



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 6, 2026

## The News & Observer

### As Hurricanes eye NHL division title, might goalie reinforcements be on the way?

By: Chip Alexander

Raleigh

It's getting late in the hockey season, and the Carolina Hurricanes are checking off boxes.

The first was clinching a spot in the Stanley Cup playoffs. The Canes did that Thursday with a decisive win over the Columbus Blue Jackets.

Next is the Metropolitan Division title, and the Hurricanes moved a step closer Saturday with a 4-3 victory over the New York Islanders at the Lenovo Center.

Also on the list: first place in the Eastern Conference. That's still to be determined, as the Canes (104 points) and Tampa Bay Lightning (102) are contending to finish on top.

"Home ice in the playoffs is important, but I think the most important thing is feeling good about our game going into the playoffs," Canes defenseman Sean Walker said. "We've got to keep our foot on the gas and push the rest of the way."

The Canes, quick and aggressive, dominated the Islanders with a 40-16 edge in shots and 82 total shooting attempts to the Isles' 32.

Seth Jarvis had two goals and an assist, showing off his vertical leap into the glass after his first score. Sebastian Aho scored shorthanded and Jackson Blake had a goal while the Canes were stifling the Isles, who had five of their shots in the last three minutes of regulation after goalie Ilya Sorokin left for a sixth attacker.

"That was pretty impressive, considering what's at stake," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "We played the way we wanted to, and we got what we deserved tonight."

The Canes have scored shorthanded in three straight games — Jordan Martinook and Alexander Nikishin with the first two shorties — for the first time since December 1980. Carolina has 12 this season.

Defenseman Jaccob Slavin jump-started the rush with a bank pass off the boards to Jarvis, who connected with Aho on a two-on-one rush for a 3-2 lead in the second period.

"Slavo made a great play kind of holding on to it and letting me and Fishy (Aho) get up ice," Jarvis said. "That's something we've gotten a lot better at, our D, when we're out there, they know we're looking for offense."

The Isles (42-31-5), fighting to hold on to third place in the Metro, were coming off a 4-1 loss Friday to the Flyers. They managed to keep the score tight against the Canes with

goals from Marc Gatcomb, Max Shabanov and then Anders Lee in the final 90 seconds of regulation after pulling Sorokin, whose 36 saves gave his team a chance.

Goalie Brandon Bussi earned his 29th win of the season for the Canes, who have a game Sunday at Ottawa.

Pyotr Kochetkov joins Hurricanes at morning skate

What had been a routine morning skate Saturday at Lenovo Center got a surprising twist: a late appearance by Pyotr Kochetkov, coming on the ice in his goaltending gear.

Two days after Brind'Amour said there was no timeline for Kochetkov's return from lower-body issues and surgery that have kept him out for three months, Kochetkov was back. He spent some time in net facing a few shots, later saying it was fun being back skating with the guys for the first time.

Kochetkov, 26, has not played since Dec. 20, when he gave up five goals in a loss at Tampa Bay — his ninth game of the season. He elected to have surgery for an injury that had slowed him since training camp and his return was uncertain, although General Manager Eric Tulsky did say later that he might be able to get back before the end of the season.

Kochetkov, in talking to the media Saturday, would not specify what type of surgery was performed. He did say his injury situation — he had a different lower-body issue surface during camp — reached the point that it could not be alleviated without surgery.

"After some time, it was just every day no feel good," he said. "It was when I skate, when I'm off ice, when I sleep. I try my best to play and try to come back every time, but every game it just felt more and more and more. I had a moment where I knew I just couldn't do it."

Asked how close he was to being able to play, Kochetkov said he was not sure and joked that Andrei Svechnikov scored a few times on him Saturday.

"I'm probably very far from playing if he scored on me," he quipped.

Kochetkov has started 120 games in parts of five seasons with the Canes, with an overall record of 71-38-12, a career 2.46 goals against average and .905 save percentage. He has 11 career shutouts, blanking the New York Rangers in his first start of the 2025-26 season at Madison Square Garden.

"Tough time for me," Kochetkov said. "Tough mentally, tough on my body. But now I feel much better. Just every day, step by step."



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## The Athletic

### Where does Nikolaj Ehlers rank among Hurricanes' best free-agent additions?

By: Cory Lavalette

RALEIGH, N.C. — The most dangerous time for NHL general managers is the opening of free agency, when hundreds of millions of dollars are handed out to waiting players.

It's fair to say Carolina Hurricanes GM Eric Tulsky has no regrets about signing Nikolaj Ehlers to a six-year, \$51 million contract last July 3.

After a slow start to the season — six games before his first point and 12 games before his first goal — the 30-year-old is on pace to have a career-best season.

With an assist in a loss to Ottawa on Sunday, Ehlers set new career highs in assists (41) and points (65). His six game-winning goals lead the Hurricanes and are one shy of the most he's had in a season.

It's only the first year of Ehlers' six-year deal, but he's already making a case for being the best unrestricted free agent signing since the team relocated to North Carolina.

Here is a look at his competition.

The gray-area cases

Matt Cullen, Ron Francis, Justin Williams

All three of these players were key free-agent signings, but their tenures with the franchise contain some gray area.

Francis is often credited with legitimizing the team in North Carolina after he signed a four-year, \$20 million free-agent deal in July 1998. He also already owned nearly all the franchise's records from his decade in Hartford. He was definitely still very good in his time with the Hurricanes — 118 goals, 236 assists and 354 points in a durable five-plus seasons in Raleigh in the twilight of his career — but it's not as though Carolina came in blind in signing the best player in Whalers history.

Williams and Cullen had inverse runs with the Hurricanes.

Williams was acquired by trade and became a key part of the 2006 Stanley Cup-winning team. He then returned as a free agent in 2017 — with two more rings on his fingers — and after a season under Bill Peters, Williams assumed the captaincy when Rod Brind'Amour took over as coach in 2018. Even if Williams had never played in Carolina before 2017, there would still be a case for his significance as a UFA signing. His part in the Game 7 double-overtime winner that officially ended the Capitals' Stanley Cup reign, in the first round in 2019, is enough to solidify any player's legacy (ask Brock McGinn).

Cullen, meanwhile, initially came to Raleigh as a UFA in one of GM Jim Rutherford's best moves ahead of the Cup-winning season. Cullen was masterful as Carolina's third-line center, on the point on the Hurricanes' top power-play unit and as one of the league's best in the newly implemented shootout. He did play two more seasons in Carolina, but those came after Rutherford reacquired him in a trade with the Rangers a year after Cullen had signed a big UFA deal with New York.

The buyouts

Frank Kaberle, Alexander Semin

Kaberle was fantastic in 2005-06, totaling 44 points on a one-year deal to help Carolina to the Stanley Cup. That earned him a four-year extension, but his first year in Raleigh proved to be his best. He played 137 games over the next three seasons — totaling six fewer points, 38, than he had in the Cup season — before being bought out.

Semin was a point-per-game player after signing a one-year contract with Carolina ahead of the lockout-shortened 2012-13 season. In hindsight, the Hurricanes wish they had left it at that. Semin inked a five-year, \$35 million extension, during which he totaled 62 points in 122 games before being bought out — arguably the worst contract decision in franchise history.

The defensemen

Tony DeAngelo, Shayne Gostisbehere, Sean Walker

DeAngelo twice signed with the Hurricanes, proving to be a great replacement for Dougie Hamilton on a one-year, \$1 million career reclamation contract in 2021-22. He finished with 10 goals and 51 points while playing alongside Jacob Slavin on the top pairing. His second tour didn't go nearly as well. He played 31 games and was limited to 11 points, mostly serving as the team's No. 7 defenseman in 2023-24.

Gostisbehere has also had two tenures in Carolina. The first was as a trade-deadline acquisition in 2023. He had fair production (three goals, 13 points in 23 regular-season games; three assists in 15 playoff games) but couldn't come to terms on a new deal that summer and instead signed with Detroit. After putting up 56 points with the Red Wings on a one-year deal, he returned to Raleigh on a three-year contract worth \$3.2 million annually. He's had back-to-back 40-plus-point seasons and elevated Carolina's power play into the top five this season.

Walker has been a more traditional addition, signing a five-year, \$18 million contract two summers ago. His numbers don't jump off the page — 16 points last season, 25 through 77 games this year — but he's been a steady force



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defensively while contributing on the penalty kill. He's not a sexy pick, but his contributions and the value of the deal mean he at least deserves mention.

## The goalies

Frederik Andersen, Arturs Irbe

Andersen has been a solid netminder for five seasons in Carolina, though injuries and ailments have limited him to a 96-49-10 record through Saturday. He's 19-12 with a 2.16 goals-against average in the playoffs with the Hurricanes, but anything short of winning a Stanley Cup will probably render his time in Raleigh a mild disappointment.

Irbe could make a case to be the best free agent signing in Carolina history. He was an absolute workhorse in the franchise's early days in Raleigh, and finished eighth in Vezina Trophy voting in 1998-99 and led the league in games played in consecutive seasons, in 1999-2000 and 2000-01 (placing 10th in the Vezina). His absurd .938 save percentage and 1.67 goals-against average in Carolina's run to the Cup Final in 2002 was a postseason for the ages. The relationship with the Hurricanes went sour, however, with Rutherford placing him on waivers the following year before reluctantly bringing him back for 10 games in 2003-04, the final season of his NHL career.

## The undrafted finds

Jalen Chatfield, Chad LaRose

Chatfield could have been tucked up in the defensemen category, but it felt necessary to weigh his worth by mentioning that he was an undrafted player who had been stuck in the Canucks' system for all but 18 games before coming to Carolina. He signed with the Hurricanes and spent much of his first season with the AHL Chicago Wolves — winning the Calder Cup in 2022 — before becoming a mainstay on Carolina's blue line. Like Walker, his numbers don't jump off the page — 23 goals and 75 points in 333 games — but he has developed into a reliable shutdown defender who has helped the Hurricanes maintain a solid penalty kill.

LaRose was one of many former Plymouth Whalers brought into the organization under Peter Karmanos, who owned both the Hurricanes and the former OHL team. LaRose was

one of the few successes. The Hurricanes signed him after he scored 61 goals in his final year in juniors, and he spent time in both the ECHL and AHL in his first two pro seasons. His third year, 2005-06, saw him earn a checking-line role on the Stanley Cup team, playing 21 games in the team's run to its lone title. He played the next seven seasons in Raleigh, twice scoring 19 goals while often playing a top-nine role on teams thin on talent. He also had four goals and 11 points in Carolina's 18-game run to the Eastern Conference final in 2009.

## The forward contenders

Cory Stillman, Ray Whitney

Stillman won the Stanley Cup with the Lightning in the year before the lockout, finishing with 80 points in his only season in Tampa Bay, but inked a three-year deal with Carolina in August 2005. He had a similar impact on the Hurricanes, posting 76 points in 72 games and 26 more during the team's 25-game run to the Cup. He was limited to 43 games the following season, posting 27 points, and played 55 more in 2007-08 (46 points) before being shipped with fellow Cup winner Mike Commodore to Ottawa for Joe Corvo and Patrick Eaves. Stillman returned to Raleigh for the final 21 games of his career when he was acquired from the Panthers for Ryan Carter and a fifth-round pick in February 2011.

We end with Whitney, who probably sets the bar Ehlers will have to leap over to be the top UFA signing in Hurricanes history. Whitney was bought out by the Red Wings in 2005 and signed a two-year contract worth \$1.5 million annually with Carolina. "The Wizard" gave the Hurricanes their money's worth and more, posting 55 points in 63 regular-season games and 15 more in the playoffs in the 2006 Cup season. He followed that with an 83-point campaign, which is tied for the third most in a season since relocation. Whitney re-signed with the Hurricanes (three years, \$10.65 million) and finished his time in Raleigh with 119 goals and 334 points in 372 regular-season games.

It's still early — Kaberle, Semin and DeAngelo remind us that one season does not make a legacy — but Ehlers looks capable of joining or even surpassing Whitney and Irbe as the Hurricanes' best summer signing in their history.

