



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

The News & Observer

Hurricanes trail for first time in 2026 playoffs, rally to beat Flyers in OT

By: Chip Alexander

The Carolina Hurricanes were deep into overtime of their second-round playoff game against Philadelphia on Monday, and Taylor Hall was determined to make a difference.

The Hurricanes' winger didn't believe he had been at his best in Game 2 against the Flyers. But it was his goal, with 1:06 left in OT, that propelled the Canes to a 3-2 victory at Lenovo Center, and a 2-0 lead in the series.

With the overtime winding down, Canes defenseman Sean Walker carried the puck through the neutral zone and got it to Hall on the left wing. Hall drove the net, got off a shot, fell, jumped back up and popped the puck past goalie Dan Vladar for the winner.

Canes winger Jackson Blake, crashing the net, got a piece of the puck before Hall finished and was credited with a shot and the primary assist.

"It was a gritty goal," Hall said. "I didn't do a good job of attacking tonight, personally. I got that puck and I wanted to get to the middle of the ice as much as I could."

Hall smiled, saying he watched a replay of the goal after the game and didn't remember falling down in front of the crease.

"When you score in overtime," he joked, "sometimes your memory goes."

A comeback win and overtime goal should be a nice memory to have as the best-of-seven Eastern Conference series shifts to Philadelphia for the next two games — Game 3 is Thursday night.

The Hurricanes never trailed in any of the four games in sweeping the Ottawa Senators in the opening round of the playoffs, and shut out the Flyers in Game 1. But the Flyers were quicker and more aggressive in Game 2, scoring two early goals for a 2-0 lead and forcing the Canes to fight back into it.

After a power-play goal by Nikolaj Ehlers in the first period, there was no more scoring — but a lot of penalties — until the third. Seth Jarvis' first goal of the playoffs tied it 2-2 for the Canes with 8:39 left in regulation, and it soon was headed to overtime as Canes goalie Frederik Andersen and Vladar matched critical save with critical save.

"He made so many saves. He's unflappable, our rock," Hall said of Andersen, who faced 36 shots, 15 in overtime.

The Canes had to kill off an Andrei Svechnikov penalty in the overtime, and the Flyers' Travis Konecny later had a chance to win it on a breakaway but was denied by Andersen with 4:45 left.

Then, Hall delivered the winner.

"As you get older and play this game a while, you have to figure out if you don't have your 'A' game and maybe have your 'B-minus' game or something close to that, you have to find a way to contribute," said Hall, who blocked a Noah Cates shot with eight seconds left in regulation.

The Hurricanes would say they didn't have their 'A' game. The Flyers did, for the most part. They had more jump in their game, won more puck battles than they did in the series opener and kept the Canes to the outside much of the game, which was marred by 15 penalties.

The Flyers had a pair of rapid-fire goals in the first when defenseman Jamie Drysdale scored on a power play and then captain Sean Couturier scored at even strength 39 seconds later with a shot in tight just five minutes into the game and the Canes were in a 2-0 hole.

"That was not ideal," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "But I liked the way we played the rest of the first half of the game. We got it close. Too many penalties killed our game, killed the momentum. But we found a way to tie it up."

A lot went into winning this one. Brind'Amour made a line switch that clicked with Jarvis playing with Jordan Staal and Ehlers. Walker had a tremendous game as did his defensive partner, K'Andre Miller. Logan Stankoven's goal streak ended at five games, but his line was on the ice for the overtime winner.

The Canes allowed the power-play goal early, but the penalty killers did their job the rest of the game, capped by the big one in overtime.

"It was our first time trailing, which was a little weird, but we did a great job responding," Miller said. "You have to find different ways to win playoff games."

Where is Carolina Hurricanes' vaunted depth? Finally tested, they need to find it

By: Justin Pelletier

For the first time in the 2026 NHL playoffs, the Carolina Hurricanes (Shopping Cart IconShop Canes Fan Gear) were forced to play from behind Monday night.

For the first time, Frederik Andersen looked leaky — early on, anyway, before settling into a rhythm.

And for the first time, it looked as though the "Kids and the Hall" line might not bail the Hurricanes out on offense.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

How did Carolina handle it?

Fair-to-middlin'.

Oh, and the Hall-Stankoven-Blake line did, eventually, bail the Canes out.

Again.

That doesn't change the fact that the Philadelphia Flyers did Monday what Ottawa was never able to do — took a lead against Carolina. Then, the Flyers did to the Hurricanes what the Canes had done to Ottawa in four games, and Philly in Game 1: They locked the game down, created a dead zone through the center of the ice and forced everything wide or deep.

Even the winner, another in Hall's mounting playoff highlight reel, was greasy.

"When you score in overtime, it seems like parts of your memory go," Hall said after the game. "That was a gritty goal. I didn't do a very good job of attacking tonight, personally, and I got that puck and wanted to get to the middle of the ice as much as I could and got the shot off and got the rebound."

Home-ice advantage in Round 2? Intact, barely. Air of invincibility? Damaged. Momentum? Still there ... maybe?

Two days off will help.

The Canes got into their precarious position Monday because of uncharacteristic unforced errors. First, while defending a Philadelphia power play, Andersen poked the puck up the middle rather than cover it. The resulting shot from defender Jamie Drysdale zipped past his helmet and ended the Hurricanes' NHL-record streak of minutes leading or tied to open the playoffs at 337:55. The Flyers added another for good measure just 39 seconds later when Sean Couturier camped alone in front of the net and pounded a pass from Carl Grundstrom past Andersen.

The Canes remained in that position with even more unforced errors — two puck-over-glass penalties and a too-many-men call among them.

And they're going to keep finding themselves in this position unless their top players start playing like their top players.

We saw minor glimpses Monday.

Nikolaj Ehlers scored for Carolina later in the first period — from Blake and K'Andre Miller on the power play — his first goal of the playoffs.

And Seth Jarvis finally found the net for his first of the playoffs — after he changed lines to skate with Jordan Staal and Ehlers.

Where is Sebastian Aho? Andrei Svechnikov? And yes, despite his goal, let's include Jarvis here, too. Two Olympians and a would-have-been Russian Olympian. Four total goals (two into an empty net), four total assists.

That isn't enough for a troika that pulls down about \$25 million per season, more than five times the combined salaries of Blake, Stankoven and Hall.

Most NHL coaches won't publicly assign ranks to their forward lines. Carolina's Rod Brind'Amour bristles at the notion, though in the Canes' case, he's probably closer to accurate than most of the league's coaches (Pretty sure whichever line Macklin Celebrini is on is the Sharks' "No. 1" line, for instance). The Hurricanes preach depth, preach playing a certain way: Quick. Gritty. Suffocating. Waves of pressure.

But when results matter most, the team's star players need to play like its star players. Someone in that group needs to take charge and lead the way. Typically, the best players in the regular season become a team's best players in the playoffs. They get more ice time, more opportunity. Others feed off of them.

Sure you need depth, too, ideally a second or even a third line with solid numbers, as well. That's what separates the wheat from the chaff. And the Canes are getting that in spades.

Each round of the NHL playoffs is ostensibly tougher, because each team you face should be better than the previous opponent. What worked — barely, in some cases — against Ottawa, and what worked against an admittedly tired and travel-weary Philly team in Game 1, isn't going to fly going forward.

Brind'Amour has been blunt about that, saying more than once that Aho, Jarvis and Svechnikov need to be "better."

He said it again Monday.

"It's probably a good sign for us that we have another level," Brind'Amour said. "We all know it. We're finding ways to get it done, and it's just a matter of time before these guys start chipping in in that department, because, again, it's an area where we have to be better."

"Better" isn't enough at this point, though. The Hurricanes need their best players to be elite.

Their Stanley Cup Playoff longevity depends on it.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

The Athletic

Taylor Hall brought his 'B-minus game' to Hurricanes' Game 2 win, but it was enough

By: Sean Gentille

RALEIGH, N.C. — Taylor Hall knows pretty goals. You don't score 302 times over 16 NHL seasons without mixing in plenty of them. So he was not expecting the bit of work he did in Tuesday night's fourth period to fit the bill.

Then, after he and the Carolina Hurricanes left the ice with a 2-0 series lead over the Philadelphia Flyers after a 3-2 win, Hall watched the replay of himself forcing his way to the slot, tumbling to the ground on his initial shot, then regaining his footing and batting the puck past Flyers goalie Dan Vladar.

The video confirmed his suspicions.

"I didn't realize that I fell down and then put it in," Hall said. "When you score in overtime, it seems like parts of your memory kind of go."

It isn't Logan Stankoven, the breakout star of the Stanley Cup playoffs, who leads the Hurricanes in points. It's Hall, the 34-year-old counterbalance to linemates Stankoven and Jackson Blake. Carolina's most efficient five-on-five point producer in the regular season wasn't Sebastian Aho or Seth Jarvis or Andrei Svechnikov. It was Hall, acquired last season after a stint with the Chicago Blackhawks that was both brief and disastrous enough to spur real questions over the amount of gas left in his tank.

Turns out he's not running on empty and he might not be particularly close. In this postseason for the Hurricanes, as was the case in the 82 games that preceded it, Hall has the look of a difference-maker — not on the level of a former Hart Trophy winner, though he is indeed one, but as a smarter, wiser, better-rounded, battle-tested Old Guy. The kind, say, that throws a limb in front of a dangerous shot in the closing seconds of regulation, then cobbles together a rush chance in overtime that eventually finds the back of the net.

Game 2 didn't get the 2018 version of Hall, who led the NHL in points for the New Jersey Devils. To hear him say it, it didn't get the 2025-26 version, either.

"It was a gritty goal. I didn't do a very good job of attacking tonight personally. I got that puck, and I just wanted to get to the middle of the ice as much as I could," Hall said.

What the Hurricanes did get in Game 2 was the exact sort of player they need and the kind of player they've lacked, a seasoned secondary source of offense who's capable of producing even when he and the rest of teammates aren't necessarily at their best. Carolina can win a Cup if things go right. Players like Hall give them a reason to think they can win one if things go wrong.

"You know, as you get older and you play this game a while, you've got to figure out if you don't have your A game, do

you maybe have your B-minus game or something close to that," he said. "You find a way to contribute. And that's hockey."

Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour has talked often about Hall — about the impact he's made on the forward group and the amount of work he's done to bring his defensive game to the level Carolina's system demands — and on Monday night, he was doing it again. The phrase "buy-in" was used.

"There's a pro that just understands how to evaluate his game and knows, 'OK, maybe this isn't going good, but I've got to do something else,'" Brind'Amour said.

"But the one thing about (Hall) that we know is he wants to make a difference, and that goal sums it up for me. You could just almost tell when he grabbed it, like, 'I'm going to try to put this away.'"

It was Hurricanes defenseman Sean Walker who, with a high-end bit of skating and puck-carrying, gained the zone on that sequence. That's an area of expertise for Hall, too. He's more frequently the distributor than the finisher — someone who's capable of making his way to the middle himself, but also hanging by the boards and finding teammates in what Hurricanes general manager Eric Tulsky called "premium ice."

That's a quality Stankoven and Blake, who helped keep the puck alive in front of Vladar long enough for Hall to get a second crack at it, both can appreciate. With them on the ice at five-on-five in the regular season for 541 minutes, fourth-most among any line, Carolina outscored opponents 35-25 for expected and actual goal rates of about 60 percent.

