.

All that extra hockey seems to have caught up with the defending champs, though, which has this group in unfamiliar territory: at the bottom of the Atlantic Division, trailing 10 points off pace of a wild-card berth, and suddenly posting up as deadline sellers. Bobrovsky's career-low numbers — a 3.13 goals-against average and .873 save percentage — have matched the woeful output of his team, and considering the injuries throughout this season it's hard to know whether we're seeing a natural decline for the 37-year-old starter or if this season has been a forgettable exception to the rule all around.

So, what might this mean for the man in the blue paint? As GM Bill Zito's biggest trade chip, dealing Bobrovsky would be an effective way to recoup a little draft capital after the shopping sprees of deadlines past.

"I do think they'll look at the market for Bobrovsky," Sportsnet's Elliotte Friedman said during an appearance on The FAN Hockey Show on Wednesday. "I've heard it's been a challenge to sign him, that the number he wants, or whatever he wants, is more than they're willing to do at this point in time. So, I do think they're going to look at it, absolutely."

The club just brought in veteran backup Louis Domingue, giving the team some short-term insurance in case of a major move.

St. Louis Blues netminder Jordan Binnington has spent more time in the rumour mill than his peers on this list, so it's no surprise to see plenty of speculation as we near the deadline. What began as murmurs and musings about whether a fresh start is ahead for both the Blues and their Stanley Cup-winning netminder as St. Louis stares down a roster overhaul now feels like a very real possibility he's played his last game as a member of the Blues.

He's a No. 1 netminder with a proven track record of bringing his best in the biggest situations. He's backstopped the Blues to the Stanley Cup, stood tall for Team Canada en route to gold at the 4 Nations Face-Off, and was excellent in red and white once again as Canada's starter at the Olympic Games last month. The stakes don't get higher than that.

But what to make of his NHL numbers? Consistency has not been Binnington's strong suit, and we've seen that play out plenty. After posting pedestrian numbers (2.69 GAA, .913 save percentage) in 56 appearances in 2024-25, his stats this season have gone in the wrong direction (3.60 GAA, .867 GAA).

But the what-if of it all has to be alluring to contenders willing to bet on a higher upside in net. And because he's not a true rental — the 32-year-old still has a year on his contract — he could make a lot of sense for a club entering a new era of contention.

We know the upside is there, and we know he's a player that can very quickly step into a role and be the elite netminder his team needs.

"There are some people out there that don't like the idea of acquiring a goalie in the middle of the year, especially when you don't have a lot of practice time. But it's twice in a row now that Binnington's been on a really good team — a superstar team — at the 4 Nations and the



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Olympics, with not a lot of practice time, and he's flourished. He's been excellent. And also he's been calm, he's been under control," Friedman said on Monday's edition of 32 Thoughts: The Podcast. "The fact that he's now done this twice in a row, in a compressed schedule, some of these teams that need goalies, I'd be betting on him."

To say the Toronto Maple Leafs' season hasn't gone to plan would be... an understatement. So much so, that it seems there's now a new plan on the horizon. Whether that's a retool or a rebuild remains to be determined, but the impending changes make for some interesting questions in the crease.

Anthony Stolarz was impressive enough in his first season as a Maple Leaf last season to earn a four-year, \$15-million extension with the club. That he may not be a Maple Leaf when the new deal kicks in on July 1 isn't really about his own performance — health has limited him to just 20 games this season, and while his numbers haven't stood out he's put up back-to-back strong performances in losses that were no fault of his own. Rather, it's about the organization's impending log jam in net and some tough choices ahead for a team that will likely need to make space for Dennis Hildeby with the big club full-time. Could Stolarz be the odd man out in a Hildeby-Woll duo?

At 32, Stolarz is a perfect trade candidate for a team looking to go the tandem route. Stolarz's term could scare off some, but the affordable cap hit (\$3.75 million) and notable upside when healthy have to be appealing for both contenders looking for veteran insurance and on-the-cusp clubs alike. Only, trading him now would likely mean selling low on a valuable asset.

Trading away your young, talented goaltender may seem like a bad idea, but everything about the Minnesota Wild screams 'win now!' — and that applies to the crease, too.