## NHL weekend rankings: Another coaching shocker rocks the East's pillow fight

By: Sean McIndoe

The big news, for the second week in a row, is a shock coaching change. This time it's the New York Islanders, with Patrick Roy being shown the door and Pete DeBoer taking over.

This kind of move needs its own section, so we'll cover the Islanders in more depth down below. But first, three quick thoughts, which might be the same three thoughts you had when you first heard the news:

- Damn, Mathieu Darche is not messing around.
- This was tough news to hear for a whole lot of teams that thought DeBoer would be on their radar in a few weeks.
- Matthew Schaefer, COACH KILLER?

• The latest "next coach fired odds" list sent to the media came out on Wednesday, and it had 13 names ahead of Roy. In other words, lots of coaches probably don't want their phone to ring right now.

Way more on this to come down below. But first...

It's been a quiet season around these parts when it comes to Canadian content. There hasn't been a Canadian team in the top five since the season was a month old, back when the Winnipeg Jets and Edmonton Oilers made brief appearances in the haze of optimism carried over from the year before. The Calgary Flames and Vancouver Canucks have taken up residence in the bottom five, where we're running out of ways to say "Yep, they're bad" every week. And the Ottawa Senators, Toronto Leafs and Montreal Canadiens are three



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of the eight teams that have yet to appear in either section, getting occasional “not ranked” mentions but not much else.

And that’s fair enough, because there’s only room for so many teams each week. But with the season almost over, five of those seven Canadian teams are suddenly making strong pushes in the right direction. So let’s dedicate our bonus five to our friends up north.

Bonus five: Canadian teams worth watching down the stretch

5. Winnipeg – The Jets might not be making the most unlikely late-season playoff push, but it has to be the most interesting. After flirting with becoming the first team in modern NHL history to go first-to-worst in one year, the Jets are lurking in the background of the Western pillow fight. They’re still big-time long shots, with several teams to pass. But with less than two weeks left, they’re still a going concern, which is more than anyone would have expected even a few weeks ago.

Of course, there’s some question as to whether that’s actually a good thing. More specifically, will a near-miss not only torpedo their draft pick but risk teaching the organization the wrong lessons? Murat’s been all over that topic recently, with this excellent post followed by another questioning the team’s level of loyalty.

4. Toronto – No, they’re not winning. But we said teams were headed in the right direction, and Toronto’s belated push for a bottom-five spot at least fits that description. More importantly, by firing Brad Treliving last week, Keith Pelley managed to clear the lowest possible bar for fixing this mess. Will he find a way to screw up the upcoming leadership search? Probably, but it hasn’t happened yet, so Leafs fans might look back on this month as the good old days. (As far as the search goes, I tried to offer my two cents, but Pelley and the Leafs apparently aren’t interested in anything with that cheap a price tag.)

3. Ottawa – It’s been another weird week, with minor controversies over Linus Ullmark’s schedule and Brady Tkachuk’s podcast. In between came a crushing loss to the Florida Panthers that was immediately cancelled out by an inspiring win over the Buffalo Sabres. And through it all, the Eastern race continues to grind to a halt, leaving the door open for the Senators to stride in with a decent finish. Last night’s win over the Carolina Hurricanes was a big one, leaving Ottawa in charge of its own destiny.

2. Edmonton – Last weekend’s win over the Anaheim Ducks was supposed to keep the Oilers in the race, but it now looks like it flipped it entirely. With the Oilers winning four straight and briefly moving into top spot in the Pacific, it looks like we may not get that all-or-nothing Golden Knights matchup in the first round after all. We did get it on Saturday, and Vegas made a statement in a win, so we can pump the brakes a bit on the Oilers being all the way back. All three teams still have a chance to clinch home ice through the first two rounds, meaning the Oilers’ path to the conference final seems as wide open as it has all year.

Also... this happened.

1. Montreal – No, I didn’t have the guts to move the Canadiens into the top five this week, unlike the other guys, but I thought hard about it. It’s very rare for a team to make a top-five debut this late in the season, but we’re close to

having no choice as the Canadiens roll through the league. The question in Montreal was always about whether the young core’s ceiling was high enough for true contention. That question sure seems to have been answered over the last month or so.

On to the rankings...

Road to the Cup

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

Shout out to Canadian broadcasting legend Scott Oake, who announced his retirement over the weekend. He’ll make his final “After Hours” appearance on “Hockey Night in Canada” on Saturday.

5. Buffalo Sabres (46-23-8, +30 true goals differential\*) – No, I’m not going to take them out of the top five on the same weekend they finally clinch a playoff spot for the first time since 2011. Maybe next week, though. For now, let’s all celebrate the long-awaited moment for our favorite team.

(But yeah, two straight losses mean Montreal is absolutely eying this spot. Buffalo gets the Tampa Bay Lightning tonight in a rematch of the best game of the year, so let’s see how this plays out.)

4. Dallas Stars (45-20-12, +46) – The big one this week is Thursday night at home, as they host the Wild in a first-round preview. This could also be the game that determines home ice in that series, so the intensity should be playoff-caliber.

3. Tampa Bay Lightning (48-22-6, +64) – They also clinched a spot on Saturday. By the way, I renew my objection to saying teams that clinch have “punched their ticket.” Your ticket gets punched when you arrive at the event and go in, not when you get the ticket itself. I realize not everyone agrees, and my response is to declare myself right and refuse to discuss this any further.

2. Carolina Hurricanes (49-22-6, +45) – They apparently missed the memo about having nothing to play for the rest of the way, as they spent their week crushing playoff hopes around the Eastern Conference. Back-to-back wins over the Columbus Blue Jackets was bad enough, but their win over the Islanders may have been the breaking point for Roy’s job. No such luck against the Sens last night, though.

1. Colorado Avalanche (50-16-10, +95) – Ho hum, let’s just go into the building of the league’s second-best team and shut them out, this game means nothing to us but hockey is just too easy. Then we’ll lose in regulation to the Blues, because this sport makes sense.

Also, shout out to Brent Burns for playing his 1,000th straight game. Only 64 more to catch the all-time ironman in the world’s toughest sport, a pudgy dude who ate hot dogs and looked like he was going to throw up on the bench every time he had a shift that went past 20 seconds. Hockey rules.

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

Not ranked: Boston Bruins – I’m going to be completely honest here. Initially, I’d planned to use this space to talk about the Red Wings. But I’m not sure I want to anymore, because good golly. Red Wings fans: Misery loves company, but sometimes acute and abject anguish needs to be alone



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because you're bumming everyone else out. We'll talk about the Wings in the newsletter tomorrow, but today? I just can't.

Where were we? Right, the Bruins. They haven't clinched anything, but it sure seems to be trending that way. Despite coughing up what should have been easy points against teams like the Panthers and Leafs in recent weeks, the Bruins have been doing more than enough winning to keep pace in the Eastern wild-card race. At this point, a miss would require a near-total collapse.

With everything else going on around the league, it's easy enough to shrug off the Bruins' success. After all, this is a team that won a Presidents' Trophy just a few years ago, and ran off three straight seasons well north of 100 points from 2022 to 2024. They're good, right?

Well, sure. Except they sure weren't last year, collapsing to 76 points in a season that cost Jim Montgomery his job. That led to a deadline selloff that included captain Brad Marchand, and with Patrice Bergeron and Zdeno Chara already long gone, the window in Boston had slammed shut. The rebuild was on, and it was shaping up to be a long job.

Except ... well, here we are. So what happened?

We can start at the top, where you do indeed have to hand it to GM Don Sweeney. It turns out that all that talk about five-year rebuilds falls apart when you have a GM who keeps ripping everybody off. Not bad work by a guy that most Boston fans seemed to have given up on just a year ago.

Sweeney also seems to have hit a home run with the hiring of Marco Sturm. In fact, I'm surprised Sturm isn't getting more Jack Adams love, even in a ridiculously crowded field. The award often goes to the rookie coach who leads a surprise playoff team, and Sturm checks both boxes. He'd be on my ballot if I had one.

Mix in a bounce-back season from Jeremy Swayman, which is the one element of this that we all probably should have seen coming after last year's contract debacle, and the Bruins make for an intriguing playoff team. Would you really rule them out against a first-round opponent like Buffalo or Montreal, or even Carolina? If Swayman is at his best, I'm not sure I would.

We're not quite there yet, and there's still work to be done. Until then, consider this a reminder not to sleep on one of the better comeback stories in a year filled with them.

The bottom five

The five teams headed towards dead last and a shot at Gavin McKenna or Ivar Stenberg.

Oh interesting, "The Athletic Hockey Show" starts putting our podcasts on YouTube and suddenly my patented "greying beard and hoodie" look is getting blatantly ripped off.

5. Seattle Kraken (32-32-11, -22) – Welcome back. They started the year holding down this very spot in the bottom five, then went on a season-long playoff chase that had them defying expectations. But they've collapsed over the last few weeks, ending any hopes of a Western wild-card spot and dropping all the way down to fake .500, so here we are.

4. New York Rangers (33-36-9, -11) – Careful boys, the Panthers and Leafs are getting dangerously close to

bumping you out of the bottom-five spot you've more than earned.

3. Calgary Flames (32-36-8, -45) – I'll admit, I did not know that Ethan Wyttenbach had more points than Gavin McKenna and everyone else in the NCAA this season. That's a nice dollop of hope for the Flames, among lots to be found in this piece on every team's most encouraging season from a prospect.

2. Chicago Blackhawks (28-35-14, -51) – We love it when a rookie's first career goal is also a game-winner, don't we folks?

1. Vancouver Canucks (22-46-8, -97) – They did it. They clinched dead last, top lottery odds and a worst-case scenario of a top-three pick. Also, Drance wants you to hate Quinn Hughes now.

Not ranked: New York Islanders – Wow.

It was shocking enough when the Golden Knights dropped a late-season coaching change on us a week ago. It's Vegas, where a cloud of what can only be described as anti-loyalty hangs over everything.

But the Islanders? Less than a year removed from having the No. 1 pick, and on the verge of a playoff spot with just four games to play? That's a stunner.

There's no question that the Islanders seem to be running out of gas with the finish line in sight. Saturday's loss in Carolina was their fourth straight, dropping their playoff odds from nearly 70 percent at the end of March down to under 30 percent today. Does that warrant a coaching change? Normally, no. But when a new GM who didn't hire the coach is making the call, and a big name is available, that apparently shifts the equation.

So what now? First, the good news: There's still time, with four games left on the schedule. All four of those are at home, and they get a rare four-day break to adjust under DeBoer. And the stretch starts when they welcome old pal John Tavares and the Leafs on Thursday, which should be an easy win. Then come the Senators, in a control-your-own destiny battle for both teams. And while the Canadiens and Hurricanes to end the season looks rough, either or both teams could be looking ahead to the playoffs by then. There's still a path for the Islanders, especially with the Blue Jackets wobbling.

The better news: While nobody in New York wants to hear it quite yet, the season has already been a success. Making the playoffs, and maybe doing some damage once they're there, is still the goal. But it would be the cherry on top of a season's worth of sundae, as a team that nobody seemed to think much of in October proved us all wrong.

And yes, most of that is due to Matthew Schaefer, who may be about to become the first unanimous Calder winner in modern NHL history. By now, he hardly needs even more tire-pumping, but it's hard to avoid. From a long-term perspective, Schaefer's development was the single most important aspect of the Islanders' season, and it hasn't just been an A+ — it might have broken the grade scale entirely.

Mix in a Vezina-worthy season from Ilya Sorokin and returns to form from Mathew Barzal and Bo Horvat, and the season



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is going to feel like a major step forward, no matter how it ends.

There aren't too many other teams in the race that you could say that for. Maybe the Sharks out west, and that's about it. In that sense, the Islanders are one of the only teams that already have an overall W in the bank. The only question is whether it's an all-caps W, or we get to bold it and underline

it with a playoff spot. We'll find out over the next few days, as the rested-up Islanders get set to play the final week with house money already spilling out of their pockets.