"He knows where to find the quiet ice," Stankoven said before the series about Hall, who now has primary assist on two of his six playoff goals. That's a logical progression from a regular season that saw Hall score 2.22 points per 60 at five-on-five, a major bump from what he managed after Carolina acquired him last season (1.68) and his best overall since 2021-22.

"I think we can all make plays on the line, but he's the veteran," Blake said. "He knows the game more than any of us."

That type of production, along with Hall's offensive toolkit, are huge. What has made his game stand up, though, has been a focus on defensive play and physicality, Tulsky said, that "has really made him someone you can trust defensively and play on a line that is gonna get tough matchups going forward."

It's telling that on a night when Brind'Amour shuffled his first and third lines, the second went untouched. That decision paid off when Seth Jarvis scored the game-tying goal with



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

Jordan Staal and Nikolaj Ehlers, but whether it works with Jordan Martinook in Jarvis' previous spot alongside Aho and Svechnikov remains to be seen. Those two have just one goal and one assist between them at five-on-five, and Brind'Amour knows he'll need them to get going at some

point. Their C-game won't be good enough to win 11 more games.

Hall's B-minus, though, can buy them some time. It already has.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026



Hall's overtime goal keeps Hurricanes perfect in playoffs | The North State Journal

By: Cory Lavalette

Hurricanes forward Taylor Hall, left, celebrates after his winning overtime goal as Flyers defenseman Travis Sanheim (6) looks on during Carolina's 3-2 win Monday in Game 2 of their second round series in Raleigh. (Karl DeBlaker / AP Photo)

RALEIGH — Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said before Game 2 that his team hadn't yet faced adversity this postseason.

Now they have — and they passed the test with flying colors.

Taylor Hall drove the net and scored with 66 seconds left in the first overtime as Carolina erased a two-goal deficit and beat the visiting Flyers 3-2 in Monday's Game 2 to take a 2-0 series lead.

"We don't quit," Hurricanes winger Nikolaj Ehlers said.

Despite getting outshot 15-8 in overtime, the Hurricanes — as they did in the first round against Ottawa — held serve at home with an overtime win in the second game of the series.

Defenseman Sean Walker picked up a loose puck in the defensive zone and carried it all the way into the Flyers' end. He dropped the puck off to Hall, who drove the net and shot on Philadelphia goalie Dan Vladar (40 saves). Jackson Blake took a swipe at the rebound, and Hall located the puck and pushed it past defenseman Travis Sanheim and into the net for the win.

"When you score in overtime it seems like parts of your memory kind of go," Hall said while trying to recap the goal. "It was a gritty goal. I didn't do a very good job of attacking tonight personally. So I got that puck and I just wanted to get to the middle of the ice as much as I could, and I got a shot off and got the rebound. That was an overtime goal, for sure."

It was Hall's third goal and team-leading ninth point of the postseason. And the game may not have reached overtime if not for Hall — in the defensive zone.

With 8 seconds left in regulation, Hall made a key block on Flyers forward Noah Cates to keep the game tied and force overtime.

"He wants to win," Brind'Amour said. "So he's doing whatever he has to do to help the team. And he's doing it, in that situation obviously, at both ends of the rink. And winning it for us too. He's been just a great player for us."

Brind'Amour and his coaching staff deserve credit as well. With his top line of Sebastian Aho, Seth Jarvis and Andrei

Svechnikov still searching for their first goal together this postseason, Brind'Amour flipped his lines in the middle of the third period with Carolina trailing by a goal. Jarvis joined Ehlers and Jordan Staal, and the results were immediate.

Ehlers, who scored Carolina's first period power play goal, received the puck in the neutral zone and pushed back the Flyers defense. He dropped the puck to Jarvis at the top of the right circle, and Jarvis snapped a shot past the glove of Vladar to tie the game at 11:21 of the third period.

"(Assistant coach) Jeff Daniels, who helps me with the forward group — does such a good job — and he's just like, 'It's time.' And literally, the first shift we did it, that's what happened. So I've got to give him all the credit there for tapping me and saying, 'OK, look, we waited long enough.' And it paid dividends. It doesn't always work that way, but it did tonight."

The goal was Jarvis' first of the postseason.

"It's always nice to see one go in, especially (since) I've had chances and haven't been doing it, so to step up in a moment like that was huge," Jarvis said. "The line shuffling, I mean, it seems like every time when I'm with (Staal), stuff starts to go in. So hopefully that kick starts the rest of my playoffs."

The Hurricanes were forced to play from behind for the first time this postseason after the Flyers scored twice in 39 seconds in the opening five minutes of the game to jump out to a 2-0 lead.

Philadelphia's league-worst power play converted on its first chance of the night. With Walker in the penalty box for a delay-of-game penalty, Jamie Drysdale jumped on a loose puck in the slot and fired it past Frederik Andersen (34 saves) to give Philadelphia a 1-0 lead at 4:02 of the first period.

The lead doubled on the next shift.

After Carolina failed to get a clear in the defensive zone, Flyers captain Sean Couturier scored right in the goal mouth to extend the lead to 2-0 at 4:41 of the opening period.

The Hurricanes, however, responded, halving the lead thanks to their power play and a failed clear by the Flyers.

Philadelphia defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen hesitated in shooting the puck down the ice on the penalty kill, allowing Carolina to stay in the zone. Blake then made a circle-to-circle pass to Ehlers, whose one-timer beat Vladar at 10:21 of the first period for his first playoff goal in a Hurricanes uniform to make it 2-1.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

"You want to get one right back, and we were able to do that," Ehlers said. "After that, it's a one-goal lead."

And Andersen — who has not allowed more than two goals in his six postseason starts — stopped the last 33 shots he faced.

"That's just a testament to the type of person he is and the player he is," defenseman K'Andre Miller said of Andersen. "He's been doing a great job obviously this entire playoffs. You're going to have a mess up every once in a while, but I think it's just a matter of turning the page and getting back to your game."

And in overtime, Carolina's best line in the playoffs — Hall, Blake and Logan Stankoven — again came through.

"Every night, it feels like they're cashing in and being a big part of our group," Walker said. "To see (Hall) get rewarded, I'm not surprised. They've been great all year, but especially in the playoffs."

Notes: Carolina won 44 of 73 faceoffs. ... Hurricanes forward William Carrier had 12 hits. ... Sanheim had five blocks. ... Carolina forward Andrei Svechnikov took three minor penalties. ... Forwards Jesperi Kotkaniemi and Nicolas Deslauriers, and goalie Pyotr Kochetkov were healthy scratches. Alexander Nikishin (concussion) did not dress.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026



Recap: Hall's OT Dagger Completes Canes' Game 2 Comeback

By: Peter Dewar & Walt Ruff

Carolina erases two-goal deficit to take 2-0 series lead

RALEIGH, N.C. - Taylor Hall scored with 1:06 remaining in overtime to lift the Carolina Hurricanes to a 3-2 victory over the Philadelphia Flyers in Game 2 of their 2026 Stanley Cup Playoffs series.

[GAME SUMMARY](#) | [BOX SCORE](#) | [BUY PLAYOFF TICKETS](#) | [PLAYOFF HUB](#)

Coming off a dominant start to Game 1, the Canes found themselves on the back foot early in Monday's rematch after the Flyers scored back-to-back goals in a span of just 39 seconds. Trailing for the first time all postseason, Carolina climbed back into the contest with a Nikolaj Ehlers power-play blast at 10:21, halving Philadelphia's lead before the break.

The Canes' chase for a tying tally ebbed and flowed through a penalty-filled second period, but the contest rolled into the final frame with the Flyers still ahead by one. With 9:39 remaining in regulation, the equalizer finally arrived off the stick of Seth Jarvis, who wired a drop pass from Ehlers past Dan Vladar to force overtime.

Compared to a cagey third period, overtime was a track meet. The two clubs combined for 23 shots — 15 of which came from Philadelphia — as would-be winners just missed the mark for much of the frame.

But as the clock ticked toward the final minute, Sean Walker breezed through the neutral zone before dishing to Hall on the wing, who drove to the net and managed to slam home his own rebound to wrap up a sixth straight win for the Hurricanes.

Once again, Frederik Andersen stood tall when called upon, particularly as nearly half of his 34 saves came in overtime.

Stats & Standouts

Taylor Hall scored his first career playoff overtime goal to boost his team-leading point total to nine (3G, 6A) in six games. At 34, he's the franchise's fourth-oldest player to score a playoff overtime goal behind Ron Francis (39, 2002), Paul Stastny (37, 2023) and Scott Walker (35, 2009).

The only Hurricane with points in all six playoff games, Hall now boasts the franchise's longest postseason-opening point streak. Only three players in franchise history have had a longer point streak at any point of a playoff year (not limited to the start of the postseason).

Seth Jarvis scored his 20th career playoff goal and became the third player in franchise history to reach the mark, following Sebastian Aho (37) and Andrei Svechnikov (23).

Nikolaj Ehlers tallied his first playoff goal as a Hurricane and the 10th of his career, tying Oliver Bjorkstrand for the second-most postseason goals by a Danish player. Only Lars Eller (15) has more.

Jackson Blake notched two assists for his third multi-point performance of the playoffs and his second in as many games.

Now with 14 career playoff points (5-9—14 in 21 GP), Blake overtook Kevin Dineen (6-7—13 in 10 GP) for the fourth-most by a player age 22 or younger with the franchise. Eric Staal (9-19—28 in 25 GP) tops the list.

Jordan Staal recorded his 39th career playoff point with Carolina, passing Rod Brind'Amour and tying Ron Francis and Teuvo Teravainen for the sixth-most in franchise history. Staal also tied his brother, Eric (24), for seventh on the club's all-time postseason assists list.

K'Andre Miller picked up his fourth assist and point of the playoffs and leads the team's defensemen in both categories.

Frederik Andersen extended his streak of allowing two or fewer goals this postseason to six games. Only nine goaltenders in NHL history have started a postseason with a longer run; Jeremy Swayman (7 GP in 2024) is the only other active netminder to do so.

They Said It...

Taylor Hall walking us through his overtime winner...

"I didn't realize I fell down, and then put it in. When you score in overtime, it seems like parts of your memory just kind of go. It was a gritty goal. I didn't do a very good job of attacking tonight, personally. I got that puck and I just wanted to get to the middle of the ice as much as I could. I got a shot off and got a rebound. That was an overtime goal, for sure."

Seth Jarvis reviewing Taylor Hall's night...

"He's been incredible. Almost more important than his goal was his block in the third with a couple of seconds left. You never know what happens there. For him to put his body on the line, and then get rewarded with a goal, I couldn't be happier for the guy."

Rod Brind'Amour giving his thoughts on the overtime hero...



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

"He wants to win, so he's doing whatever he has to do to help the team. He's doing it, in that situation, at both ends of the rink, and obviously winning it for us too. He's just been a great player for us."

Rod Brind'Amour looking at the big picture of the game, starting with his team falling behind 2-0 early...

"(Falling behind early) was not ideal. I actually thought we had a good start, and yet we were throwing the puck over the glass for no reason, and then they had a good shift, we had it on our stick, and bobbled it around. Next thing you know, we're down two. That was not ideal, but I actually liked the way we played for the rest of the first half of the game. We found a way to kind of get it close. I think that was the key (avoiding falling behind by three). Too many penalties, you know? It just kills your team, kills your momentum, kills everything. But you've got to give the guys credit, they did a great job there and then found a way to tie it up."