Wallstedt, 23, has been excellent in his rookie campaign, posting 14 wins with a 2.85 goals-against average and a .911 save percentage, but Filip Gustavsson is the guy here. His 2.54 GAA and .912 save percentage with 22 wins in 39 appearances has him among Vezina contenders and the unquestioned starter on this squad — and the five-year extension he signed in October tells us he's the starter not just for now but for the foreseeable future. This crease could get crowded, and quick.

While Wallstedt surely holds a ton of value on the ice for Minnesota, the allure of what he may earn them on the market — a huge opportunity to recoup some draft capital, perhaps, or an NHL-ready difference-maker for this year's push — is interesting. If he is indeed made available, he is GM Bill Guerin's best chance at landing a big haul.

Wallstedt holds widespread appeal. He could help a contender win now, but would also be coveted by non-contenders looking for someone to build around (see Chicago's acquisition of Knight last March, for example). The latter option points to any deals involving the young netminder coming in the summer rather than at the deadline, though — if at all.

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TSN.CA / Leafs players confront reality of being on a selling team

Mark Masters

The New York Rangers held an optional skate at the MSG Training Center in Tarrytown, NY on Thursday. The Leafs are scheduled to hold a media availability at Madison Square Garden at 4:45 pm.

With Friday's trade deadline fast approaching, the Leafs decided to hold centre Scott Laughton, winger Bobby McMann and defenceman Oliver Ekman-Larsson out of Wednesday's game in New Jersey. All three players are in the top 16 on TSN's latest trade-bait list.

"I found out when I came to get prepared at like four o'clock," winger Matthew Knies said following the 4-3 shootout loss to the Devils. "I saw that they had empty stalls ... It's a crappy feeling not being able to suit up next to them and play with them."

The Leafs entered the season with the expectation of making the playoffs for a 10th straight season, but heading into Thursday's game in New York against the Rangers, Toronto sits eight points out. Players are now grappling with the reality that the team is trending toward a playoff-free spring.

"It's weird to be in this position right now," said William Nylander. "Haven't really, I think, fully [understood] that might happen. It's a tight spot to get in. If it doesn't happen, I mean, it's a tough position to be in."

The star winger trailed off.

Ekman-Larsson leads the team's defence with 35 points and still has two years remaining on his contract beyond this season. McMann and Laughton are both heading towards unrestricted free agency in the summer

"All three of them, would be very tough to see them go," Nylander said. "That's something you don't really want to think about too much."

"He's been nothing but good to me," rookie winger Easton Cowan said of Laughton. "Honestly, I haven't known him long, but probably wouldn't be the person I am right now without him. Just a great teammate. Yeah, it's unfortunate. Obviously, it sucks."

The players are doing their best to tune out the trade deadline, but it's impossible to ignore right now.

The Leafs made their first move, and first trade since July, by shipping centre Nicolas Roy to the Colorado Avalanche on Thursday. Toronto received a conditional first-round selection in the 2027 draft and a conditional fifth-round selection in the 2026 draft.

In the event the 2027 first-round selection is in the top 10, Colorado will send its unprotected 2028 first-round pick to Toronto. Colorado currently holds three fifth-round selections in the 2026 draft and Toronto will get the lowest of those selections.

The Leafs called up Jacob Quillan from the Toronto Marlies of the American Hockey League and he is expected to suit up in his sixth career NHL game on Thursday night.

Nicolas Roy, yesterday:

"Growing up, I was a Leafs fan so, for sure, it's really fun to be playing for this team. Obviously, playing in Canada, big market, everybody's really involved & obviously really good group of people so really enjoying my time."

— Mark Masters (@markmasters) March 5, 2026

The Leafs have dropped all five games (0-3-2) since the Olympic break.

Management may be in sell mode, but the players are not quite ready to throw in the towel on a season that's gone sideways.

"Everyone's frustrated and we want to do better," said Knies. "We're going to try to stick with it. We have the mentality that anything can happen right now. We can still jump back in it and that should be our focus. We're not going to hang our heads low and feel defeated. We're still in it. Like, we still have a chance. So, keep believing in that."



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Will Vincent Trocheck play on Thursday night?

"Right now, everybody's a game-time decision," said New York coach Mike Sullivan. "There's uncertainty around this week, but right now everybody's a game-time decision."

The Rangers centre is No. 1 on TSN's trade bait list.