We just won't have Patrick Roy along for the ride. That might change the dynamic significantly, especially if the Islanders still end up as a miss. They've got four games to make it a moot point.



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## NORTH STATE JOURNAL

### Hurricanes overwhelm Islanders in 4-3 win

By: Cory Lavalette

RALEIGH — If there were any concerns the Hurricanes would take their foot off the accelerator after clinching a playoff berth, those were put to rest Saturday night.

Carolina dominated the desperate Islanders in a 4-3 win that didn't reflect how thorough a beat down the Metropolitan Division leaders inflicted on the overwhelmed visitors.

"We played a really good team," said Seth Jarvis, "and I'm really proud of how we came out and handled it."

The Hurricanes outshot New York 40-16 and have allowed a combined 26 shots against in their last two games — two playoff hopefuls in the Blue Jackets and Islanders. The 5-on-5 shot attempts were 71-21. Matthew Schaefer, the Islanders' wunderkind defenseman and shoe-in for the Calder Trophy, was on the ice at 5-on-5 for four shots on goal for and 21 against.

Despite all that, the game wasn't a total rout thanks to New York goalie Ilya Sorokin (36 saves), who did everything he could while playing for the second straight night to try to get the Islanders valuable points in the standings.

"He's one of the top goalies in the world," Hurricanes forward Jackson Blake said. "When you shoot that many pucks, though, I think you're going to get the bounces once in a while."

The Islanders, outshot nearly six to one in the first half of the game, still led 2-1 on goals by Matt Gatcomb and Max Shabanov.

But Blake tied the game just past the midway point of regulation for his 22nd goal when Logan Stankoven bodied Islanders defenseman Scott Mayfield — eight inches taller and 50 pounds heavier — off the puck along the boards to set up his linemate.

"That goal is all credit to him," Blake said of Stankoven. "I had the easy part just to finish it, but he made an unbelievable play there. He's a smaller guy, but he doesn't play like it."

Jarvis, who tied the game in the first period by scoring on a partial breakaway off a stretch pass from Sean Walker, gave Carolina its first lead by setting up Sebastian Aho for a shorthanded goal — the Hurricanes' third in as many games.

That shorthanded rush was started when defenseman Jacob Slavin angled a backhand pass off the boards and up to Jarvis to create the opportunity. Jarvis then feathered a pass through Schaefer to Aho, who banged in his 26th goal of the season at 16:17 of the second for a 3-2 lead.

"Great pass by (Slavin), and then just executing was the biggest thing," Jarvis said. "And (Aho) scoring was huge."

Jarvis' second goal, his 32nd of the year, came in the opening shift of the third when Andrei Svechnikov won a race to a loose puck and sent a pass cross ice for a Jarvis one-timer.

The Hurricanes ended up needing the two-goal cushion.

New York sent Sorokin to the bench with more than three minutes remaining and got within one when Anders Lee scored his 19th goal of the season on a redirection in front of Brandon Bussi (13 saves) with 97 seconds left.

But Bussi shut the door at the end, making two saves in the final 30 seconds to secure his fourth straight win and 29th of the season.

"The last minute got a little hairy, but overall I just can't say enough," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "That was pretty impressive considering what's at stake. I thought our guys just played the way we wanted to, and we got what we deserved tonight."

The win pushed Carolina's magic number to one to win the division, and the team's 104 points have it atop the Eastern Conference with six games remaining.

"You look at our last couple of games, and I think that desperation type of feeling has been apparent in each game," defenseman K'Andre Miller said. "So obviously we're closing in tight on the end of the year, and the playoffs are right around the corner."

Notes: Stankoven won 6 of 11 faceoffs and has won more than 50% of his draws in three straight games. ... Carolina went 0 for 3 on the power play, snapping its eight-game goal streak. ... Miller had two assists, his seventh multipoint game of the season. ... Forwards Nicolas Deslauriers and Jesperi Kotkaniemi and defenseman Mike Reilly were healthy scratches for Carolina.



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## Recap: Canes Outdueled In Ottawa

By: Peter Dewar & Walt Ruff

Hall nets 300th career goal, but Carolina can't complete the comeback

RALEIGH, N.C. - The Carolina Hurricanes struck first on Sunday, but the Ottawa Senators roared back to take a 6-3 victory at Canadian Tire Centre.

A potential playoff preview looked the part from puck drop as both teams traded punches in the early going. When Logan Stankoven put away a rebound on the power play to nudge the Canes ahead first, the Senators responded with two tucks of their own in the next 3:29 to steal the lead.

But as time wound down in the first frame, a persistent Andrei Svechnikov knotted things up just before the buzzer, poking home a loose puck in the crease as Linus Ullmark scrambled to cover.

The latter 40 minutes, however, largely belonged to the home club. Ottawa's Brady Tkachuk scored his first of two on the night to retake the lead in the second period, before he and Shane Pinto tacked on a goal apiece in the third period to stretch their team's advantage to three.

Taylor Hall gave the Canes late life with 2:30 to play, but the comeback was not to be as an Ottawa empty-netter sealed its victory.

Frederik Andersen finished with 26 saves on 31 shots during his 33rd appearance this season.

### Stats & Standouts

Nikolaj Ehlers picked up an assist to reach 65 points, his most in a single season during his 11-year career. His 41 helpers on the year are also a career high, and his 24 goals are five shy of his single-season best (29), set in 2017-18.

Taylor Hall scored his 300th career goal, becoming the sixth member of the 2010 NHL Draft class to do so. He's also the ninth active first-overall pick to reach that milestone.

Recording an assist on Hall's goal, Sean Walker reached 100 helpers in his NHL career, 30 of which have come with Carolina over the last two seasons.

Logan Stankoven potted his fourth goal in his last four games and extended his point streak (4G, 1A) to the same duration. The goal marks his 38th point of the season, matching last season's total.

Andrei Svechnikov's goal pushed his point streak to five games (4G, 2A) and nudged him to within one of his second career 30-goal campaign.

### They Said It...

Rod Brind'Amour describing the effort...

"Pretty flat and just doing things that you're not going to win [doing]. [We were not] winning any 50-50 pucks and faceoffs were terrible. We (didn't) start with the puck, bad pinches, bad penalties, the list goes on and on. And yet somehow we were still in the game there for a while. It was not a good night for us."

Taylor Hall describing the difference in the game...

"Execution. That's a tough back-to-back to come into. They played yesterday, but they played early. That's hockey. Montreal came in with kind of the same schedule and beat us at home. There's some things to take away from it. That's a playoff team. I don't know if they're going to make the playoffs, but that's a team that plays playoff hockey. It's a good test for what we're going to see. They have that desperation, and we're going to have to match that in a couple of weeks."

Rod Brind'Amour on the Hall-Stankoven-Blake line, after two of them scored today...

"That line's been the one bright spot all year, really. They've never really come off it. They've been pretty solid, and he was good again. Hallsy gave us a goal too at the end, not giving up. But we can't win with just one line. We need to have other contributors, and we didn't have that tonight."

Taylor Hall on scoring his 300th NHL goal...

"It's nice. This is the closest arena to my hometown. My dad was here. Result excluded, it's nice to score that. I haven't been scoring a ton lately. Our line's been playing well, and our line is going to be a big key moving forward. We all have to chip in, so it was nice to do that tonight."

### What's Next?

The Canes are scheduled to be off on Monday before taking on the Bruins at Lenovo Center on Tuesday.

Next Game: Tuesday, April 7 vs. Boston | 7:00 p.m. ET | FDSNSO | Tickets | Parking

## Recap: Canes Clip Isles For Third Straight Win



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 6, 2026

By: Peter Dewar & Walt Ruff

"I thought our guys played the way we wanted to, and we got what we deserved tonight..."

RALEIGH, N.C. - Spearheaded by Seth Jarvis' three-point performance, the Carolina Hurricanes overcame two one-goal deficits to outlast the New York Islanders 4-3 at Lenovo Center on Saturday.

Despite the game's first goal going to the Isles at 5:17, the Canes had their foot on the gas throughout the opening frame. As Jarvis netted the equalizer with a wrister off the rush at 11:07, Carolina carried a 13-4 shot advantage into the first break.

But once the puck dropped for the second period, a similar script played out. New York nabbed another go-ahead goal in the early going, while chance after chance for Carolina found anything but net at the other end. Undeterred, the Canes broke through once more when Logan Stankoven found Jackson Blake cruising through the slot for a five-hole finish and another tie game.

After a Canes power play came and went in the ensuing action, an Islanders man advantage shortly afterward threatened to nudge the visitors ahead once more. Instead, a stout effort from Carolina's killers led to an opportunity to break out of their zone, and five minutes after Blake's leveler, a perfect outlet pass from Jaccob Slavin sent Jarvis and Sebastian Aho in on a 2-on-1, with the former setting up the latter for a shorthanded strike and the Canes' first lead of the night.

Providing what would become much-needed insurance, Jarvis' second of the night arrived, fittingly, 24 seconds into the third period as he finished off a cross-ice feed from Andrei Svechnikov. In terms of shots on goal, the Islanders enjoyed their most productive period with 10 in the final frame, but the only one to find its way home did so with 97 seconds remaining, leaving sparse opportunities to knot things up as Carolina held on from there.

Despite a lower shot volume coming his way, Brandon Bussi needed to be sharp when called upon. Finishing with 12 saves on 15 shots, Bussi came up big with a handful of key third-period stops as the Islanders sought an equalizer.

### Stats & Standouts

Sebastian Aho scored his franchise record-extending 22nd career shorthanded goal. He tied Blake Coleman for the third-most among active players behind Brad Marchand (36) and Islanders forward Jean-Gabriel Pageau (24). Aho also now has points in five straight games (1G, 5A).

The Canes lead the league with 12 shorthanded goals, including one in each of their last three outings. The only other time the franchise has scored shorthanded in three straight games was during the 1980-81 campaign as the Hartford Whalers.

Seth Jarvis extended his team lead in goals with his 31st and 32nd tallies of the campaign, matching last season's total and climbing to within one of his career high of 33 (2023-24).

After scoring in three straight, Andrei Svechnikov's goal-scoring streak became a four-game point streak (3G, 2A) with an assist on Jarvis' tally.

Jackson Blake picked up his 22nd goal of the season, becoming the fifth Hurricane since relocation to reach that mark in one of his first two NHL campaigns. The others: Sebastian Aho (x2), Jeff Skinner, Eric Staal and Andrei Svechnikov.

Logan Stankoven extended his point streak to three games (3G, 1A) with an assist on Blake's marker and reached the 20-assist mark for the first time in his career.

K'Andre Miller's two assists marked his seventh multi-point game of the season, which ranks second among Canes defensemen behind Shayne Gostisbehere (11).

They Said It...

Rod Brind'Amour giving his thoughts on the victory...

"I mean, the last minute got a little hairy, but, overall, I just can't say enough. That was pretty impressive, considering what's at stake. I thought our guys played the way we wanted to, and we got what we deserved tonight."

Jackson Blake touching on what he liked about the win...

"I just think it was everyone's effort tonight. It's awesome to see that, when every line and every defenseman [has that effort], and Bus is making saves like that, it's fun to watch. It was a great team win, and I'm happy we got to play the way that Rod wants us to play tonight."

K'Andre Miller on the lockdown performance...

"I don't think we gave them all that much. We played really good defensively, limiting their chances too through the neutral zone and not allowing them to get to Bus all that much. It was a good job."

K'Andre Miller on what's taken the team to a new level lately, defensively...

"I think just trusting that the next guy up is going to do their job. I think we've done a really good job this year of playing your man hard, and everybody's doing their job. It's making life pretty easy right now."

Rod Brind'Amour talking about the line of Andrei Svechnikov, Sebastian Aho, and Seth Jarvis...