Sean Walker after another Frederik Andersen win...

"Fred's been so good the whole playoffs so far. We didn't start the way we wanted. We didn't really give him help there, but then he shuts the door. To have that confidence

and to know your goalie is going to be there [is great]. We did have some breakdowns, obviously, and they had some good pushes, where they had some pretty good chances, but he was there to save our \\. He's unbelievable and a really big part of our team and all the success we've had right now."

Nikolaj Ehlers describing his team's resolve...

"Well, we don't quit. I think we've shown all year that if we keep playing the right way and keep putting pressure on their players every single shift, we will get back to playing some pretty good hockey, and create turnovers and a lot of good chances. We were able to do that tonight."

What's Next?

The Canes are scheduled to be off on Tuesday. They'll return to practice on Wednesday before departing for Philadelphia ahead of Thursday's Game 3 at Xfinity Mobile Arena.

Next Game: Thursday, May 7 | Round 2, Game 3 at Philadelphia | 8:00 p.m. ET | How To Watch | Tickets | Parking



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026



Hall's goal in OT lifts Hurricanes past Flyers in Game 2 of Eastern 2nd Round

By: Kurt Dusterberg

RALEIGH, N.C. -- Taylor Hall scored at 18:54 of overtime to lift the Carolina Hurricanes to a 3-2 win against the Philadelphia Flyers in Game 2 of the Eastern Conference Second Round at Lenovo Center on Monday.

Hall drove to the net and had his initial shot stopped by Dan Vladar. The rebound popped out to Hall during a goal-mouth scramble, and he swiped it past Vladar's left pad and through the legs of Philadelphia defenseman Travis Sanheim.

It was Hall's first career Stanley Cup Playoff overtime goal.

"I just watched it. I didn't realize that I fell down," Hall said. "When you score in overtime, it seems like part of your memory kind of goes."

"I didn't do a very good job of attacking tonight, personally. I got that puck, and I wanted to go to the middle of the ice as much as I could. I got a shot off and got the rebound. That was an overtime goal for sure."

Nikolaj Ehlers had a goal and an assist, and Seth Jarvis scored for the Hurricanes, who are the No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference and Metropolitan Division. Jackson Blake had two assists, and Frederik Andersen made 34 saves.

Carolina rallied from a two-goal deficit after giving up goals 39 seconds apart early in the first period.

"It's probably a good sign for us that we have another level and we all know it," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "We find ways, obviously, to get it done."

Jamie Drysdale and Sean Couturier scored for the Flyers, who are the No. 3 seed in the Metropolitan. Vladar made 40 saves.

"We played a good hockey game. It was well-fought by both teams," Philadelphia coach Rick Tocchet said. "I really liked how the young guys competed. I'm really proud of these guys. (Carolina) just made the play at the end. That's it."

Carolina leads the best-of-7 series 2-0. Game 3 will be at Xfinity Mobile Arena in Philadelphia on Thursday (8 p.m. ET; TNT, truTV, HBO MAX, SN, CBC, TVAS).

Drysdale put the Flyers up 1-0 with a power-play goal at 4:02 of the first. He collected a loose puck in the high slot and put a wrist shot past Andersen's blocker.

"It's unfortunate that we weren't able to come out with this one," Drysdale said. "There's definitely things we can take and learn. We've got a few days here to regroup and come back hard at home."

It was the first time the Hurricanes trailed this postseason, ending their streak of not trailing in a game at 618:51 dating back to April 7.

Couturier made it 2-0 at 4:41. Carl Grundstrom backhanded the puck out front from behind the net, and Couturier slipped the puck through the five-hole for his first goal of the playoffs.

Ehlers cut the deficit to 2-1 while on a power play at 10:21. Blake fed a cross-ice pass to Ehlers in the right face-off circle, where his one-timer went in off Vladar's left shoulder for his first playoff goal with Carolina.

"At that point, it was a 2-0 game and you want to get one right back, and we were able to do that," Ehlers said. "Now it's a one-goal lead, it's one shot. I loved every second of it. It's awesome to get my first of the playoffs at home as well."

Sanheim said: "That's the playoffs. You get up and the better teams start pushing. They're behind, they're getting the chances. We didn't honestly give up a whole lot after that."

Jarvis tied it 2-2 with his first goal of the playoffs at 11:21, taking a pass from Ehlers and burying a snap shot past Vladar's glove from the right circle.

"To be down two (goals) and just stick to our game and wait for our opportunities to capitalize," Jarvis said. "It speaks a lot to our leaders, to 'Roddy,' just keeping everyone calm and trusting the process. I'm really proud of how we did that tonight."

Philadelphia outshot Carolina 15-8 in overtime.

"I still think there is another level to our game that we can get to," Flyers forward Travis Konecny said. "It was a lot better tonight. It should have went our way tonight."

The Flyers were 1-for-7 on the power play. The Hurricanes were 1-for-6.

"Too many penalties," Brind'Amour said. "It just kills your game, kills momentum, kills everything. But I've got to give guys credit. They did a great job there."

NOTES: The Hurricanes became the fifth team in the past 17 years to win each of its first six games of a postseason. ... Hall established a Hurricanes/Hartford Whalers record for longest playoff-opening point streak by extending his run to six games (three goals, six assists). ... Andersen extended his streak of allowing two or fewer goals this postseason to six games. Only nine goaltenders in NHL history have started a postseason with a longer run. ... Carolina improved its all-time record to 34-23 in playoff games that require extra time (19-11 as home team).



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

AP ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hurricanes take 2-0 series lead on Flyers in 2nd round of NHL playoffs | AP News

By: Aaron Beard

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Rick Tocchet got the response he wanted from his Philadelphia Flyers. Rod Brind'Amour had reason to be frustrated with his Carolina Hurricanes taking too many penalties, disrupting their preferred 5-on-5 rhythm.

And yet, the Hurricanes are still unbeaten in the NHL playoffs, thanks to a comeback from their first deficit of the postseason and a gritty-effort overtime winner from Taylor Hall.

Carolina's 3-2 win Monday night gave the Eastern Conference's top seed a 2-0 lead in the second-round series, coming after an uphill climb with the Flyers getting to their game much more effectively than in the series opener to build some confidence as the series shifts to Philadelphia.

"We don't quit. I think we've shown that all year," said Carolina winger Nikolaj Ehlers, who had a goal and assisted on the tying score in the third period. "If we keep playing the right way and keep putting a lot of pressure on their players, every single shift, we will get back to playing some pretty good hockey and creating a lot of turnovers, a lot of good chances.

"You want adversity. We had that in the Ottawa series as well, because it's going to happen again. And now we know what we need to do for the next time it happens."

Carolina swept that first-round series against the Senators and never trailed. That series started with a home shutout and then a 3-2 double-overtime win in Game 2. The Hurricanes started this series in similar fashion, first with a Game 1 shutout and then another 3-2 win in extra time on Hall's score at 18:54 of OT.

The Flyers host the next two games in the best-of-seven series, with Game 3 set for Thursday night.

The Hurricanes had at least one clear area to clean up: penalties. Carolina committed eight — two for delay of game for putting pucks over the glass, one for too many men on the ice — and had a steady line of players heading to the penalty box.

The penalty kill was good enough to hold Philadelphia to a 1-for-7 showing Monday, pushing Carolina to 30 for 32 (.938)

this postseason. Brind'Amour, however, said the rash of penalties "kills your team, kills your momentum, kills everything."

"We're taking too many," the coach said. "The ones that are self-inflicted for me — the over the glass, little tic-tac ones — you've got to avoid these. Too many men. We've had too many of those here. We've gotten away with it, because we've been able to kill it. But it's not how you draw it up."

As for Tocchet, Monday's loss offered a welcome sign of pushback after Game 1, which left the Flyers coach talking about the need for his players to react quicker against Carolina's aggression and speed, as well as to carry the puck more into the tough areas of the ice.

"Mentally and physically I just thought we had more energy, and I think we believed that we can compete with this team," Tocchet said.

Philadelphia did that early, with Jamie Drysdale and Sean Couturier scoring in a 39-second span of the first period for the Flyers. And they outshot Carolina 15-8 in overtime to carry that competitiveness to the end despite playing again without injured regular-season goals leader Owen Tippett.

Yet this one ended with Hall hopping to his feet after being knocked to the ice by Denver Barkey as Hall charged toward the crease, then grabbing a loose puck kept alive by Jackson Blake to slip it past Dan Vladar's left skate for the winner.

That pushed Carolina to a 2-0 lead in a best-of-seven series for the 10th time in the Hurricanes' eight-year playoff run under Brind'Amour. Carolina has won eight of the previous nine, the outlier being a seven-game loss to the New York Rangers in the 2022 second round.

Then again, the Flyers became the first NHL team to make the playoffs after being 10 points out with 22 or fewer games remaining, securing Philadelphia's first postseason appearance since 2020. Then the Flyers beat Pittsburgh in six games in the first round.

"Just the belief in the room, I think that really helps," Tocchet said. "The belief in the room of just staying with it. And we've been dead before, and we've climbed out of the grave. We keep hearing we're dead and dead, but the guys won't give up. So that's why I'm proud of them."



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026



SB NATION
CANES COUNTRY

Carolina Holds Off Philadelphia - Hurricanes 3, Flyers 2 OT

By: Bob Wage

The Carolina Hurricanes fell behind for the first time this postseason but regrouped and went on to defeat the Philadelphia Flyers 3-2, in overtime on Monday night at the Lenovo Center.

The win gives the Hurricanes a 2-0 lead over the Flyers in their Round 2 matchup. They are 6-0 so far this postseason.

Taylor Hall knocked in the game-winner with 1:06 left in the overtime to send everyone home happy.

Sean Walker started the rush then passed off to Hall, who took the puck to the net. He was initially stopped and taken to his knees but Jackson Blake was battling and kept the puck alive then Hall was able to get his stick on it to bang it home.

It was not the prettiest game in the world as a total of 15 penalties were called, eight for Carolina and seven for the Flyers. Each team was able to score one powerplay goal.

The Flyers got off to a quick start when they scored on the first powerplay of the game just four minutes into the opening period. Then just 39 seconds later, they made the score 2-0 when they scrambled in front of the net on a loose puck that eventually got by goalie Frederik Andersen.

After that goal, Andersen had a perfect game and made several key stops especially in OT when the Flyers outshot the Canes 15-8.

The Hurricanes did not look their best in this one but got on the board themselves when Nikolaj Ehlers blasted in a shot

off a nice pass from Blake, who earned two assists in the game. The goal was a powerplay tally scored at about the 10 minute mark of the first period.

After a scoreless second period Brind'Amour mixed the lines up a bit and had Seth Jarvis and Jordan Martinook switch lines.

Jarvis took advantage of the switch immediately as he buried a pass from Ehlers to tie the score. After the game he said that he enjoyed playing with Staal and Ehlers and felt comfortable there.

After the game, Brind'Amour gave credit to assistant coach, Jeff Daniels for the change up. He told me "it's time" so I made the move.

The Flyers had the advantage in overtime but again, Andersen was equal to the task until the Hall game-winner. After the game, Hall said that he knew he was not having his best game but tried hard to contribute and was thrilled to be able to do so.

Eric Robinson had a team high six shots on goal and was second with eight hits in his 11:59 of ice time. He had a couple of open breakaways but was unable to solve Dan Vladar, who also played well.