"He's a fierce competitor," said Sullivan, who is in his first season behind the Rangers bench. "I knew he was a competitor. What I've learned in having the opportunity to work with him every day is more affirmation on how competitive he is and his willingness and his want to win."

Rangers defenceman Braden Schneider (No. 32) is also on TSN's trade bait list.

"There's a lot of uncertainty," said defenceman Matthew Robertson after New York's optional morning skate. "But just focusing on tonight and taking it day-by-day is all you can do."

Sullivan hopes to share a quick hello with Auston Matthews after Thursday's game. The pair just helped Team USA win a gold medal at the Olympics in Milan where Matthews served as captain.

"I thought he did a great job off the ice as far as rallying the team and building camaraderie around activities away from the rink and in the Village and things of that nature," Sullivan said. "He was a big part of that. But, as you guys [in Toronto] know, he's not a rah-rah guy. He's a quiet guy. [The] biggest way that he leads is through his example and how he plays the game and that's inspiring."

Craig Berube met with the Leafs leadership group ahead of Wednesday's game and praised Matthews for leading by example in New Jersey.

"He went out in the first period and showed we were here to play," the Leafs coach said. "I know we are missing guys and it is not easy to deal with that but, in my opinion, from a work and compete standpoint, he went out and dictated how we were going to play the game."

Matthews fired a team-high six shots on net and picked up an assist. But the team's top-line centre was also held without a goal for a ninth straight NHL game.

"He is getting opportunities," Berube said. "It is tough. It is tough on him and tough on the team. We need him to produce. It is not like he isn't getting his looks. They just aren't going in right now. He just has to stick with it. He does a lot of other good things in the game. It is not just about scoring. But he'll come out of it. I have confidence in him. Sometimes, you just have to get a greasy goal around the net."

This is the longest goal drought for Matthews in the NHL since a 13-game dry spell during his rookie season. Is he pressing right now?

"I don't sense it," Berube insisted. "I don't see it or hear it from him. But anytime those scorers go a bit of time without scoring, it definitely weighs on him. That is human nature."

Matthews has scored eight goals in 13 career games against Igor Shesterkin, who will get the start for the Rangers on Thursday.

With McMann a late scratch on Wednesday, Cowan moved all the way up from the fourth line to the first line beside Matthews and Nylander.

"Good to get opportunity," the 20-year-old rookie said. "Had a bunch of chances. Would have been nice to capitalize on more, but I felt like we had some pretty good chemistry."

Cowan produced the primary assist on a goal by Nylander, which came right as a Leafs power play expired.

"He did a lot of good things," Berube said. "There are things he is still learning, but he did a good job on Willy's goal. Willy did a good job of getting to the net. He made some plays. I wasn't disappointed with his performance."

After logging a season-low eight minutes and 23 seconds of ice time on Monday, Cowan played more than 17 minutes on Wednesday.

Once the deadline dust settles, the focus will turn to Toronto's younger players and ensuring they continue to develop. What's the key for Cowan down the stretch?

"For me, it is about being a little stickier and heavier in the battles and just understanding he doesn't always have to make a play," Berube said. "He has to manage the game, which I thought he did a pretty good job of [Wednesday]. There were times when he tried to force things, or he sees something and wants to make the play but, for me, it is all about him doing things harder and getting firmer. He has to grow still and get stronger, for sure, but hound, forecheck, and be responsible defensively. He did some good things. There are always things he can do better."

Rangers defenceman Vincent Iorio asked reporters for an update on the Nic Dowd situation when he got off the ice on Thursday. Dowd was traded from the Washington Capitals to the Vegas Golden Knights.

"He's the absolute greatest human being," said Iorio, who played with Dowd in Washington.

Growing up in Vancouver, Iorio immersed himself in trade deadline coverage as a kid.

"It was always fun," the 23-year-old beamed. "Deadline day and free agency frenzy in the summer, my dad and I would be glued to the TV all day to see who the Canucks would pick up or who they would trade."

So, what will it be like for Iorio on Friday?

"This is my first full-time year in the NHL so it will be weird being on the other side of the fence," he said with a grin.

Leafs lines in Wednesday's game:

Cowan - Matthews - Nylander

Knies - Tavares - Domi

Maccelli - Roy - Joshua

Robertson - Lorentz - Jarnkrok

Rielly - Carlo

McCabe - Stecher

Benoit - Myers

Stolarz starts

Woll

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