"I thought they had a great game. A lot of opportunities. A lot of almost's. It certainly felt like the whole game, the whole team played the way they wanted. I don't know what you could talk negative about that game, that was a pretty solid effort."

K'Andre Miller after picking up another win over a team fighting for its playoff lives...

"I think if you look at our last couple of games, I think that desperation type of feeling has been apparent in each game. Obviously, we're closing in tight on the end of the year, and playoffs are right around the corner, so those are good games for us already."

Postgame Quotes: K'Andre Miller

What's Next?

The Canes fly to Ottawa immediately post-game. They'll take on the Senators at 5 p.m. on Sunday.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Next Game: Sunday, April 5 at Ottawa | 5:00 p.m. ET | FDSNSO

Next Home Game: Tuesday, April 7 vs. Boston | 7:00 p.m. ET | FDSNSO | Tickets | Parking

## Injury Report: Kochetkov Resumes Skating With Canes

By: Walt Ruff & Peter Dewar

RALEIGH, N.C. - The Carolina Hurricanes had a familiar face join them at the end of their morning skate on Saturday, as goaltender Pyotr Kochetkov jumped on the ice.

His first time facing shots from all of his teammates in over three months, the 26-year-old backstop was declared "probably out for the year" on Dec. 29, when Rod Brind'Amour shared that Kochetkov was set to undergo surgery to repair a lower-body injury. But with the Canes having secured their spot in the 2026 Stanley Cup Playoffs and the potential of playing for two more months, the timing aligned for Kochetkov to continue on the road to recovery.

Although there's no timeline for when (or if) he'd become available again, today's focus was kept on the positive.

"It's a step in the right direction for him, for sure, coming off that injury," Brind'Amour said following the skate.

Kochetkov sang a similar tune, saying that he's not sure how far away he is from potentially playing, and that it'll take a few practices to get a better understanding.

"It's fun to see the guys on the ice, it's very special for me now," he said with a beaming smile. "For a long time, I skated alone and with Goalie Coach (Paul Schonfelder). It's [been] tough mentally, but I'm happy I'm a little bit closer for the guys."

Continuing to call his time away both mentally and physically tough, Kochetkov needed to address both a longstanding issue and one that flared up during training camp.

Missing the first month of the season, he ramped things back up for a Nov. 4 season debut in New York, in which he posted a 26-save shutout. Pushing through the pain for eight starts, it became too much and led him to understand that continuing on in that way was too dangerous for his future and his career.

"I felt it when I skated, when I was off the ice, when I would sleep. I tried my best to play. I tried to come back every time, but after every game, it just felt it more and more and more," Kochetkov described.

Saying he feels "much better" now, the next logical step in the rehab process would be for Kochetkov to take part in a full morning skate or a full-length practice. While the Canes have a few morning skates left on the schedule, practice days are hard to come by this time of year, given the amount of games left in the next two weeks before the start of the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

In Kochetkov's absence, Brandon Bussi has made NHL history on a few occasions, including becoming the fastest goaltender ever to reach 10, 15, 20, and 25 wins. Now 28-6-1, he's worked in tandem with a healthy Frederik Andersen, and should Kochetkov become an option, the Canes may get their three-headed monster between the pipes back.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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## Tkachuk scores twice, Senators defeat Hurricanes

By: Zoe Pierce

Ottawa maintains hold on 2nd wild card in East; Carolina had won 3 straight

OTTAWA -- Brady Tkachuk scored twice, and the Ottawa Senators defeated the Carolina Hurricanes 6-3 at Canadian Tire Centre on Sunday.

Tim Stutzle, Shane Pinto and Dylan Cozens each had a goal and an assist for the Senators (40-27-10), who have won two of three. Linus Ullmark made 25 saves in the second of back-to-back starts after a 4-1 loss to the Minnesota Wild on Saturday.

"It took everybody," Tkachuk said. "All the forwards, all the 'D,' and Linus was outstanding, made some huge saves at the right time and (we) stayed consistent in our game, didn't let things affect us."

The Senators hold the second wild card into the Stanley Cup Playoffs from the Eastern Conference, one point ahead of the New York Islanders and two points ahead of the Columbus Blue Jackets and Detroit Red Wings.

"That's a playoff team," Carolina forward Taylor Hall said of Ottawa. "I don't know if they're going to make the playoffs, but that's a team that plays playoff hockey, and it's a good test for what we're going to see. They have that desperation, and we're going to have to match that in a couple weeks."

Andrei Svechnikov, Logan Stankoven, and Hall scored for the Hurricanes (49-22-6), who had won three straight. Frederik Andersen made 25 saves.

Carolina is first in the Metropolitan Division and Eastern Conference. The Hurricanes would have clinched the division title with one point on Sunday.

"Pretty flat and just doing things that you're not going to win (doing)," Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "(We were not) winning any 50-50 pucks and face-offs were terrible. We (didn't) start with the puck, bad pinches, bad penalties, the list goes on and on. And yet somehow we were still in the game there for a while. It was not a good night for us."

Stankoven gave the Hurricanes a 1-0 lead on the power play at 5:22 of the first period. Nikolaj Ehlers attempted a backhand-to-forehand move down low but lost control of the puck, which slid into the slot to Stankoven, who buried it past Ullmark.

"That line's been the one bright spot all year, really. They've never really come off it," Brind'Amour said of the Hall-Stankoven-Jackson Blake line. "They've been pretty solid and he was good again. 'Hallsy' gave us a goal too at the end, not giving up. But we can't win with just one line. We need to have other contributors, and we didn't have that tonight."

Cozens tied it 1-1 on the power play at 7:17. Drake Batherson sent the puck into the slot to Stutzle, whose rebound went to Cozens for a backhand past Andersen.

"They play well at home, they play with a lot of speed," Hall said. "And if you're not able to sustain O-zone time in their end, they break pucks out quickly, and they're on the attack very fast."

Stutzle gave Ottawa a 2-1 lead at 8:51 with a highlight-reel goal. He intercepted a pass at the blue line and broke in alone before deking to the backhand, forehand, and backhand again to beat Andersen.

"It was a superstar moment," Tkachuk said.

The Hurricanes tied the game 2-2 at 19:40. After two failed clearing attempts by Ottawa, Svechnikov put a shot on net that created a loose puck in front. Warren Foegele attempted to push it to Ullmark's glove for a cover, but Svechnikov reached it first and scored.

"I think a lot of teams have learned to be like (the Hurricanes) and that's something that, you know, we've taken inspiration from them, and we knew it was going to be a grind of a game," Tkachuk said.

Tkachuk regained the lead for the Senators, tipping Artem Zub's shot from the blue line to make it 3-2 at 8:33 of the second period.

Fabian Zetterlund then fed Pinto on the power play to put the Senators up 4-2 at 2:50 of the third period.

Tkachuk made it 5-2 at 6:32. Ridly Greig drove the net and put a backhand shot on net, with the rebound getting buried by Tkachuk.

"I thought everyone responded with a better game," Ottawa coach Travis Green said. "Especially the guys that I didn't think played that well yesterday. Just played a little harder, played a little quicker, went to hard places."



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Hall scored at 17:30 to make it 5-3. He picked up the rebound of Sean Walker's shot in the high slot for his 300th NHL goal.

"It's nice to have that, I haven't been scoring a ton lately," Hall said. "Our line's been playing well, but our lines going to be a big key going forward here, and we've all got to chip in."

Claude Giroux added an empty-net goal for the 6-3 final at 19:03.

"Last year, this year, it's, you know, it takes everybody in this community and we know how passionate, how bad (the fans)

want (playoffs)," Tkachuk said, "They chant ('we want playoffs') multiple times and I don't think anybody wants it as bad as the guys in this room, so we always appreciate their support."

NOTES: Forwards Jordan Staal (undisclosed) and Jordan Martinook (undisclosed) were late scratches for Carolina. ... Tkachuk became the sixth player in Senators history to record 30 career multigoal games, joining Daniel Alfredsson (61), Jason Spezza (39), Dany Heatley (36), Alexei Yashin (36) and Marian Hossa (33).

## Jarvis has 3 points, Hurricanes hold off Islanders

By: Kurt Dusterberg

Carolina wins 3rd straight; New York has lost 4 in row

RALEIGH, N.C. -- Seth Jarvis had two goals and an assist, and the Carolina Hurricanes defeated the New York Islanders 4-3 at Lenovo Center on Saturday.

Sebastian Aho scored short-handed, and Brandon Bussi made 13 saves for the Hurricanes (49-21-6), who have won three in a row. K'Andre Miller had two assists.

"Overall, I can't say enough. That was pretty impressive," Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "Considering what's at stake, I thought our guys played the way we want them to. We got what we deserved tonight."

Carolina is first in the Eastern Conference, two points ahead of the Tampa Bay Lightning. The Hurricanes lead the Metropolitan Division, 10 points ahead of the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Marc Gatcomb and Max Shabonov scored for the Islanders (42-31-5), who have lost a season-high four in a row. Ilya Sorokin made 36 saves.

Matthew Schaefer had an assist to reach 58 points (22 goals, 36 assists) on the season to pass Phil Housley (57) for the most by an 18-year-old defenseman in NHL history.

New York remained in third place in the Metropolitan, one point ahead of the Philadelphia Flyers and Columbus Blue Jackets.

"This is a good forecheck team. They put a lot of pressure (on us)," New York coach Patrick Roy said. "Their defense comes in and they pinch hard, and we had a hard time getting out of the zone.

"It's not the time of year where you (can) feel sorry for yourself. You've got to go out there and play and refocus for the next game. It's not good timing to lose four in a row, I get it. But we've been playing against good teams -- four games in six days."

Gatcomb put the Islanders up 1-0 at 5:17 of the first period. Simon Holmstrom slipped a pass around Carolina defenseman Sean Walker in the left face-off circle, and Gatcomb redirected the puck in the net at the right post.

Jarvis tied it 1-1 at 11:07 when he took a stretch pass from Walker, got a step on New York defenseman Ryan Pulock and scored over Sorokin's right pad.

The Islanders took a 2-1 lead at 2:17 of the second period. Calum Ritchie passed from behind the net to Shabonov, who scored on the short side on a sharp-angle shot.

Carolina made it 2-2 at 11:15. Jackson Blake drove the net and scored five-hole off Logan Stankoven's pass from the left-side boards. Stankoven kept possession of the puck after taking a hit from New York defenseman Scott Mayfield.

"That goal is all credit to him. I had the easy part just to finish it," Blake said. "He made an unbelievable play. He's a smaller guy, but he doesn't play like it."

The Hurricanes scored short-handed for a 3-2 lead at 16:17. Jarvis took a pass off the boards from Jaccob Slavin near the offensive blue line before slipping a pass to Aho, who scored on a snap shot.

Jarvis extended the lead to 4-2 at 24 seconds of the third period when he took a cross-ice pass from Andrei Svechnikov and scored over Sorokin's left shoulder.

Anders Lee tipped a shot at the net front with the extra attacker to cut with 1:37 remaining to cut the lead to 4-3.

"The pressure they put on us tonight was tough for us to break for most of that game," Lee said. "But we found a way to hang in there and find some goals and find a timely (penalty) kill. We stuck around, we didn't give up, we battled until the absolute end. Too bad we couldn't get one of those last bounces to go."

NOTES: Aho has six points (one goal, five assists) on a five-game point streak ... Carolina is 19-5-1 against the Metropolitan Division. ... The Hurricanes lead the NHL with 12 short-handed goals. They have scored short-handed in three straight games for the second time in Hurricanes/Hartford Whalers history (Dec. 3-7, 1980).



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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**AP** ASSOCIATED PRESS

## Senators beat the Hurricanes 6-3 to move into the second wild-card spot in the East | AP News

By: The Associated Press

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP) — Brady Tkachuk scored twice and the Ottawa Senators beat the Carolina Hurricanes 6-3 on Sunday night to move into the second wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference.

Ottawa moved a point ahead of the New York Islanders for the last playoff spot with five games left. The Senators are five points behind Boston for the first wild card.