William Carrier had a team high 12 hits. In all, both teams had a total of 48.

Next up, the Canes will travel to Philadelphia for game three on Thursday night.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

The Hockey News

Taylor Hall Calls Game; Hurricanes Take 2-0 Series Lead

By: Ryan Henkel

The resurgent veteran powered home a gritty overtime winner to erase an early deficit and push his team to a 2-0 series lead.

Who'd have thought that a 34-year-old winger who started the year on the fourth line would be the Carolina Hurricanes playoff MVP?

Well, Taylor Hall has always been a great player, I mean, he was the first overall selection in 2010 and won the Hart Trophy in 2018, but at this point in his career, many weren't sure what he had left in the tank.

However, ever since the midway part of this season, Hall has been steadily turning back the clock and now he's looking like legitimately one of the best players in the entire league, having gotten a point in every single game this postseason.

And on Monday night at Lenovo Center in Game 2 of the Hurricanes' second round series against the Philadelphia Flyers, Hall was once again playing the role of hero as he drove home the overtime game winner.

"The one thing about him that we know is he wants to make a difference," said Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour. "And that goal, to me, kind of sums it up."

"We talked about it before the playoffs. His impact on the team and maybe it's his buy-in or whatever, but the change in his game, he wants to win. So he's doing whatever he has to do to help the team. He's been just a great player for us."

The Hurricanes had battled back from an early 2-0 deficit to even force overtime in the first place and even there, the Flyers looked to have the edge.

But after weathering Philadelphia's best push of the series, the Hurricanes found the perfect counter strike.

Sean Walker collected the puck and transitioned it through the neutral zone, before dropping it off to Hall.

Hall then used the space Walker opened up with his net-front drive, powered to the middle of the ice, shot it and then collected his own rebound to pot home the winner.

"When you score in overtime it seems like parts of your memory kind of go," Hall said. "It was a gritty goal. I didn't do a very good job of attacking tonight personally. So I got that puck and I just wanted to get to the middle of the ice as much as I could and I got a shot off and got the rebound. That was an overtime goal, for sure."

Carolina had found themselves trailing early (for the first time all postseason actually), as the Flyers converted on their first power play opportunity following a puck over of glass penalty.

And then 39 seconds later, a blown coverage saw Sean Couturier alone in front of the net and the Philly captain made no mistake in burying a feed from below the goal line.

For the first time all postseason, the Hurricanes had their real first taste of adversity and how did they respond? Well, almost right away.

"It would obviously be nice if everything went perfectly our way the whole time, but not necessarily the way we wanted to start the game, but to watch us battle the whole night, stick to our game plan and not really falter at all is reassuring, for sure," Walker said.

The Canes got a power play chance of their own not long after and in the waning seconds of it, Jackson Blake fed a feed across to Nikolaj Ehlers and the veteran blasted it through Dan Vladar.

The deficit was down to one.

"It's always huge, but at that point it was a 2-0 game," Ehlers said on his goal. "You want to get one right back and we were able to do that. After that, it's a one-goal lead. One shot. It took us till six minutes left to get that second one. I loved every second of it. It was awesome to get my first of the playoffs, at home as well. I enjoyed that one tonight."

From there the Hurricanes really pushed the pace of play, but Philadelphia was stalwart with the lead and were giving Carolina a real tough time as they tried to break through.

The Canes were generating plenty at 5v5, but the frequency of penalties just wasn't allowing them to find consistent pressure.

And eventually, the coaching staff knew that the team needed a little spark and so they swapped Seth Jarvis and Jordan Martinook and immediately it paid off as on their first shift together, Ehlers weaved his way into the neutral and dropped a pass off to Jarvis who ripped one past Vladar for his first goal of the playoffs.

"Jeff Daniels, who helps me with the forward group, does such a good job," Brind'Amour said. "He was just like, 'It's time.' And then literally the first shift, we tie it. So I have to give him all the credit there for tapping me and saying it had been long enough. Paid dividends. Doesn't always work, but it did tonight."

"It's always nice to see one go in, especially since I've had chances and haven't been doing it," Jarvis said. "So to step up in a moment like that was huge. The line shuffling, I mean, it seems like every time with I'm with Jordo, stuff starts to go in. So hopefully that kick starts the rest of my playoffs."

The Canes had come back, but they never would have even been able to get to that point though if it wasn't for Frederik Andersen.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

The Danish netminder saw two go past him just five minutes into the game, but that would be the last ones that beat him as he absolutely shut down the rest of the Flyers' chances, making 33 straight saves en route to the win.

Andersen was at his best too in overtime, where the Flyers found another gear to their game, putting up 15 shots in total.

It was thanks to his elite level of play that allowed the Hurricanes to weather the storm and eventually take the win.

"Fred's been so good the whole playoffs so far," Walker said. "We didn't start the way we wanted and we didn't really give him help there, but he shut the door. To have that confidence and know that your goalie is gonna be there. We did have some breakdowns and they had some pushes where they were getting some pretty good chances and he was there to save our ass. Unbelievable and he's really a big part of our team and all the success we've had."

Carolina now will head north for Game 3 and 4 in Philadelphia as they look to steal a road win.

'We Don't Quit': Taylor Hall, Nikolaj Ehlers, Seth Jarvis, K'Andre Miller, Sean Walker, Rod Brind'Amour On Game 2 OT Win

By: Ryan Henkel

Taylor Hall's gritty overtime winner capped a stunning comeback after the Hurricanes erased an early deficit and survived the frequent trips to the penalty box to seize a commanding series lead.

The Carolina Hurricanes have taken a 2-0 series lead over the Philadelphia Flyers thanks to a Taylor Hall OT game winner.

The Canes stormed back from an early 2-0 deficit to force overtime and weathered the storm before eventually Hall found a greasy one.

After the game, Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour along with Hall, Nikolaj Ehlers, K'Andre Miller, Sean Walker and Seth Jarvis spoke with the media. Here's what they had to say:

Rod Brind'Amour

On Taylor Hall with a crucial block as well as the OT winner: We talked about it before the playoffs, his impact on the team and maybe the buy-in or whatever, but the change in his game, he wants to win. So he's doing whatever he has to do to help the team. And he's doing it, in that situation obviously, at both ends of the rink. And winning it for us too. He's been just a great player for us.

On facing adversity early: I actually thought we had a good start, and yet we throw one over the glass for no reason and then they had a good shift, and we had it on our stick and bobbled it around, and next thing you know, we're down two. So that was not ideal, but I actually liked the way we played for the rest of the first half of the game. We found a way to kind of get it close and I think that was the key. Not to get another one for them. And then, too many penalties. That just kills your team, kills your momentum, kills everything. But you've got to give the guys credit; they did a great job there and then found a way to tie it up.

On the line changes before the tying goal: Jeff Daniels, who helps me with the forward group, does such a good job. He was just like, 'It's time.' And then literally the first shift, we tie it. So I have to give him all the credit there for tapping me and saying it had been long enough. Paid dividends. Doesn't always work, but it did tonight.

On Frederik Andersen: He was the difference, right? In overtime, especially. I thought we had that one bad shift and then took a penalty, and they had plenty opportunities to win the game. So he was the difference there. That's where he really, I think, rose to the occasion and enabled us to hang in there and maybe enable us to get the win.

On the OT penalty kill and all the penalties: They had some looks there. But we're taking too many, right? The ones that are self-inflicted for me — over the glass, little tic-tac ones — we've got to avoid these. Too many men — we've had too many of those here. We've gotten away with it because we've been able to kill it, but it's not how you draw it up. So we've got to do better job there. But on the other hand, the guys that are killing it have done just an amazing job.

On Sean Walker: He's the one that threw it over the glass in the first, but he's such a competitor. That's why we love him. Mistakes are going to happen, but it seems to fire him up when things like that happen. And he does have an offensive flair — that was a hell of a move — just their goalie played great too. I mean, let's be honest, big breakaways at both ends... goaltending was not the issue tonight for any team.

On what the top power play unit needs: They've got to get a little more desperation in their game. It's probably a good sign for us though that we still have another level, and we all know it. We're finding ways to obviously get it done, and it's just a matter of time. I think these guys will start chipping in in that department because, again, it's an area that we've got to be better.

On the defense: Can kind of go down the list, especially with our D right now. That pair, Miller, you've got to give him his due too because he's been great, logging a lot of minutes against top, top competition. I mean, all year they've been doing that, and that's one of the key reasons our defense has helped us to be where we're at.

On Hall saying he didn't have his "A" game: That's probably what happened tonight. There's a pro that just understands how to evaluate his game and knows, 'OK, maybe of this isn't going good, but I've got to do something else. The one thing about him that we know is he wants to make a difference. And that goal, to me, kind of sums it up for me. You can just almost tell when he grabbed it. He's like, 'I'm going to try to put this away,' and he's got that flair to him, and obviously it worked tonight.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

Taylor Hall

On his game-winning goal: I just watched it and I didn't even realize I had fell down and then put it in. When you score in overtime it seems like parts of your memory kind of go. It was a gritty goal. I didn't do a very good job of attacking tonight personally. So I got that puck and I just wanted to get to the middle of the ice as much as I could and I got a shot off and got the rebound. That was an overtime goal, for sure.

On his last second block at the end of the third period: I might have overbackchecked on that and came a bit too deep in my zone, but as soon as he got the puck, I just wanted to challenge him and kind of went road hockey goalie there for a second. Anyone on our team is going to try and sellout to block that in that situation and it was my turn.

On Frederik Andersen: He's such a good goalie and he's so composed and he's unflappable and that's one of his strengths, honestly. Just being able to flush things. I think he has confidence right now with how he's playing and that shows if something goes a little bit wrong. When you're a confident player, athlete, you just flush and keep going and that's what he did. He made so many saves, some of which didn't even hit the net, but he's in such good positioning that he forces guys to really want to pick a corner. He's been our rock and it's just fun to watch.

On Sean Walker's underrated offensive game: He's a very good puck transporter for a Dman. We've had that similar type of play a few times this season where he's coming in on that side and I'm on my left wing. I was yelling like, 'Hey, I want it,' but he made a great play to keep driving and trusted that I wasn't gonna turn it over and make us go the other way. But Walks is such an underrated player and that was one of the first things I realized last year when I got here. Just how good he was. There's always guys on a new team that you start to appreciate more and more and he was one of them.

On if he got any deja vu feelings when the Flyers weren't leaving the ice after his goal: Yeah. I mean, I didn't really know. The ref kind of pointed at center, but I didn't... I don't know. I was kind of in another time zone there.

On his line: Tonight, honestly, wasn't our strongest game 5v5. We had a couple looks there in the third period, but for the most part, they did a good job on us. They're not letting any slot plays, not letting anything come from below the goal line to the slot, and that's kind of where we were having some success in that Ottawa series. We were already talking about some adjustments we might make, but they're a good defensive team. You look at their numbers and all that. They're strong and they're gonna force you to make plays and they're gonna keep you to the outside. We're gonna have to figure out something.

On contributing even when he's not having his best game: As you get older and you play this game for awhile, you have to figure out if you don't have your A game. If maybe you have your B-minus game or something close that and so you find a way to contribute. That's hockey. And like I said, they've done a good job of keeping us to the outside. But Fly penetrates on the one goal and gives it to Jarvy. That's the type of stuff that you're gonna have to do. But I think as I get older and I play this game more and more, you're not always gonna feel your best and play your best, but if you can

manage to find a way to contribute and not be an anchor on your line, then you're good.

Nikolaj Ehlers

On the line switches in the third period: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, sometimes you have to make some changes to spark anything. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Tonight, it did and obviously we're happy about that.

On scoring his first of the postseason: It's always huge, but at that point it was a 2-0 game. You want to get one right back and we were able to do that. After that, it's a one-goal lead. One shot. It took us till six minutes left to get that second one. I loved every second of it. It was awesome to get my first of the playoffs, at home as well. I enjoyed that one tonight.

On what's been going right for the second power play unit: Puck movement. Having an attacking mindset is something that is needed on the power play and especially in the playoffs. In the playoffs, you need your power play to score sometimes and we were able to do that tonight. But that attacking mindset will create some loose pucks where you can get a little creative and find somebody open. I think that attacking mindset is something we need to keep going forward.

On the resolve of the team: We don't quit. I think we've shown that all year. If we keep playing the right way and keep putting a lot of pressure on their players every single shift, I think we'll get back to playing some pretty good hockey and creating a lot of turnovers and a lot of good chances. Again, we were able to do that tonight. You want adversity and we had that in the Ottawa series as well. It's gonna happen again and so now we know what to do the next time it happens.

K'Andre Miller

On the comeback win: It was great. I think we did a great job of coming out and playing the right way and just sticking with it. It was our first time trailing in a game this playoffs, so that was a little weird, but I thought we did a great job responding and Freddie played great for us.

On what this win proved: That we can win if they score first? I don't know. They have a good team over there and we just have to stay the course and everything will work out.

On facing adversity: You're gonna have to find different ways to win playoff games and I think we just proved that tonight.

On what's going through his mind in those broken stick situations in OT: Just do anything you can to get the puck out. Keep it out of the net and do whatever you can.

On Frederik Andersen's bounce back: That's just a testament to the type of person he is and the player he is. He's been doing a great job obviously this entire playoffs. You're gonna have a mess up every once in a while, but I think it's just a matter of turning the page and getting back to your game.

Sean Walker

On the team's resolve: It would obviously be nice if everything went perfectly our way the whole time, but not necessarily the way we wanted to start the game, but to watch us battle the whole night, stick to our game plan and not really falter at all is reassuring, for sure.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

On the Flyers' push in overtime: Obviously they're playing really good right now too. We're just gonna look to limit those next game. Maybe start a little better and not have to chase as much, but it was back and forth, for sure.

On the sheer amount of penalties: It's tough. Obviously our PK is doing great, but we don't want to put that kind of stress on ourselves every night. Obviously there was some funny ones tonight, a couple of pucks out of the d-zone, bench minor too. We'll have to clean those up, but having a PK we can trust night in and night out is something that's been good, for us.

On K'Andre Miller: I like to think I'm playing pretty good, but Key's been unbelievable. I think he's on another level right now. Just his abilities, his stick, his skating, his physicality, the plays he makes every night has made it easy on me and I'm just trying to help him out whatever I can.

On the game-winner: It was a little scrambly there, but I just saw a great chance to get up the ice there. Beat my guy and it was kind of like a partial 3-on-2. I knew Hallsy was open, so I just kind of kicked it our and drove the net. We knew it might be a greasy one so I'm happy it worked out that way.

On Taylor Hall: Hallsy these whole playoffs has been unbelievable. Again, every night, it feels like they're cashing in and being a big part of our group. To see him get rewarded, I'm not surprised. They've been great all year, but especially in the playoffs. It's been great to see.

On Frederik Andersen: Fred's been so good the whole playoffs so far. We didn't start the way we wanted and we didn't really give him help there, but he shut the door. To have that confidence and know that your goalie is gonna be there. We did have some breakdowns and they had some pushes where they were getting some pretty good chances and he was there to save our ass. Unbelievable and he's really a big part of our team and all the success we've had.

Seth Jarvis

On scoring his first of the postseason: It's always nice to see one go in, especially since I've had chances and haven't been doing it. So to step up in a moment like that was huge. The line shuffling, I mean, it seems like every time with I'm with Jordo, stuff starts to go in. So hopefully that kick starts the rest of my playoffs.

On the line shuffling: I love playing with them. Fly especially, the way he can move the puck throughout the neutral zone, it's just about finding open ice and that's kind of what happened there. I don't know if he meant to drop it to me, but it worked out. And then with Jordo, I mean, if you don't have it, you put it behind them and you know that guy's going to go get it and hold onto it and wait for space. So it's a great pairing, and I'm just happy to be a part of it.

On his buddies being at the game: It's cool. I might have to keep them around more often. When they sounded the siren and we went down 2-0 right away, I was a little nervous. I was about to uninvite them forever. I'm glad we got the win, and to have these guys here... I saw them after we won, and one had a shirt off, the other one was piggybacking on somebody. So I'm glad they're enjoying it.

On if facing adversity is good: One-hundred percent. If I'm not mistaken, I don't think we were losing at any point in the playoffs until then. So to be down two and just kind of stick to our game and wait for opportunities and capitalize, that was huge. It speaks a lot to our leaders, to Roddy just keeping everyone calm and trusting in the process. I'm really proud of how we did that tonight.

On Taylor Hall: He's been incredible. Almost more important than that goal was that block in the third with a couple seconds left. You never know what happens there. So for him to put his body on the line like that and then get rewarded with the goal, I couldn't be happier for the guy.

LINKS

<https://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/article315626362.html>

<https://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/article315626618.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/7254612/2026/05/05/taylor-hall-hurricanes-game-2-win/>

<https://nsonline.com/article/2026/05/halls-overtime-goal-keeps-hurricanes-perfect-in-playoffs/>

<https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/recap-hall-s-ot-dagger-completes-can-es-game-2-comeback>

<https://www.nhl.com/news/topic/playoffs/philadelphia-flyers-carolina-hurricanes-game-2-recap-may-4-2026>

<https://apnews.com/article/nhl-playoffs-flyers-hurricanes-ot-02643b5499deb3af4dcbd17ebf0f9b5e>

<https://www.canescountry.com/2010-11-carolina-hurricanes-game-recaps/53583/carolina-holds-off-philadelphia-hurricanes-3-flyers-2-ot>

<https://thehockeynews.com/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/game-day/taylor-hall-calls-game-hurricanes-take-2-0-series-lead>

<https://thehockeynews.com/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/game-day/we-dont-quit-taylor-hall-nikolaj-ehlers-seth-jarvis-kandre-miller-sean-walker-rod-brindamour-on-game-2-ot-win>



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

SportScan

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

1390085 Carolina Hurricanes

Hurricanes trail for first time in 2026 playoffs, rally to beat Flyers in OT

Chip Alexander6-8 minutes 05/05/2026

The Carolina Hurricanes were deep into overtime of their second-round playoff game against Philadelphia on Monday, and Taylor Hall was determined to make a difference.

The Hurricanes' winger didn't believe he had been at his best in Game 2 against the Flyers. But it was his goal, with 1:06 left in OT, that propelled the Canes to a 3-2 victory at Lenovo Center, and a 2-0 lead in the series.

With the overtime winding down, Canes defenseman Sean Walker carried the puck through the neutral zone and got it to Hall on the left wing. Hall drove the net, got off a shot, fell, jumped back up and popped the puck past goalie Dan Vladar for the winner.

Canes winger Jackson Blake, crashing the net, got a piece of the puck before Hall finished and was credited with a shot and the primary assist.

"It was a gritty goal," Hall said. "I didn't do a good job of attacking tonight, personally. I got that puck and I wanted to get to the middle of the ice as much as I could."

Hall smiled, saying he watched a replay of the goal after the game and didn't remember falling down in front of the crease.

"When you score in overtime," he joked, "sometimes your memory goes."

A comeback win and overtime goal should be a nice memory to have as the best-of-seven Eastern Conference series shifts to Philadelphia for the next two games — Game 3 is Thursday night.

The Hurricanes never trailed in any of the four games in sweeping the Ottawa Senators in the opening round of the playoffs, and shut out the Flyers in Game 1. But the Flyers were quicker and more aggressive in Game 2, scoring two early goals for a 2-0 lead and forcing the Canes to fight back into it.

After a power-play goal by Nikolaj Ehlers in the first period, there was no more scoring — but a lot of penalties — until the third. Seth Jarvis' first goal of the playoffs tied it 2-2 for the Canes with 8:39 left in regulation, and it soon was headed to overtime as Canes goalie Frederik Andersen and Vladar matched critical save with critical save.

"He made so many saves. He's unflappable, our rock," Ehlers said of Andersen, who faced 36 shots, 15 in overtime.

The Canes had to kill off an Andrei Svechnikov penalty in the overtime, and the Flyers' Travis Konecny later had a chance to win it on a breakaway but was denied by Andersen with 4:45 left.

Then, Hall delivered the winner.

"As you get older and play this game a while, you have to figure out if you don't have your 'A' game and maybe have your 'B-minus' game or

something close to that, you have to find a way to contribute," said Hall, who blocked a Noah Cates shot with six seconds left in regulation.

The Hurricanes would say they didn't have their 'A' game. The Flyers did, for the most part. They had more jump in their game, won more puck battles than they did in the series opener and kept the Canes to the outside much of the game, which was marred by 15 penalties.

The Flyers had a pair of rapid-fire goals in the first when defenseman Jamie Drysdale scored on a power play and then captain Sean Couturier scored at even strength 39 seconds later with a shot in tight just five minutes into the game and the Canes were in a 2-0 hole.

Philadelphia center Sean Couturier (14) scores on Carolina Hurricanes goalie Frederik Andersen (31) to take a 2-0 lead in the first period in Game 2 on Monday, May 4, 2026, during the second round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C.

Philadelphia center Sean Couturier (14) scores on Carolina Hurricanes goalie Frederik Andersen (31) to take a 2-0 lead in the first period in Game 2 on Monday, May 4, 2026, during the second round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C. Robert Willett rwillett@newsobserver.com

"That was not ideal," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "But I liked the way we played the rest of the first half of the game. We got it close. Too many penalties killed our game, killed the momentum. But we found a way to tie it up."

A lot went into winning this one. Brind'Amour made a line switch that clicked with Jarvis playing with Jordan Staal and Ehlers. Walker had a tremendous game as did his defensive partner, K'Andre Miller. Logan Stankoven's goal streak ended at five games, but his line was on the ice for the overtime winner.

The Canes allowed the power-play goal early, but the penalty killers did their job the rest of the game, capped by the big one in overtime.

"It was our first time trailing, which was a little weird, but we did a great job responding," Miller said. "You have to find different ways to win playoff games."

This story was originally

Published May 4, 2026 at 10:42 PM.

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: 05.05.2026

1390086 Carolina Hurricanes



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

Carolina Hurricanes find winning formula for NHL playoffs. Can they keep it up?

Chip Alexander 7-9 minutes 04/05/2026

The Carolina Hurricanes have played five postseason games, won all five, and haven't trailed at any point in any of them.

The last team to do that in the Stanley Cup playoffs was the Washington Capitals in 1986, when Bryan Murray was the Caps' coach.

But Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour can be a hard man to impress, and is hardly concerned about such things. His only focus is on Game 2 of the second-round playoff series against the Philadelphia Flyers, Monday at Lenovo Center.

"We have played well," Brind'Amour said Sunday. "But hockey's just a random thing. You get a bounce here or there and that goes out the window. But, obviously, it helps to get ahead of it."