Carolina leads the East, two points ahead of Tampa Bay. The Hurricanes missed a chance to clinch the Metropolitan Division.

Both teams were playing the second half of back-to-back games, with Ottawa scoring twice in a 3:42 span in the third to take a 5-2 lead.

Shane Pinto made it 4-2 on a power play, beating Frederik Andersen to the short side. Ridly Greig then won a race to

the net and, while Andersen made the initial save, the side was wide open for Tkachuk to bury his second of the game.

Carolina's Taylor Hall wristed a shot past Linus Ullmark with 2:30 remaining to make it 5-3, but Claude Giroux added an empty-netter for Ottawa.

Dylan Cozens and Tim Stutzle also scored for Ottawa, and Ullmark stopped 25 shots. Defenseman Jake Sanderson played his 300th NHL game. He had an assist.

Logan Stankoven and Andrei Svechnikov also scored for Carolina, and Andersen made 25 saves.

Up next

Hurricanes: Host Boston on Tuesday night.

Senators: Host Tampa Bay on Tuesday night



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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## 2026 NHL playoff picture: Standings, schedule, bracket, seedings as Stanley Cup Playoff race heats up

By: Austin Nivison

The 2026 Stanley Cup Playoffs are almost here, but there are still plenty of questions about which teams will qualify and which matchups we will see in the postseason. The Buffalo Sabres have clinched their first playoff berth since 2011, and the Tampa Bay Lightning also locked up their playoff spot on Saturday.

In both conferences, the wild card races are incredibly tight. The Ottawa Senators still hold a tenuous grip on the final playoff spot, but the margin is razor thin with four teams at 88 points and the Washington Capitals at 87 points. The race for the Atlantic Division title just got even more interesting as the Montreal Canadiens rattled off their eighth straight win.

Out West, Connor McDavid and the Edmonton Oilers have surpassed the Anaheim Ducks for first place, although the two teams are tied in points. The Vegas Golden Knights have steadied the ship in third place, and they are one point behind the two teams in front of them.

The Western Conference wild card race seems to change every day. The Nashville Predators defeated the San Jose Sharks on Saturday night to take over the final playoff spot, but the Los Angeles Kings are lurking right behind them.

Be sure to take a look at the full schedule with just a few weeks left to play.

Reminder: Here's how the NHL playoff seeding works

The top three teams in each division automatically qualify for the playoffs.

Each conference has two wild card spots.

The top division winner in each conference will play the second wild card team, and the other division winner will play the first wild card team.

The second and third-place teams in each division will match up with one another in the first round.

Regulation wins are the first tiebreaker.

Regulation plus OT wins are the second tiebreaker

(X) denotes clinched playoff berth; (Y) denotes clinched division; (Z) denotes clinched conference; (P) denotes clinched Presidents' Trophy

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

1. Tampa Bay Lightning | 48-22-6 | 102 points (X)

Points percentage: .671

Regulation wins: 39

Regulation plus OT wins: 44

Current first-round matchup: Boston Bruins

2. Montreal Canadiens | 45-21-10 | 100 points

Points percentage: .658

Regulation wins: 32

Regulation plus OT wins: 42

Current first-round matchup: Buffalo Sabres

3. Buffalo Sabres | 46-23-8 | 100 points (X)

Points percentage: .649

Regulation wins: 38

Regulation plus OT wins: 41

Current first-round matchup: Montreal Canadiens

Metropolitan Division

1. Carolina Hurricanes | 49-21-6 | 104 points (X)

Points percentage: .684

Regulation wins: 36

Regulation plus OT wins: 44

Current first-round matchup: Ottawa Senators

2. Pittsburgh Penguins | 39-22-16 | 94 points

Points percentage: .610

Regulation wins: 32

Regulation plus OT wins: 36

Current first-round matchup: New York Islanders

3. New York Islanders | 42-31-5 | 89 points

Points percentage: .571

Regulation wins: 28

Regulation plus OT wins: 38

Current first-round matchup: Pittsburgh Penguins

Wild Card

WC1. Boston Bruins | 43-26-8 | 94 points

Points percentage: .610



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Regulation wins: 31

Regulation plus OT wins: 39

Current first-round matchup: Tampa Bay Lightning

WC2. Ottawa Senators | 39-27-10 | 88 points

Points percentage: .579

Regulation wins: 33

Regulation plus OT wins: 36

Current first-round matchup: Carolina Hurricanes

In the hunt

Detroit Red Wings | 40-28-8 | 88 points

Points percentage: .579

Regulation wins: 29

Regulation plus OT wins: 38

Philadelphia Flyers | 38-26-12 | 88 points

Points percentage: .579

Regulation wins: 24

Regulation plus OT wins: 29

Columbus Blue Jackets | 38-27-12 | 88 points

Points percentage: .571

Regulation wins: 27

Regulation plus OT wins: 32

Washington Capitals | 39-29-9 | 87 points

Points percentage: .565

Regulation wins: 33

Regulation plus OT wins: 367

Western Conference

Central Division

1. Colorado Avalanche | 50-15-10 | 110 points (X)

Points percentage: .733

Regulation wins: 44

Regulation plus OT wins: 44

Current first-round matchup: Nashville Predators

2. Dallas Stars | 45-20-12 | 102 points (X)

Points percentage: .662

Regulation wins: 35

Regulation plus OT wins: 40

Current first-round matchup: Minnesota Wild

3. Minnesota Wild | 43-21-12 | 98 points (X)

Points percentage: .645

Regulation wins: 28

Regulation plus OT wins: 39

Current first-round matchup: Dallas Stars

Pacific Division

1. Edmonton Oilers | 39-29-9 | 87 points

Points percentage: .565

Regulation wins: 30

Regulation plus OT wins: 39

Current first-round matchup: Utah Mammoth

2. Anaheim Ducks | 41-31-5 | 87 points

Points percentage: .565

Regulation wins: 24

Regulation plus OT wins: 33

Current first-round matchup: Vegas Golden Knights

3. Vegas Golden Knights | 35-26-16 | 86 points

Points percentage: .558

Regulation wins: 27

Regulation plus OT wins: 34

Current first-round matchup: Anaheim Ducks

Wild Card

WC1. Utah Mammoth | 40-30-6 | 86 points

Points percentage: .566

Regulation wins: 31

Regulation plus OT wins: 40

Current first-round matchup: Edmonton Oilers

WC2. Nashville Predators | 36-31-9 | 81 points

Points percentage: .533

Regulation wins: 26

Regulation plus OT wins: 31

Current first-round opponent: Colorado Avalanche

In the hunt

Los Angeles Kings | 31-26-19 | 81 points

Points percentage: .533

Regulation wins: 19

Regulation plus OT wins: 27

San Jose Sharks | 36-32-7 | 79 points

Points percentage: .527

Regulation wins: 24

Regulation plus OT wins: 34

Winnipeg Jets | 33-31-12 | 78 points

Points percentage: .513

Regulation wins: 26

Regulation plus OT wins: 31



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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St. Louis Blues | 32-31-12 | 76 points

Points percentage: .507

Regulation wins: 28

Regulation plus OT wins: 31

Seattle Kraken | 32-32-11 | 75 points

Points percentage: .500

Regulation wins: 25

Regulation plus OT wins: 31



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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**SB NATION**  
**CANES COUNTRY**

## Hurricanes drop back-to-back to desperate Senators 6-3.

By: Al Hood

When the pregame hype reel was released on social media for Sunday's game against Ottawa, the sight of Nicolas Deslauriers walking in and his jersey being hung ended up being a signal that Carolina was prepared to have at least one player sit out. It turns out two players didn't make the trip to Ottawa—Jordan Staal and Jordan Martinook—and the effort on the ice showed that the Canes had moved into preservation mode as Ottawa ran away with the game 5-2.

The loss means that Carolina failed to clinch the Metropolitan Division as Pittsburgh won in regulation for the second day in a row against a Florida team that has given up on the season.

Ottawa meanwhile was looking to at least salvage some points to stem the bleeding from dropping four of their last five and take advantage of other results during the day to stay in the Wild Card 2 spot and inch closer to Boston in the first spot.

The game started well for the Hurricanes, as Carolina reacted to losing their Power Play Goal games streak on Saturday by starting a new one. The Canes earned the penalty when Seth Jarvis went down the ice on a breakaway and was held by Jordan Spence to the point where he ended up in the goalie net, hitting the cross bar. Jarvis was OK, and on the ensuing power play a red hot Nikolaj Ehlers was able to get close to the net, thread a great pass over to Logan Stankoven who potted it to put the Hurricanes up 1-0.

Once that power play was finished, though, the Senators basically took control of the game. There wasn't a period where the Senators were outshot by the Canes, and less than two minutes after Stankoven gave Carolina the lead Ottawa tied it back up on a Power Play goal of their own by Dylan Cozens. Less than a minute later, Tim Stützle took advantage of a misplay on the puck, skated in on goalie Frederik Andersen, and made a great move at the crease to push the puck by the goalie to give the Senators a 2-1 lead.

Carolina still had some fight, though, as the first period wound down. Carolina was able to keep possession of the puck in the Ottawa zone in the last few seconds, and when a shot went toward Linus Ullmark he was unable to fully cover it in sight of the referee and Andrei Svechnikov kept batting at the puck to get it into the goal and knot the score right at the end of the period.

The good vibes for the Canes were over after that, though, as Ottawa took control of the game. Brady Tkachuk provided the dagger 8:33 into the period with a tip in from a point shot by Artem Zub. While Carolina didn't surrender another goal in the second, the mood and play on the ice indicated that the Canes went into self-preservation mode.

The third period put the final nail in the game when Carolina was unable to take advantage of another power play, and Shane Pinto would score a few minutes later to put the game out of reach for Ottawa at 4-2. The rest of the goals were window dressing as Tkachuk made it 5-2, and then Taylor Hall finally got his 300th career goal late in the period to bring Carolina back to within two. The goal came with some netfront presence by the veteran, and it did give Carolina a shred of hope with a little over two minutes left.

The Hurricanes would pull Andersen and try to stage a rally, but Claude Giroux nailed the empty net, and Carolina heads back home with their winning streak snapped at three, 6-3.

Ullmark was able to make 25 saves on 28 shots playing the second night in a row after backstopping the Senators against Minnesota on Saturday. Andersen was a victim of the missing stalwarts of Staal and Martinook, making 25 saves on 30 shots.

Carolina heads back to Raleigh to face off against another desperate playoff team in Boston on Tuesday night for their last regular season home game. They'll once again have a chance to clinch the division, and this time they'll do so without keeping an eye on Pittsburgh as the Penguins somehow scored three days off and won't play again until Thursday.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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## The Hockey News

### 'It Was Not A Good Night For Us': Rod Brind'Amour, Taylor Hall On Loss To Senators

By: Ryan Henkel

Brind'Amour critiques a flat performance. Hall reflects on his 300th goal and matching playoff intensity after the Senators' decisive victory.

The Carolina Hurricanes saw their three-game winning streak snapped Sunday night as the Canes fell 6-3 to the Ottawa Senators.

Carolina struck first and managed to keep the game close, but eventually the Senators overwhelmed them in the third.

After the game, Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour spoke with the media in Ottawa. Here's what he had to say:

Rod Brind'Amour

On the game: We were pretty flat and just doing things that you're not going to win doing. Just not winning any 50/50 pucks, faceoffs were terrible, not starting with the puck, bad pinches, bad penalties. The list goes on and on. Yet somehow, we were still in the game there for a while. It was not a good night for us.

On Logan Stankoven's scoring uptick: That line's been the one bright spot all year and they've never really come off of it. They've been pretty solid and he was again good. Hallsy got a goal too at the end by not giving up. But can't win with just one line. You have to have other contributors and we didn't have that tonight.

On Taylor Hall reaching 300 career goals: He's been a great player for a long time obviously. I think that kind of goes without saying. But since he's been with us, I don't know if he's reinvented himself, but he's certainly playing like he did maybe 10 years ago. He's been a bright spot for us.