Logan Stankoven's line has seen to that for the Hurricanes, who opened the Flyers series Saturday with a 3-0 victory in Game 1. Stankoven scored the first goal in each of the first three games against the Ottawa Senators in the first-round sweep of the Sens, then again Saturday early in the first period against the Flyers.

Through the Canes' first five playoff games, Stankoven's line with wingers Jackson Blake and Taylor Hall has combined for 10 goals and 11 assists. They've had 47 shots on goal, constantly on the prowl in the offensive zone.

"They're on a heater right now," Flyers coach Rick Tocchet said after Game 1. "When you're playing a confident line like that, you have to make sure you're in front of them and make it a tough night."

The Flyers, playing without injured forward Owen Tippett, changed up their lines during Game 1 to give the Canes different looks. They also put in a practice Sunday while the Canes opted for off-ice work.

The Flyers were 0-for-4 on the power play in Game 1. On the first three, they did not have a shot while allowing three shorthanded chances to the Canes' penalty killers.

"Their PK is fast, they go right at you," Tocchet said.

Canes goalie Frederik Andersen also has been on point, shorthanded and at even strength, giving up five goals in five games. He opened the Ottawa series with a shutout win and did the same Saturday against the Flyers with 19 saves.

"Everyone's digging in, but I think the little difference might be the goaltending has been a notch up from what it had been in the regular season," Brind'Amour said. "It was fine then, but now it has been that much better."

The Hurricanes have two power-play goals in the first five playoff games and also were 0-for-4 Saturday while generating five shots.

Canes defenseman Alexander Nikishin was scratched from Game 1 as veteran Mike Reilly was slotted into the lineup and contributed a pair of assists. Nikishin, who sustained a concussion in Game 4 against Ottawa, took part in Saturday's morning skate, but Brind'Amour said he "didn't feel quite right" following the skate and sat out.

"We're just waiting for him to give us the OK," Brind'Amour said.

The Canes will look to continue doing all the right things, big or small, in Game 2. Defenseman Jaccob Slavin mentioned Sunday that Carolina's "heavy pressure" style of play is effective, saying it can be "suffocating."

The Canes will roll all four forward lines and each is capable of a strong forecheck that can wear down teams, through speed, puck pursuit and physicality.

"It's us getting momentum behind it," forward Jordan Martinook said Sunday. "When you see one line go and then the next line go, it's kind of like the snowball going downhill kind of thing. ... When you get rolling, it's hard for the other team to push back."

The Canes would like to be sharper on the power play — Carolina is 2-for-19 in the playoffs — and sharper in the third period than they were in Game 1.

"All these games we have played could have gone the other way," Brind'Amour said. "We're always chasing the perfect game. I have yet to see it. There's a lot to get better at, and we're going to have to, because we know those bounces are going to go the other way at some point, and we need to be sharper as a group."

This story was originally

Published May 4, 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: 05.05.2026

1390087 Carolina Hurricanes

Hurricanes vs. Flyers Game 2: Key takeaways as Carolina prevails in OT

Sean Gentile, Kevin Kurz 8-10 minutes 05/05/2026

RALEIGH, N.C. — Rod Brind'Amour saw Monday night coming.

"All these games we've played could have gone the other way," the Carolina Hurricanes coach said between his team's series-opening win over the Philadelphia Flyers, which pushed his team to 5-0 in the Stanley Cup playoffs, and Game 2.

"A bounce here or there, and now all of a sudden it looks different. We're always chasing the perfect game. I have yet to see it. There's a lot to get better at, and we're going to have to, because we know that those bounces are going to go the other way at some point."

"Some point" nearly came in the Hurricanes' 3-2 win, during a Game 2 marked by an outstanding performance from Flyers goaltender Dan Vladar and a series of wasted second-period opportunities by Carolina. But Brind'Amour's team escaped in the end, earning a 2-0 series lead after Taylor Hall's game-winning goal with 1:06 remaining in the first overtime.

Game 2 wasn't just Carolina's first come-from-behind victory of this year's Stanley Cup playoffs — it was also the first time it trailed, thanks to a four-game sweep of the Ottawa Senators and Game 1 victory.

Carolina forward Seth Jarvis tied the score at 2, 11:21 into the third period, on a snap shot past Vladar set up by some knifing puck-carrying and a subsequent drop pass from Nikolaj Ehlers. Ehlers had previously cut Philadelphia's lead to 2-1 with a one-timed rocket off a cross-ice feed from Jackson Blake on a sequence that began when Flyers defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen flubbed a clearing attempt.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

"Obviously, it would be nice if everything went perfectly our way the whole time," Hurricanes defenseman Sean Walker said. "Not necessarily the way we want to start the game, but to watch us just battle the whole night, stick to our game plan and not really falter at all, is reassuring for sure."

Defenseman Jamie Drysdale and forward Sean Couturier scored for the Flyers, who held the lead for 44:37 before Jarvis' strike pulled Carolina even. Hurricanes goalie Frederik Andersen made 34 saves, including 15 in overtime, to remain perfect for the postseason. Brind'Amour described Andersen as "the difference," adding that he "rose to the occasion and enabled us to hang in there."

Game 3 is scheduled for Thursday night in Philadelphia.

Freddie steps up in OT ...

Andersen saw the bulk of his work in overtime, more than three full periods after the Flyers gave themselves a 2-0 lead. One of those goals fell on Andersen a bit more than the other — he pokechecked a puck directly to Drysdale in the slot, and Drysdale beat him with a pinpoint shot to put Philadelphia up 2-1.

Andersen also rebounded from a puckhandling issue in overtime, when his misplay behind the net set up the Flyers for some sustained time in Carolina's zone. In that sequence, Andersen stopped Tyson Foerster — the Flyer who forced his error — with a pad save at the doorstep.

"That's just a testament to the type of person he is and the player he is," Hurricanes defenseman K'Andre Miller said. "Yeah, you're going to have a mess-up every once in a while, but I think it's just a matter of turning the page and getting back to your game."

Andersen extended his streak of allowing two or fewer goals this postseason to six games. Only nine goalies in NHL history have had a longer run, and only one of those goalies (Jeremy Swayman) is still active.

"We did have some breakdowns," Walker said. "Obviously, they had some good pushes where they were getting some pretty good chances, and he was there to save our ass."

... as Philly rues missed chances

The Flyers managed a whopping 15 shots on goal in overtime, but it was one that missed that everyone will remember. With a little less than five minutes to go, forward Travis Konecny found himself streaking ahead on a breakaway, sprung by Trevor Zegras. He shot it wide, though, and the Hurricanes were celebrating about four minutes later.

"It's got to go in," Konecny said after the game.

Defenseman Travis Sanheim was asked about the Flyers' playing well in the extra session, when they outshot the Hurricanes 15-6, and better overall than in Game 1.

"Yeah, but at the end of the day, we still lost," Sanheim said. "We'll move on, get ready for the next one. I think it helps our confidence still going into the next one. Much better effort from our group. I thought we deserved better."

Jarvis breaks through

Jarvis' tying the game at 2 was immense — and not just for the Hurricanes. After a team-leading 32 regular-season goals, he had yet to score in the playoffs. If it hadn't yet become a true point of concern for the Hurricanes, it was close.

Then, in the third period, on the advice of assistant Jeff Daniels, telling him "it's time," Brind'Amour shuffled the lines. Jarvis, who spent nearly the entire regular season playing with Sebastian Aho and Andrei Svechnikov, found the net on his first shift with Ehlers and Jordan Staal.

"I've had chances and haven't been doing it, so to step up in a moment like that was huge," Jarvis said. "The line shuffling, I mean, seems if I jump with (Staal), stuff starts to go in. Hopefully, that kickstarts the rest of my playoffs."

The goal also came with his Winnipeg buddies in the building. The Good Ol' Canadian Boys, who've become a Hurricanes playoff staple and also wound up at the Milan Olympics, arrived in Raleigh for Game 2. Beers, as tends to be the case with those guys, had been consumed.

They also ran the pregame siren at Lenovo Center shortly before the Hurricanes went down 2-0, leaving Jarvis "nervous" enough to take drastic measures.

"I was about to uninvite them forever," said Jarvis, who held his postgame media session in a battle-tested Winnipeg Blue Bombers T-shirt. "To have these guys here, I saw them after we won, and one had his shirt off, the other one's piggybacking on somebody, so I'm glad they're enjoying it."

Vladar stands tall

Vladar was always going to have to steal a game or two in this series for the Flyers to have a chance. He nearly did Monday.

Under attack in the second period, in particular, Vladar saved all 16 of Carolina's shots in the frame to preserve the Flyers' 2-1 lead. He made a pair of breakaway stops on Robinson, including one short-handed rush about five minutes into the frame. The red-hot Logan Stankoven's wrist shot from the circle with 6:34 to go was handled by Vladar, too. He also got a little help in the frame when Svechnikov's shot sneaked through his pads only for Sanheim to swipe it away at the last moment.

Vladar, who finished with 39 saves in dropping to 4-4 on the postseason, has not allowed more than three goals in any of his eight playoff starts.

Canes slow to catch up

For the first time in the postseason, the Hurricanes started a period while trailing their opponent, and though the Flyers' 2-1 lead held for all 20 minutes of the second, Carolina certainly made them work for it.

Five penalties (three on Carolina, two on Philadelphia) zapped the game of any real flow, but the Hurricanes created plenty of opportunities at five-on-five and on both sets of special teams. Across all situations, Carolina outattempted the Flyers 30-15, outshot them 15-10, won high-danger chances 11-2 and held a 2.17-0.75 edge in expected goals.

What they failed to do, though, was actually tie the score. Their three best chances came when Sanheim swept out a puck that Svechnikov had slipped through Vladar's five-hole on the power play; when Eric Robinson failed to cash in after Andersen sprung him with a stretch pass on the penalty kill; and when Mark Jankowski airmailed a two-on-one feed from Svechnikov at five-on-five.

In sum, it was the sort of period that often comes back to bite a team — and the sort of period that Carolina had avoided entirely in its first five postseason games.

Flyers finally strike in first

Sanheim said before the game that there "should be a big difference" in the way the Flyers come out for Game 2 compared with in the series-opener, when they quickly got behind and never really got into the game.

There certainly was. For the first time all postseason, the Flyers scored a first-period goal — two, in fact, to jump out to an early 2-0 lead. It also marked the first time the Hurricanes, who had been outscoring their opponents 4-0 in the first period, trailed in the playoffs.

Falling behind early was a major issue for the Flyers in the regular season, as they gave up the first goal in 50 of 82 games. They've now



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

scored first in four of their eight playoff games, though Game 2 marked their only loss in that situation.

The Athletic LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390088 Carolina Hurricanes

Senators' Ridly Greig suspended 2 games for playoff sucker punches vs. Canes

Julian McKenzie 3-4 minutes 04/05/2026

OTTAWA — Ottawa Senators forward Ridly Greig has been suspended two games for sucker-punching Carolina Hurricanes defenseman Sean Walker in Game 4 of their first-round playoff series.

The suspension, officially handed out for roughing, will carry over into the 2026-27 NHL regular season, as Carolina eliminated Ottawa in a four-game sweep last month. Greig's hearing with the NHL's Department of Player Safety was held on Monday, after which the league released a video explaining the decision.

The incident occurred in the second period of the Hurricanes' 4-2 win on April 25, as Greig flung two sucker punches at Walker while Walker was engaged in a post-whistle scum with Ottawa forward Warren Foegele. First Greig jabbed a defenseless Walker in the face, before seconds later connecting on an uppercut punch with Walker bent over and restrained in a headlock by Foegele.

"It is important to note that this is not a situation in which two players are squaring off in a mutual confrontation, only for the confrontation to escalate rapidly," the NHL's Department of Player Safety said in its video explanation. "In this situation, Walker is fully engaged with a Senators player when Greig knowingly approaches them and elects to throw two sucker punches towards the defenseless Walker with sufficient force to merit supplemental discipline."

Speaking during the Senators' locker cleanout day last week, Greig said there wasn't any prior incident between him and Walker that prompted him to do it.

"I've got to do a better job of controlling my emotions," Greig said. "Yeah, that's all I'll say on it."

CHAOS IN OTTAWA pic.twitter.com/f8DxsTCsg9

— Sportsnet (@Sportsnet) April 25, 2026

"It is what it is," Walker said last Tuesday. "I think everybody saw what happened. I don't need to make comments on it. We all saw what happened. The league will make their decision on discipline, and we'll leave it at that."

Greig's punch was not penalized during the penalty-filled second frame, when 11 minors and 22 penalty minutes were doled out between both teams. However, it received swift and resounding criticism from around the hockey world. On Sportsnet, "Hockey Night in Canada" commentator and retired NHL goalie Kelly Hrudey referred to Greig's actions as "gutless and disgusting" and "just so dirty."

"For you to just give a flat-out uppercut like that, that is absolute B.S.," added TNT commentator and former NHL forward Paul Bissonnette. "That's the type of thing, when it's not called, I would be so fired up that after the game I might even be at the locker room waiting for him to walk out."

"Thankfully, I've never really been a huge social media person," Greig said of the reaction. "I try to stay off everything. So, yeah, it doesn't really bother me too much."

This is the second time Greig has been disciplined by the NHL's Department of Player Safety, having received a two-game suspension in September 2021 after cross-checking then-Winnipeg Jets forward Pierre-Luc Dubois. Greig ultimately missed a preseason game and a regular-season game.

May 5, 2026

The Athletic LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390089 Carolina Hurricanes

Hall's overtime goal keeps Hurricanes perfect in playoffs

Cory Lavoie 6-7 minutes 05/05/2026

RALEIGH — Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said before Game 2 that his team hadn't yet faced adversity this postseason.

Now they have — and they passed the test with flying colors.

Taylor Hall drove the net and scored with 66 seconds left in the first overtime as Carolina erased a two-goal deficit and beat the visiting Flyers 3-2 in Monday's Game 2 to take a 2-0 series lead.

"We don't quit," Hurricanes winger Nikolaj Ehlers said.

Despite getting outshot 15-8 in overtime, the Hurricanes — as they did in the first round against Ottawa — held serve at home with an overtime win in the second game of the series.

Defenseman Sean Walker picked up a loose puck in the defensive zone and carried it all the way into the Flyers' end. He dropped the puck off to Hall, who drove the net and shot on Philadelphia goalie Dan Vladar (40 saves). Jackson Blake took a swipe at the rebound, and Hall located the puck and pushed it past defenseman Travis Sanheim and into the net for the win.

"When you score in overtime it seems like parts of your memory kind of go," Hall said while trying to recap the goal. "It was a gritty goal. I didn't do a very good job of attacking tonight personally. So I got that puck and I just wanted to get to the middle of the ice as much as I could, and I got a shot off and got the rebound. That was an overtime goal, for sure."

It was Hall's third goal and team-leading ninth point of the postseason. And the game may not have reached overtime if not for Hall — in the defensive zone.

With 8 seconds left in regulation, Hall made a key block on Flyers forward Noah Cates to keep the game tied and force overtime.

"He wants to win," Brind'Amour said. "So he's doing whatever he has to do to help the team. And he's doing it, in that situation obviously, at both ends of the rink. And winning it for us too. He's been just a great player for us."

Brind'Amour and his coaching staff deserve credit as well. With his top line of Sebastian Aho, Seth Jarvis and Andrei Svechnikov still searching for their first goal together this postseason, Brind'Amour flipped his lines in the middle of the third period with Carolina trailing by a goal. Jarvis joined Ehlers and Jordan Staal, and the results were immediate.

Ehlers, who scored Carolina's first period power play goal, received the puck in the neutral zone and pushed back the Flyers defense. He dropped the puck to Jarvis at the top of the right circle, and Jarvis



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

snapped a shot past the glove of Vladar to tie the game at 11:21 of the third period.

“(Assistant coach) Jeff Daniels, who helps me with the forward group — does such a good job — and he’s just like, ‘It’s time.’ And literally, the first shift we did it, that’s what happened. So I’ve got to give him all the credit there for tapping me and saying, ‘OK, look, we waited long enough.’ And it paid dividends. It doesn’t always work that way, but it did tonight.”

The goal was Jarvis’ first of the postseason.

“It’s always nice to see one go in, especially (since) I’ve had chances and haven’t been doing it, so to step up in a moment like that was huge,” Jarvis said. “The line shuffling, I mean, it seems like every time when I’m with (Staal), stuff starts to go in. So hopefully that kick starts the rest of my playoffs.”

The Hurricanes were forced to play from behind for the first time this postseason after the Flyers scored twice in 39 seconds in the opening five minutes of the game to jump out to a 2-0 lead.

Philadelphia’s league-worst power play converted on its first chance of the night. With Walker in the penalty box for a delay-of-game penalty, Jamie Drysdale jumped on a loose puck in the slot and fired it past Frederik Andersen (34 saves) to give Philadelphia a 1-0 lead at 4:02 of the first period.

The lead doubled on the next shift.

After Carolina failed to get a clear in the defensive zone, Flyers captain Sean Couturier scored right in the goal mouth to extend the lead to 2-0 at 4:41 of the opening period.

The Hurricanes, however, responded, halving the lead thanks to their power play and a failed clear by the Flyers.

Philadelphia defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen hesitated in shooting the puck down the ice on the penalty kill, allowing Carolina to stay in the zone. Blake then made a circle-to-circle pass to Ehlers, whose one-timer beat Vladar at 10:21 of the first period for his first playoff goal in a Hurricanes uniform to make it 2-1.

“You want to get one right back, and we were able to do that,” Ehlers said. “After that, it’s a one-goal lead.”

And Andersen — who has not allowed more than two goals in his six postseason starts — stopped the last 33 shots he faced.

“That’s just a testament to the type of person he is and the player he is,” defenseman K’Andre Miller said of Andersen. “He’s been doing a great job obviously this entire playoffs. You’re going to have a mess up every once in a while, but I think it’s just a matter of turning the page and getting back to your game.”

And in overtime, Carolina’s best line in the playoffs — Hall, Blake and Logan Stankoven — again came through.

“Every night, it feels like they’re cashing in and being a big part of our group,” Walker said. “To see (Hall) get rewarded, I’m not surprised. They’ve been great all year, but especially in the playoffs.”

Notes: Carolina won 44 of 73 faceoffs. ... Hurricanes forward William Carrier had 12 hits. ... Sanheim had five blocks. ... Carolina forward Andrei Svechnikov took three minor penalties. ... Forwards Jesperi Kotkaniemi and Nicolas Deslauriers, and goalie Pyotr Kochetkov were healthy scratches. Alexander Nikishin (concussion) did not dress.

North State Journal LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390197 Websites

The Athletic / Dahlin, Toews, Landeskog named finalists for NHL’s Bill Masterton Memorial Trophy

By Julian McKenzie

May 4, 2026 Updated 12:38 pm EDT

Buffalo Sabres defenseman Rasmus Dahlin, Colorado Avalanche forward Gabriel Landeskog and Winnipeg Jets forward Jonathan Toews have been named this year’s finalists for the NHL’s Bill Masterton Trophy, given to the player who best displays qualities of “perseverance, sportsmanship and dedication.”

Dahlin scored 19 goals and set a career high in points with 74 for the Sabres, who reached the Stanley Cup playoffs for the first time since 2011. The Swedish defenseman took a leave of absence in November to be with his fiancée, Carolina Matovac, who had experienced heart failure months earlier and required a heart transplant. Matovac and Dahlin also lost their unborn child during the medical emergency. Dahlin missed five games this season while attending health checkups with Matovac, before she was healthy enough to join Dahlin in Buffalo in March. The Sabres are currently in the second round of the playoffs, with Game 1 against the Canadiens set for Wednesday night.

This year, Landeskog played regular-season games for the first time since 2021-22, when he captained the Avalanche to a Stanley Cup. The Swedish forward went on to miss three seasons with right knee problems, going under the knife for knee cartilage replacement surgery in May 2023. But following a lengthy recovery, he rejoined the Avalanche to play games during the 2025 playoffs. During the 2025-26 regular season, he scored 14 goals and registered 35 points in 60 games for Colorado. Landeskog was also a finalist for the Masterton last season. The Avalanche took a 1-0 lead in their second-round series against the Wild with a Game 1 win on Sunday night.

Toews returned to the NHL for the first time in over two years after being sidelined with various health issues, scoring 11 goals and totaling 29 points in 82 games for his hometown team. Toews also finished third league-wide in faceoff win percentage (minimum 100 faceoffs taken) at 62.1 percent. Toews battled symptoms from long COVID and Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome, which forced him to stop playing ahead of the 2022-23 season. The three-time Stanley Cup champion confirmed with The Athletic in March 2025 that he would attempt an NHL comeback, signing with the Jets as a free agent three months later.

Last year’s Masterton winner was Columbus Blue Jackets forward Sean Monahan, whose longtime friend and teammate, Johnny Gaudreau, was killed, along with his brother Matthew, by a car in August 2024 while riding bicycles.

The Athletic LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390198 Websites

The Athletic / 2026 NHL Draft ranking: Gavin McKenna, Ivar Stenberg lead Wheeler’s May top 64

By Scott Wheeler

May 4, 2026 6:05 am EDT

Welcome to my May 2026 NHL Draft ranking.

This post-U18 worlds top 64 (plus 45 honorable mentions) is my penultimate list for this year’s draft. It follows my way-too-early top 26,



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

preseason top 32, preliminary top 64, midseason top 64 and March top 64, and will be followed by my final top 100 in June.

Wingers Gavin McKenna and Ivar Stenberg remain my top two prospects, which has been the case on all of my lists. They're followed by half a dozen defensemen, a trio of centers and another pair of wingers to form a clear-cut top 13 prospects in this year's class for me.

As always, the ranking is packaged in our sortable user interface and broken down into tiers. My board currently has six tiers: 1-2, 3-13, 14-21, 22-44, 45-61, 62-64+.

Note that while I consult scouts, coaches, general managers, team staff and those around these players (their agents, skills coaches, strength and conditioning coaches, etc.) throughout the year, the following evaluations and rankings are strictly my own.

Here are my full reports on the top 64 (honorable mentions are sorted alphabetically).