On if Ottawa overwhelmed them in the third period: I mean, they were the better team all game. It wasn't a one-goal game. We were lucky to be one goal, but we just couldn't kill

penalties. Like I said, they were by far the better team. It wasn't close. But we certainly didn't make it too hard on them.

Taylor Hall

On what the game came down to: Execution. That's a tough back-to-back to come into. They played yesterday, but they played early, but that's hockey. Montreal came in with kind of the same schedule and beat us at home. There's some things to take away. That's a playoff team. I don't know if they're going to make the playoffs, but that's a team that plays playoff hockey and so it's a good test for what we're going to see. They have that desperation and we're going to have to match that in a couple of weeks.

On scoring his 300th career goal: It's nice. This is the closest arena to my hometown. My dad was here and stuff, so the result excluded, team-wise, it's nice to score. I haven't been scoring a ton lately. Our line's been playing well, but... Our line is going to be key going forward here and we all have to chip in. It was nice to do that tonight.

On the third period: They play well, they play well at home, they play with a lot of speed. If you're not able to sustain zone time in their end, they break pucks out quickly and they're on the attack very fast with some good, heavy players. They have a good blend of speed and size. But yeah, they overwhelmed us just like we do to teams when we're on. It's the same thing. It's a good example of what it feels like when we're on. What we did to the Islanders last night was something similar. Just give them credit. But that's the kind of hockey we're gonna need to play in a couple of weeks.

On this potentially being a future first-round matchup: I think it's two teams that play similarly. It'd be a good test. They're a hungry team, they're fast, but we'll be fine. Whoever we play, it's really up in the air right now, but we're looking forward to it.

### Hurricanes Veteran Reaches Big Career Milestone

By: Ryan Henkel

Veteran forward Taylor Hall reaches 300 career NHL goals, demonstrating enduring offensive prowess.

Carolina Hurricanes forward Taylor Hall became the 245th player in NHL history to reach the 300 goal milestone, scoring Sunday night in the Canes' 6-3 loss to the Ottawa Senators.

"It's nice," Hall said on the milestone. "This is the closest arena to my hometown. My dad was here and stuff, so the result excluded team-wise, it's nice to score. I haven't been scoring a ton lately. Our line's been playing well, but... Our

line is going to be key going forward here and we all have to chip in. It was nice to do that tonight."

Hall, 34, had been sitting on 299 for quite a while (eight total games), but it wasn't from a lack of trying.

The veteran was all over the offensive zone in that span, racking up 14 shots on goal and five assists and it felt like number 300 should have come way sooner, but now at least he's finally gotten it.

"He's been a great player for a long time obviously," said Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour. "I think that kind of goes without saying. But since he's been with us, I don't know if



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he's reinvented himself, but he's certainly playing like he did maybe 10 years ago. He's been a bright spot for us."

The 2010 first-overall pick has played for seven different organizations across his 16-year career.

He's never been a prolific goal scorer, his career high was 39 in 2017-18, the year he won the Hart Trophy with the New Jersey Devils, but he's been a steady scorer throughout his career.

Despite being on the backside of his career now with Carolina, Hall has still managed to remain an offensive threat

and has found good chemistry with the youngsters Jackson Blake and Logan Stankoven.

"He's been great," Brind'Amour said. "It's not easy sometimes for anyone to come into a new environment, but a former MVP and I think he's understood and done a great job at it, that just whatever you ask him to do, however many minutes, with whoever and in any situations, he's been really good. This year probably feels a little more comfortable with everything that we're doing and I think his play has been very solid."

## LINKS

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# SportScan

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

1385748 Carolina Hurricanes

As Hurricanes eye NHL division title, might goalie reinforcements be on the way?

Chip Alexander6-7 minutes 05/04/2026

It's getting late in the hockey season, and the Carolina Hurricanes are checking off boxes.

The first was clinching a spot in the Stanley Cup playoffs. The Canes did that Thursday with a decisive win over the Columbus Blue Jackets.

Next is the Metropolitan Division title, and the Hurricanes moved a step closer Saturday with a 4-3 victory over the New York Islanders at the Lenovo Center.

Also on the list: first place in the Eastern Conference. That's still to be determined, as the Canes (104 points) and Tampa Bay Lightning (102) are contending to finish on top.

"Home ice in the playoffs is important, but I think the most important thing is feeling good about our game going into the playoffs," Canes defenseman Sean Walker said. "We've got to keep our foot on the gas and push the rest of the way."

The Canes, quick and aggressive, dominated the Islanders with a 40-16 edge in shots and 82 total shooting attempts to the Isles' 32.

Seth Jarvis had two goals and an assist, showing off his vertical leap into the glass after his first score. Sebastian Aho scored shorthanded and Jackson Blake had a goal while the Canes were stifling the Isles, who had five of their shots in the last three minutes of regulation after goalie Ilya Sorokin left for a sixth attacker.

"That was pretty impressive, considering what's at stake," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "We played the way we wanted to, and we got what we deserved tonight."



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The Canes have scored shorthanded in three straight games — Jordan Martinook and Alexander Nikishin with the first two shorties — for the first time since December 1980. Carolina has 12 this season.

Defenseman Jaccob Slavin jump-started the rush with a bank pass off the boards to Jarvis, who connected with Aho on a two-on-one rush for a 3-2 lead in the second period.

“Slavo made a great play kind of holding on to it and letting me and Fishy (Aho) get up ice,” Jarvis said. “That’s something we’ve gotten a lot better at, our D, when we’re out there, they know we’re looking for offense.”

The Isles (42-31-5), fighting to hold on to third place in the Metro, were coming off a 4-1 loss Friday to the Flyers. They managed to keep the score tight against the Canes with goals from Marc Gatcomb, Max Shabanov and then Anders Lee in the final 90 seconds of regulation after pulling Sorokin, whose 36 saves gave his team a chance.

Goalie Brandon Bussi earned his 29th win of the season for the Canes, who have a game Sunday at Ottawa.

Pyotr Kochetkov joins Hurricanes at morning skate

What had been a routine morning skate Saturday at Lenovo Center got a surprising twist: a late appearance by Pyotr Kochetkov, coming on the ice in his goaltending gear.

Two days after Brind’Amour said there was no timeline for Kochetkov’s return from lower-body issues and surgery that have kept him out for three months, Kochetkov was back. He spent some time in net facing a few shots, later saying it was fun being back skating with the guys for the first time.

Kochetkov, 26, has not played since Dec. 20, when he gave up five goals in a loss at Tampa Bay — his ninth game of the season. He elected to have surgery for an injury that had slowed him since training camp and his return was uncertain, although General Manager Eric Tulskey did say later that he might be able to get back before the end of the season.

Kochetkov, in talking to the media Saturday, would not specify what type of surgery was performed. He did say his injury situation — he had a different lower-body issue surface during camp — reached the point that it could not be alleviated without surgery.

“After some time, it was just every day no feel good,” he said. “It was when I skate, when I’m off ice, when I sleep. I try my best to play and try to come back every time, but every game it just felt more and more and more. I had a moment where I knew I just couldn’t do it.”

Asked how close he was to being able to play, Kochetkov said he was not sure and joked that Andrei Svechnikov scored a few times on him Saturday.

“I’m probably very far from playing if he scored on me,” he quipped.

Kochetkov has started 120 games in parts of five seasons with the Canes, with an overall record of 71-38-12, a career 2.46 goals against average and .905 save percentage. He has 11 career shutouts, blanking the New York Rangers in his first start of the 2025-26 season at Madison Square Garden.

“Tough time for me,” Kochetkov said. “Tough mentally, tough on my body. But now I feel much better. Just every day, step by step.”

This story was originally

Published April 5, 2026 at 5:30 AM.

Profile Image of Chip Alexander

In more than 40 years at The N&O, Chip Alexander has covered the N.C. State, UNC, Duke and East Carolina beats, and now is in his 15th season on the Carolina Hurricanes beat. Alexander, who has won numerous writing awards at the state and national level, covered the

Hurricanes’ move to North Carolina in 1997 and was a part of The N&O’s coverage of the Canes’ 2006 Stanley Cup run.

News Observer LOADED: 04.06.2026

1385849 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Playoff-bound Canadiens aiming higher after streak-busting loss to Devils

Eric Engels

MONTREAL— Make no mistake about it; this was still a good day for the Montreal Canadiens, even if they spoiled their own party by dropping a stink bomb at the Bell Centre.

This beautiful hockey cathedral was begging to be turned into a madhouse on Sunday, but the Canadiens’ punchless performance against the New Jersey Devils turned it into a morgue for large portions of the game.

They were structured defensively, and not terribly leaky. But they were also uncharacteristically inept offensively, leading them to get shut out for just the third time this season and leaving Cole Caufield stuck on 49 goals.

His linemates and power-play cronies forced passes to him to get him to 50, and he flubbed his shots on the ones that made it through to him.

The rest of this game boiled down to this being Montreal’s sixth contest in nine nights, coming off a perfect five-game road trip that ended Saturday and extended their longest winning streak in 10 years to eight games.

The 4-3 shootout win over these same Devils in New Jersey a night prior didn’t clinch the 100-point Canadiens a playoff spot, but the Detroit Red Wings losing to the Minnesota Wild Sunday afternoon did.

“It was great,” said captain Nick Suzuki. “Everyone was coming to the rink in a pretty good mood. It’s been our goal ever since we started camp to get back in the playoffs.”

With it accomplished, a new one was set: to chase down the Atlantic Division-leading Tampa Bay Lightning.

The pursuit just got delayed by a night.

Still, you don’t get the sense the Canadiens will treat it as a one-off after they barely swerved to win their last two games before finally crashing in this 3-0 loss. They had what happened in proper perspective afterwards and they’re determined to make the appropriate adjustments upon their return from a well-earned day off.

This day ended on a sour note, but it was still a good day because the Canadiens had their playoff ticket punched.

And that had much more to do with them and everything they did in the lead-up to this day than it did a game between the Wild and Wings in Michigan.

The Canadiens raised their already-high standard to another level with this streak.

Now they intend to hold themselves to that.

“The challenge right now is can we keep finding consistency in that,” said coach Martin St. Louis. “To me, if you have consistency in that, I think our good is good enough to keep playing hockey in April or May.”

Maybe even June.



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If that seems outlandish because Sunday's game played out more like a game between the 2001 Canadiens and Devils than the current-day editions of both teams, keep in mind the Canadiens weren't all bad.

Aside from the stray passes and misfired shots, the Canadiens defended well and hard. They also threw 27 hits — and some haymakers.

"I think everyone's kind of taken that role and tried to do it," said Kaiden Guhle, and he was right about that.

Josh Anderson, who defended his own massive, late-game hit on Jack Hughes by fighting Brenden Dillon, led that charge as he always does. Several others, like Zach Bolduc, Arber Xhekaj and Jayden Struble, were expectedly right there with him.

But so was Joe Veleno, who didn't come to the Canadiens as a banger but had a game-high six hits to add to the 143 he'd thrown through his first 57 games (third-most on the team this season).

Defending hard in the neutral zone and defensive zone kept the Devils to just 20 shots Sunday, and also played a huge part in the Canadiens winning those eight games before this inevitable loss.

It would be reaching to suggest Sunday's flat offensive performance was a sign they're resting on their laurels.

"I like where our standards are right now and how we've improved in different departments of our game, and we've got to stay on top of it," said St. Louis. "We can't just be satisfied because that part of our game is good now. We've got to stay on top of it. I've said it before: whatever part of the game, it's never going to stay the same. It's going to get worse or better. You've got to talk about it, and that's what we're doing."

The Canadiens will discuss just playing the game and allowing Caufield's 50th goal to come to him like the other 49 have.

"The guys are searching for him a lot, and I think it affects the continuity of play," said St. Louis. "I'm very confident he's going to score 50. I'd have liked for it to have happened tonight for many reasons, so we could move on to other things, so we could've given that to the crowd. It would've been fun to get that. I've lived stuff like that, and it's normal."

Tuesday will be one of five more opportunities Caufield and the Canadiens will have to get back to what they've been doing so well all season.

They dropped beneath the Buffalo Sabres, but they can still finish ahead of them to earn home-ice advantage in a first-round series. They've still got a crack at finishing first in the division. The Carolina Hurricanes are only four points up in first place in the Eastern Conference.

All three teams own the tiebreaker (regulation wins), but that won't stop the Canadiens from gunning for them.

Maybe they'll fall short, but they're unlikely to fall as flat as they did against the Devils Sunday.

"This is the best time of the year, whether you're fighting to get in or you're trying to get ready for the playoffs and just playing the right way," said Anderson. "We're still fighting for home ice, so obviously every game matters for us. Every night you've got to be on it."

Leave this one behind.

It still came on a good day, and hope is still high that better ones lie ahead.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 04.06.2026

1385850 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Sunday Overreactions: Does Celebrini deserve the Hart if Sharks make post-season?

Michael Amato

The chants were deafening.

Macklin Celebrini was serenaded with MVP proclamations by the San Jose Sharks faithful as he exited the ice Wednesday night. The young phenom recorded four points against the division rival Anaheim Ducks, including setting up the game-winning goal with 30 seconds to play. If Sharks fans had a vote for the Hart Trophy, they would all cast for Celebrini.

San Jose supporters may be biased where Celebrini is concerned, but can you blame them? After a handful of seasons near the league's basement, the Sharks find themselves playing meaningful games in April and sit just two points out of a playoff spot thanks to some heavy lifting by Celebrini. He's up to 106 points as a teenager, while single-handedly bringing the Sharks back to relevance.

There are plenty of worthy MVP candidates this year, with Nikita Kucherov, Nathan MacKinnon and Connor McDavid right at the top of the list. They all have compelling cases for the award, but it would be hard to deny Celebrini if he can carry this Sharks team to the post-season.

If the Sharks make the playoffs, Celebrini should win the Hart Trophy

Let's just consider for a minute where the expectations for this Sharks team were heading into the season. San Jose lost its final 11 games of the 2024-25 campaign and then followed that up by losing six in a row to start 2025-26. Even the most loyal Sharks fan probably couldn't convince themselves that this team had a chance at a playoff spot.

Celebrini has the Sharks believing now, though. There's no denying he's put his team on his back more than anyone else this season and is 52 points clear of the next closest Shark. Kucherov, McDavid and MacKinnon have been dominant as well, but they all have much more talent around them to work with than Celebrini does. San Jose has a good up-and-coming team, but Celebrini doesn't have a teammate anywhere close to the likes of Leon Draisaitl, Cale Makar or Brayden Point.

Also, let's not forget, Celebrini is still just 19 and only in his second year in the NHL. What he's doing is almost unprecedented and worthy of the Hart Trophy, especially if the Sharks sneak in.

Overreaction? – No

There are so many ways to illustrate Celebrini's greatness this season, but there are a couple of things that really stand out. First, he's the only forward in the NHL this season who's leading his team in ice time. He's averaging 21:23 a night, which is incredible responsibility for a 19-year-old. The Sharks have also leaned on him even more heavily than that at times, as Celebrini has gone North of 27 minutes twice this season and he played over 24 minutes in that massive win over the Ducks on Wednesday.

It's also important to point out that San Jose goes as Celebrini goes. Thursday's victory over the Leafs was only their second win this season where Celebrini didn't record a point. The Sharks are now 2-16-3 when Celebrini is held off the scoresheet, and they have virtually no chance at a win if he doesn't play well.

Celebrini is having a season that only a select few like Gretzky, Lemieux and Crosby have had at his age and the MVP should be his if San Jose can get over the finish line.

Bruce Cassidy is the perfect fit for the Maple Leafs



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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There will undoubtedly be many organizations looking for a new coach at the end of the season and I'm not sure any of them thought Bruce Cassidy would be a potential candidate. Cassidy was shockingly dismissed by the Vegas Golden Knights late last week, less than three years after guiding the franchise to its first Stanley Cup. Vegas isn't having a season up to its usual standards, but they're still headed to the post-season and might even have been leading the Pacific division if they had league-average goaltending. The Golden Knights rank 31st in save percentage and Cassidy could still be a game-changer on a team with strong goaltending.

One such team is the Toronto Maple Leafs, who, despite all their shortcomings this year, are still solid between the pipes with a few good options. If they could land Cassidy to help improve things in their own zone, he may potentially lead them to a quick turnaround.

Overreaction? – Yes

There are a lot of reasons why Cassidy would make sense in Toronto if the Maple Leafs move on from Craig Berube at the end of the season. For one, Cassidy employs a strong defensive structure that Toronto needs to improve upon and he's had his best success running with a tandem in the crease. Whether it was Tuukka Rask and Jaroslav Halak, Jeremy Swayman and Linus Ullmark or Adin Hill and Logan Thompson, Cassidy has had his greatest success running with two goalies he can lean on. The Leafs could potentially have three in Joseph Woll, Anthony Stolarz and Dennis Hildeby, which may make them an attractive option to a coach who was just undone by poor goaltending.

That said, while the goaltending may be a selling point for Cassidy, the Leafs have a lot of other issues to sort out.

For instance, can they retool on the fly? What is the future of Auston Matthews? How are they going to fill holes on the roster like a top-six centre? Will they have a first-round pick this summer? And maybe most importantly, who will the general manager be and will they have a President of Hockey Operations? Much of this will likely have to be sorted out before they turn their attention to a head coach.

Cassidy may very well be a good option for the Maple Leafs, but it's still far too early to anoint him the ideal candidate.

Scott Wedgewood should be the starter for the Avalanche in the playoffs

The Colorado Avalanche have been powered by a two-headed monster for most of the season, but Scott Wedgewood is starting to separate himself in the crease. Wedgewood is now up to a .918 save percentage on the season and ranks top 10 in the NHL for goals saved above expected after shutting out the Dallas Stars on Saturday. He's also lost just six times in regulation all season.

Mackenzie Blackwood hasn't been bad either, sporting a 21-9-1 record. Be that as it may, his other numbers leave a lot to be desired and he's slipped below a .900 save percentage on the year. Even though Wedgewood is a journeyman 33-year-old career backup, he deserves to start for the Avs come playoff time.

Overreaction? – No

It's a massive responsibility to be between the pipes in the Stanley Cup playoffs for a team with championship aspirations, though it's hard to argue Wedgewood wouldn't give Colorado the best chance to win right now. He's been excellent over the past month, delivering a save percentage of .931 or better in eight of his nine starts.

Meanwhile, Blackwood stumbled to a mark of .863 in March and gave up six to the last-place Vancouver Canucks earlier this week. Goaltending is a volatile thing and it wouldn't shock me if Blackwood does get playoff starts for the Avs at some point, but Wedgewood should get a chance to carry the ball and run with it.

Wyatt Johnston is the best power-play player in the NHL right now

Dallas Stars forward Wyatt Johnston continues to get better year after year. After back-to-back impressive 30-plus goal campaigns, Johnston has turned things up a notch this season with 41 goals and counting while averaging more than a point per game. Johnston has done most of his damage on the power play, as he's scored 25 goals on the man advantage this season. No one else has more than 19 power-play goals in 2025-26, and last year's leader, Jake Guentzel, only had 17, which shows just how unstoppable Johnston has been while a man up. He might be the best power-play player in the NHL at the moment.

Overreaction? – Yes

Johnston is still only 22 and very well may be one of the best at his craft when all is said and done, but he's not there yet. Both Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl, along with Nick Suzuki, have more power-play points than Johnston this year and Draisaitl hasn't played in almost three weeks. Then there's Nikita Kucherov, who you could argue is one of the best all-time with the man advantage. Kucherov is incredibly difficult to read on the half boards in power play situations and has been flummoxing defenses for years. He can pick apart some of the league's best penalty kills with ease and for my money, Kucherov is still the best in the business on the power play.

Troy Terry will go the whole season without recording a hit

Anaheim Ducks forward Troy Terry doesn't exactly play a physical game, but he's taking things to a new level this season. Terry has exactly zero hits in 56 games and he's running out of time to break the goose egg. The Ducks have five contests remaining in the regular season, as Terry is on the verge of a hitless campaign. It isn't that unusual for Terry to post a low hit total. Back in 2021-22, he had just six hits across 75 contests and this year he'll finish right around the 60-game mark, so it's not impossible that he won't register a single hit this year.

Overreaction? – No

Terry is close enough to the finish line where it is starting to feel like a very realistic possibility. It seems almost implausible that Terry wouldn't even accidentally bump into someone once or twice over the course of nearly 60 games, but his career numbers show he rarely delivers hits. He's totaled just 54 in 480 games, which works out to be one every nine games or so. Terry could easily go through the last handful of outings without generating a hit to pick up an extremely rare and remarkable accomplishment. Hopefully, you aren't in a fantasy hockey league with hits and counting on Terry to help you out.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 04.06.2026

1385851 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Golden Knights get better of Oilers in feisty potential first-round preview

Mark Spector

EDMONTON — Frankly, the Edmonton Oilers were due for one of these.

You know, a night where the guy who took a puck in the head but didn't spill his beer, and the woman who gave birth at Rogers Place were both more dedicated to the cause than the Oilers seemed to be, in a 5-1 loss to the Vegas Golden Knights.

It was the kind of night where the best quote had nothing to do with a goal or a save, but about a post-game yack fest between the benches by two teams that are destined for their second playoff meeting in as many springs.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 6, 2026

What do they say in those scrums?

"It's just bickering back and forth, everyone telling everyone they make too much money. Which is all true," said Edmonton winger Trent Frederic, who is being paid \$3.85 million this season and has produced six points thus far. "Sounds like a lot of people are jealous."

There are certain games that have 'L' written all over them. For Edmonton, we thought walking into the rink Saturday, this was one.

Edmonton had won five straight games, nicely securing their spot in the post-season — whomever their opponent might turn out to be. They'd won their past five meetings with Vegas, and if you throw in a playoff series, the Oilers had beaten their toughest divisional rival in nine of the past 10 meetings.

This was a chance to bury the Golden Knights five points into the rearview mirror. Instead, with Anaheim's loss to Calgary, the Oilers (87 points), Ducks (87 points) and Vegas (86 points) have formed a tight pack atop the Pacific with five games each to play.

The Division winner will play the wildcard Utah Mammoth. The other two will face each other in Round 1.

Was this a missed opportunity for Edmonton?

"They could have been, what, five points (back)? Now it's one, right?" Frederic said. "So, yeah, pretty big."

"We were going against a team we are probably going to see down the line, so showing up like that..." said defenceman Jake Walman, whose pair alongside Ty Emberson was a combined minus-5. "We've got to kind of step back and regroup. We're a team, so the standings separation doesn't bother us as much, Getting back to the way that we can play is probably the biggest thing."

Are the Oilers a better hockey team than Vegas? When fully healthy, we think so.

Are they faster than Vegas. Undoubtedly.

But are they win-six-straight-and-10-out-of-every-11 games better than Vegas? No.

"They got the better of us tonight, we got the better of them earlier in the year," said depth forward Curtis Lazar. "A little fuel to the fire at the end of the game. I'm sure it's not the last time we'll see them."

The Oilers have become fairly accustomed to playing without the injured Leon Draisaitl. The power play has not produced, but the team is 8-4 since Draisaitl's injury, which is better than respectable.

But with Zach Hyman out as well with an undisclosed injury, that's two top-six forwards gone missing. Edmonton will win some games without those two, but winning five straight with a power play that kicked in just one goal over that span is a trait with a short shelf life.

Like it or not, this team has had the best power play in the NHL for about five years now. You become dependent on that production, and right now the power play is a three-gear race car, missing the production that comes from the office space of both Draisaitl and Hyman, a pair of players who'll combine for 80 goals, most years.

"It's not the same team without them," Walman admitted. "There are guys who have been stepping up and we've been doing a great job in their absence — it gives more opportunity — but at the same time there are spots where you can't replace certain guys. Like the one-timer on the power play, and possession of the puck. So we miss those guys for those reasons."

Edmonton's lone goal came off the stick of Evan Bouchard, his 21st of the season and 88th point. He's 10 points ahead of Zach Werenski among defencemen scoring. The Oilers posted a season-high 34 hits in the game, led by Max Jones (six).

It's known that Draisaitl will not attend the Oilers three-game road trip through Utah, San Jose and Los Angeles that departs Monday, but after the game head coach Kris Knoblauch confirmed that Hyman will not travel either.

"Zach will stay at home and hopefully he will be able to join us for that Monday game, or at the latest Vancouver (in Game 82)," Knoblauch said.

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Sportsnet.ca / 'That'd be awesome': Why Maple Leafs should bring back Scott Laughton

Luke Fox

So much so, Scott Laughton's ex-teammates met up with the newest King Friday night in Los Angeles to hang out for some laughs ahead of Saturday's 7-6 wild overtime comeback win for the Kings.

We can only wonder if the topic of Laughton — a native of Oakville, Ont., who fulfilled a boyhood dream every time he pulled on a Leafs sweater — coming home and signing back with the franchise that rented him west last month popped up.

"That'd be awesome. We would welcome him back with open arms. I know there's a lot of guys in this locker room who feel the same way," beams Steven Lorentz, Laughton's ex-linemate and fast friend. (Ah, who are we kidding? In Laughton's world, every breakaway is a slapshot opportunity, every opponent is a chirp target, and every teammate is a fast friend.)

"You win with guys like Scott. He's a glue guy. He plays the game the right way. He plays hard. And he's definitely got the skill, offensively and defensively, to be out there in all situations. So, yeah, a lot of Laughton fans over here still. It's sad we had to get rid of him. But he's a free agent, so we'll see what happens."

Hey, the Maple Leafs have a cap-space surplus and centre-depth deficit after shedding Laughton and Nicolas Roy for draft picks. And Laughton is always effusive when professing his belief in and love for the Maple Leafs.

"I have family close. And the staff, you get treated first class here. Original Six team. It's special every time you go on the ice," Laughton told us, shortly before his March 6 trade.

"You get chills every time going out, thinking about this team you grew up watching. And I've said this before, but I've fallen in love with the guys here. We have a great group of guys who really care and want to be at their best."

A month ago, Laughton's preference was to re-sign in Toronto.

Once the Leafs fell out of the race, however, it only made sense to salvage some return for an expiring asset.

The Kings bought low, sending a third-round draft choice to Toronto that upgrades to a second-rounder should Laughton's new squad — still swinging away in the pillow-fight Pacific — make the playoffs.

Laughton has meshed quickly with the Kings, as he did with the Leafs and Flyers before them. Under an old junior coach, fellow Oshawa Generals alum D.J. Smith, he has seen his ice time climb over 16 minutes while getting second-unit power-play reps.



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As a third-line pivot, Laughton has already potted four goals. His offensive-zone deployment has doubled from what he received under Toronto's Craig Berube, who used Laughton mostly as a fourth-line penalty killer.

"He has way more offence than people give him credit for," Smith told reporters this week. "He's made a play or two every night on the power play offensively. I think he's a really good player in our league."

Laughton barely got a sniff alongside the Leafs' top playmakers, and the price former GM Brad Treliving paid to acquire him — a first-round pick, plus prospect Nikita Grebenkin — didn't jibe with his role.

As any smart free agent, Laughton is open to making things work long-term in California, where opportunity is fuelling confidence — but isn't shutting the door on a Leafs reunion.

The executive who traded him away is gone. The coach who stuffed him in the D-zone might be too.

"I could see it, for sure," Berube says. "He really liked it in Toronto. And he's from around there, too. So I think that was a bit of a dream for him to go back home and play. Yeah, I could see him going back there, for sure."

Berube says the Maple Leafs miss Laughton's personality, energy, and consistency. The coach and the player first crossed paths in Philly. Berube chuckles about how he would "kinda bust his balls a little bit every day," and the two locker-room presences would fire chirps back and forth.

"He's got such a great personality and love for the game and shows up every day with the same attitude," Berube says. "People get attracted to him."

People like Troy Stecher, who was Laughton's teammate for less than four months.

Stecher considers himself fortunate to have shared a room with such a "unique" character. He noticed how Laughton would be the first to welcome a new Marlies callup to the room, how Laughton took rookie Easton Cowan under his wing, and how the veteran would call out teammates' mistakes — not to kick them while they felt down but to help raise the entire group's standard.

"With him leaving, I think we've lost a little bit of that vocalness in the room and accountability," Stecher says.

"And that's hard to replace. It's hard for guys to get out of their comfort shell. And it was so natural for him to speak up and be vocal. In a time of need, he was the guy that guys would kind of look towards. So, he's a great leader, a great hockey player, and we definitely miss him on our team."

Captain Auston Matthews calls Laughton's impact on and off the ice "incredibly valuable," stressing how he binds everyone together, be it through inside jokes or outward competitiveness.

MLSE president Keith Pelley noted this week how he was dissatisfied with the team's culture and lack of draft capital. Losing Laughton may have helped with the latter, but it hurt the former.

Treliving's successor would be wise to explore the cost of a Laughton signing — or, at minimum, seek out new additions with similar traits.

"He's one of those guys with just that charisma. Guys are drawn to him, right? He gets along with everyone right away. He treats everyone the same, whether you're a trainer, arena staff, or coach or a player," Lorentz says. "He always seems to be in a good mood, and he's always willing to joke around. And little things like that just go a long way."

"He's just one of those guys, wherever he ends up, in a positive way, he's doing something to change the organization."

The Maple Leafs organization sure could use some change, in a positive way.

"It's weird," Lorentz adds. "He was here for a year, but it felt like it was a lot longer, right?"

Hmmm... maybe it will be.

Fox's Fast Five

- Since Matthews went down, John Tavares has responded with eight goals and 16 points in 12 games. He registered his eighth 30-goal campaign Saturday. Even at 35, you won't find better value at 2C.

"Just never stops doing the same things every night," Berube says. "When he suits up and goes out there, I know what I'm going to get from him. His work ethic and competitiveness are there all the time."

"He may not have his legs one night or different things, but I know he's going to give us the effort and the compete and do the right things, night in and night out. He's been excellent."

- Tavares waited a while to leave the ice after the loss because he and the Leafs wanted to shake Anze Kopitar's hand. The Kings legend asked they do so off the ice.

"You talk about a gentleman in the way he carries himself," Tavares says. "I've gotten to know him a little bit at different events. Always was an honour to play against him and always a battle."

"That's what's amazing about this league, is playing against the world's best — and he's been one of those for a long time."

- Here is a thoughtful Troy Stecher on the firing of Brad Treliving:

"I messaged him afterward, and I think a lot of guys did. At the end of the day, the fault comes down onto the players. We're the ones that go out there and perform. So, the most upset people — I mean, besides Tree — would be the guys in the room. We feel like we let the organization down. And we have."

"So, it sucks where we are as a group. Me, personally, I'm very thankful to Brad. This was the second time he brought me in. He traded for me in Calgary when I was with Arizona. I've been a guy that's had to fight and claw my whole career to stay in this league and prove that I belong in this league. And he was one of my believers. I can't have more respect than I do for Brad. He's given me a really good chance, and my family a really good opportunity to play hockey."

- The Maple Leafs got doubled up on the shot clock in L.A. (40-20) and have been outshot something silly this season: 2,501-2,055.

No team has surrendered as many shots as Toronto, and only four teams that have played as many games as the Leafs have fewer shots: the Flyers, Stars, Rangers, and Blackhawks.

Why have shots been difficult to generate?

"We don't look to shoot enough," Berube says. "There's a lot of times where it's just a simple shot. It's not our first instinct. Even from the back end, when we get pucks, we could move our feet quicker and get them through. I think it's a mindset more than anything."

"We're right there, and we're trying to pass it in the net. We got to try to get that out of our system. We got to put more pucks at the net."

- William Villeneuve was summoned on emergency recall due to Oliver Ekman-Larsson's lower-body injury but did not play.

The steady 24-year-old Marlies defenceman was drafted back in 2020 and is still looking for his first taste of NHL action.

Five games to go.

Give him one — as a reward and to see what you got.



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Sportsnet.ca / Flames Takeaways: Strome's milestone night against former team sparks win

Eric Francis

There was no better place in the league for Ryan Strome to celebrate a milestone like this.

One month after the Anaheim Ducks' 13th forward was traded away to the Flames, he returned to southern California to record his 500th NHL point Saturday night.

He did it in style, with a breakaway finish in front of his wife, three children, in-laws and two benches full of teammates past and present who admire the man for his leadership and class.

His goal snapped a 1-1 tie early in the second period to give the Flames a lead they would not relinquish in a 5-3 road win.

What's more, it took a little pressure off him in a family battle he joked about before the game.

"It probably took a little longer this year than I would have expected," said Strome of the milestone, which was delayed by the fact he was essentially the odd-man out in Anaheim this year as part of the Ducks' youth movement.

"My brother (Dylan) is kind of catching up to me, and he's four years younger than me, so I gotta really get my butt in gear here."

He's done exactly that since joining the Flames, picking up 11 points in 15 games, which is a vast departure from the nine points in 33 games he had in Anaheim before the Flames acquired him for a seventh-round pick.

The difference in Calgary, obviously, is opportunity.

"I mean, I just really wasn't playing," he said of his fourth year with the Ducks.

"When you're playing fourth line and you're playing eight minutes a game some games, five minutes a game, it's tough. I have a lot more respect for guys that have done it for a long time in their career, now that I've been through it, and I've never had to deal with that in my career."

For the record, Dylan has 439 points as one of Washington's top players.

A Frosty 20

Late in the second period, Morgan Frost hit the 20-goal milestone for the first time in his career after taking a long pass from Olli Maatta and finishing with a series of jukes and jives to beat Ville Husso. It put the Flames up 4-1 and helped Frost fulfill an early season goal he'd come close to three years ago in Philly when he finished with 19.

He also won a huge draw in the final 90 seconds with Anaheim's goalie pulled, and seconds later potted his second of the game into the open cage.

His 41 points are only five short of his career-high.

Ryan Huska has spoken of late about Frost emerging from the shadow of Nazem Kadri after the veteran was traded, but the reality is Frost has been one of the top two or three forwards for the Flames all season long.

His combination of silky-smooth hands and sublime skating should make him the favourite to open next season as the organization's top centre.

Record intact

The Flames extended their obscure record to 56 consecutive wins when scoring four goals or more. Despite a 4-1 lead after two periods, built on the back of goals from Joel Farabee, Matvei Gridin, Frost and Strome, the result was very much in doubt in the third as the Ducks scored twice in the third.

Alas, Devin Cooley stood tall as the game's first star to make several of his 36 saves in the final few minutes to preserve the two points Anaheim would so desperately have liked.

It was Calgary's first win in the opening three games of this, their final road trip of the year.

Draft talk

A lot was made about the Flames' six-game point streak at home last week threatening the team's draft pick status.

However, the Canucks were never going to be caught as the league's worst team, leaving the Flames in a race with Chicago and a few others for second and third-worst.

Even after the Flames win Saturday, the Flames still sit third-last, just two points up on Chicago, which also won Saturday. The Rangers also won Saturday to stay a point ahead of the Flames.

If the lottery were to be held now, the Flames' draft lottery odds would look like this:

- 1st overall pick: 11.5%
- 2nd overall pick: 11.2%
- 3rd overall pick: 7.8%
- 4th overall pick: 39.7%
- 5th overall pick: 29.8%

The good news for Flames fans is that with six games left, they still have several tough opponents on the docket, including three on the road against Dallas, Colorado and desperate Seattle, followed by three at home against Utah, Colorado and L.A.

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