Tier 1

1

Gavin McKenna

LW1

PENN STATE

Height:

5' 11"

Weight:

170 lbs

DOB:

Dec. 20, 2007

LW

CA

TIER 1

NCAA

2

Ivar Stenberg

RW1

FRÖLUNDA

Height:

5' 11"

Weight:

183 lbs

DOB:

Sep. 30, 2007

RW

SE

TIER 1

SHL

Tier 2

3

Chase Reid

RHD1

SOO

Height:

6' 2.25"

Weight:

195 lbs

DOB:

Dec. 30, 2007

RHD

us

TIER 2

OHL

4

Caleb Malhotra

C1

BRANTFORD

Height:

6' 1.75"

Weight:

182 lbs

DOB:

Jun. 2, 2008

C

CA

TIER 2

OHL

5

Alberts Smits

LHD1

MUNICH

Height:

6' 3"

Weight:

205 lbs

DOB:

Dec. 2, 2007

LHD

LV

TIER 2

DEL

6



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

Viggo Bjorck

C2

DJURGÅRDEN

Height:

5' 9"

Weight:

177 lbs

DOB:

Mar. 12, 2008

C

SE

TIER 2

J20

7

Carson Carels

LHD2

PRINCE GEORGE

Height:

6' 1.75"

Weight:

198 lbs

DOB:

Jun. 23, 2008

LHD

CA

TIER 2

WHL

8

Keaton Verhoeff

RHD2

NORTH DAKOTA

Height:

6' 3.5"

Weight:

208 lbs

DOB:

Jun. 19, 2008

RHD

CA

TIER 2

NCAA

9

Ryan Lin

RHD3

VANCOUVER

Height:

5' 11"

Weight:

178 lbs

DOB:

Apr. 18, 2008

RHD

CA

TIER 2

WHL

10

Daxon Rudolph

RHD4

PRINCE ALBERT

Height:

6' 2.25"

Weight:

206 lbs

DOB:

Mar. 6, 2008

RHD

CA

TIER 2

WHL

11

Tynan Lawrence

C3

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Height:

6' 0.5"

Weight:

185 lbs

DOB:

Aug. 3, 2008

C

CA

TIER 2

NCAA

12



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

Wyatt Cullen

LW2

U18

Height:

6' 1"

Weight:

176 lbs

DOB:

Sep. 8, 2008

LW

us

TIER 2

NTDP

13

Ethan Belchetz

LW3

WINDSOR

Height:

6' 5.25"

Weight:

228 lbs

DOB:

Mar. 30, 2008

LW

ca

TIER 2

OHL

Tier 3

14

Malte Gustafsson

LHD3

HV71

Height:

6' 4.25"

Weight:

200 lbs

DOB:

Jun. 11, 2008

LHD

SE

TIER 3

J20

15

Elton Hermansson

RW2

MODO

Height:

6' 1"

Weight:

181 lbs

DOB:

Feb. 5, 2008

RW

SE

TIER 3

J20

16

Nikita Klepov

LW4

SAGINAW

Height:

6'

Weight:

180 lbs

DOB:

Jun. 27, 2008

LW

us

TIER 3

OHL

17

Oscar Hemming

LW5

BOSTON COLLEGE

Height:

6' 3.5"

Weight:

193 lbs

DOB:

Aug. 13, 2008

LW

FI

TIER 3

NCAA



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

18

Adam Novotny

LW6

PETERBOROUGH

Height:

6' 1.25"

Weight:

205 lbs

DOB:

Nov. 13, 2007

LW

cz

TIER 3

OHL

19

Marcus Nordmark

LW7

DJURGÅRDEN

Height:

6' 1.5"

Weight:

180 lbs

DOB:

May. 4, 2008

LW

se

TIER 3

J20

20

Xavier Villeneuve

LHD4

BLAINVILLE-BOISBRIAND

Height:

5' 11"

Weight:

162 lbs

DOB:

Sep. 29, 2007

LHD

ca

TIER 3

QMJHL

21

JP Hurlbert

LW8

KAMLOOPS

Height:

5' 11.75"

Weight:

183 lbs

DOB:

Apr. 11, 2008

LW

us

TIER 3

WHL

Tier 4

22

Iliia Morozov

C4

MIAMI UNIVERSITY

Height:

6' 3"

Weight:

200 lbs

DOB:

Aug. 3, 2008

C

ru

TIER 4

NCAA

23

Mathis Preston

RW3

VANCOUVER

Height:

5' 11"

Weight:

173 lbs

DOB:

Jul. 21, 2008

RW

ca

TIER 4



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

WHL

24

Alexander Command

C5

OREBRO

Height:

6' 1"

Weight:

183 lbs

DOB:

Jun. 16, 2008

C

SE

TIER 4

J20

25

Oliver Suvanto

C6

TAPPARA

Height:

6' 2.75"

Weight:

207 lbs

DOB:

Sep. 3, 2008

C

FI

TIER 4

LIIIGA

26

Ryan Roobroeck

LW9

NIAGARA

Height:

6' 2.5"

Weight:

209 lbs

DOB:

Sep. 25, 2007

LW

CA

TIER 4

OHL

27

Jack Hextall

C7

YOUNGSTOWN

Height:

6' 0.5"

Weight:

188 lbs

DOB:

Mar. 23, 2008

C

us

TIER 4

USHL

28

Tomas Chrenko

C8

NITRA

Height:

5' 11"

Weight:

172 lbs

DOB:

Nov. 2, 2007

C

SK

TIER 4

SLOVAKIA

29

Niklas Aaram-Olsen

LW10

ÖREBRO

Height:

6' 1"

Weight:

183 lbs

DOB:

Apr. 19, 2008

LW

NO

TIER 4



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

J20

30

Liam Ruck

RW4

MEDICINE HAT

Height:

5' 11.75"

Weight:

176 lbs

DOB:

Feb. 21, 2008

RW

CA

TIER 4

WHL

31

William Hakansson

LHD5

LULEÅ

Height:

6' 4"

Weight:

207 lbs

DOB:

Oct. 8, 2007

LHD

SE

TIER 4

SHL

32

Egor Shilov

C9

VICTORIAVILLE

Height:

6' 0.5"

Weight:

177 lbs

DOB:

Apr. 30, 2008

C

RU

TIER 4

QMJHL

33

Tommy Bleyl

RHD5

MONCTON

Height:

5' 11.5"

Weight:

165 lbs

DOB:

Dec. 1, 2007

RHD

us

TIER 4

QMJHL

34

Simas Ignatavicius

RW5

GENÈVE-SERVETTE

Height:

6' 3"

Weight:

198 lbs

DOB:

Oct. 22, 2007

RW

LT

TIER 4

NL

35

Markus Ruck

C10

MEDICINE HAT

Height:

5' 11.75"

Weight:

167 lbs

DOB:

Feb. 21, 2008

C

CA

TIER 4



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

WHL

36

Maddox Dagenais

C11

QUEBEC

Height:

6' 3.75"

Weight:

196 lbs

DOB:

Mar. 27, 2008

C

CA

TIER 4

QMJHL

37

Ryder Cali

C12

NORTH BAY

Height:

6' 1.5"

Weight:

219 lbs

DOB:

Sep. 6, 2008

C

CA

TIER 4

OHL

38

Juho Piiparinen

RHD6

TAPPARA

Height:

6' 1"

Weight:

201 lbs

DOB:

Aug. 10, 2008

RHD

FI

TIER 4

LIIGA U20

39

Nikita Shcherbakov

LHD6

UFA

Height:

6' 3"

Weight:

187 lbs

DOB:

Oct. 23, 2007

LHD

RU

TIER 4

KHL

40

Adam Goljer

RHD7

TRENCIN

Height:

6' 1"

Weight:

195 lbs

DOB:

Jun. 7, 2008

RHD

SK

TIER 4

SLOVAKIA

41

Jakub Vanecek

LHD7

TRI-CITY

Height:

6' 2"

Weight:

194 lbs

DOB:

Feb. 25, 2008

LHD

CZ

TIER 4



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

WHL

42

Samu Alalauri

RHD8

PELICANS

Height:

6' 1.5"

Weight:

203 lbs

DOB:

May 31, 2008

RHD

FI

TIER 4

LIIGA U20

43

Ben Macbeath

LHD8

CALGARY

Height:

6' 2"

Weight:

188 lbs

DOB:

Mar. 4, 2008

LHD

CA

TIER 4

WHL

44

Gleb Pugachyov

LW11

NIZHNY NOVGOROD

Height:

6' 3"

Weight:

198 lbs

DOB:

Mar. 25, 2008

LW

RU

TIER 4

MHL

Tier 5

45

Dmitri Borichev

G1

LOKOMOTIV

Height:

6' 2"

Weight:

194 lbs

DOB:

Jun. 19, 2008

G

RU

TIER 5

MHL

46

Lavr Gashilov

C13

YEKATERINBURG

Height:

6' 2.5"

Weight:

170 lbs

DOB:

Sep. 23, 2007

C

RU

TIER 5

MHL

47

Adam Nemec

LW12

SUDBURY

Height:

6' 0.25"

Weight:

173 lbs

DOB:

Oct. 18, 2007

LW

SK



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

TIER 5

OHL

48

Tobias Trejbal

G2

YOUNGSTOWN

Height:

6' 4.25"

Weight:

190 lbs

DOB:

Nov. 9, 2007

G

cz

TIER 5

USHL

49

Jaxon Cover

RW6

LONDON

Height:

6' 1.5"

Weight:

183 lbs

DOB:

Feb. 13, 2008

RW

ky

TIER 5

OHL

50

Brooks Rogowski

C14

OSHAWA

Height:

6' 7"

Weight:

235 lbs

DOB:

Jun. 28, 2008

C

us

TIER 5

OHL

51

Thomas Vandenberg

C15

OTTAWA

Height:

5' 11.5"

Weight:

178 lbs

DOB:

Sep. 8, 2008

C

ca

TIER 5

OHL

52

Egor Barabanov

C16

SAGINAW

Height:

6'

Weight:

177 lbs

DOB:

May. 16, 2006

C

ru

TIER 5

OHL

53

Lars Steiner

RW7

ROUYN-NORANDA

Height:

5' 9.5"

Weight:

175 lbs

DOB:

Nov. 12, 2007

RW

ch



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

TIER 5

QMJHL

54

Adam Valentini

C17

MICHIGAN

Height:

5' 9.25"

Weight:

190 lbs

DOB:

Apr. 11, 2008

C

CA

TIER 5

NCAA

55

Oscar Holmertz

C18

LINKÖPING

Height:

6'

Weight:

187 lbs

DOB:

Mar. 21, 2008

C

SE

TIER 5

J20

56

Vladimir Dravecky

RHD9

BRANTFORD

Height:

5' 11.25"

Weight:

192 lbs

DOB:

Dec. 19, 2007

RHD

CZ

TIER 5

OHL

57

Mikey Berchild

LW13

U18

Height:

5' 9.75"

Weight:

180 lbs

DOB:

Feb. 16, 2008

LW

us

TIER 5

NTDP

58

Casey Mutryn

RW8

U18

Height:

6' 3"

Weight:

200 lbs

DOB:

Jul. 5, 2008

RW

us

TIER 5

NTDP

59

Axel Elofsson

RHD10

ÖREBRO

Height:

5' 10"

Weight:

164 lbs

DOB:

Jun. 3, 2008

RHD

SE



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

TIER 5

J20

60

Alessandro Di Iorio

C19

SARNIA

Height:

6'

Weight:

188 lbs

DOB:

Mar. 17, 2008

C

CA

TIER 5

OHL

61

Pierce Mbuyi

LW14

OWEN SOUND

Height:

5' 10"

Weight:

163 lbs

DOB:

Apr. 17, 2008

LW

CA

TIER 5

OHL

Tier 6

62

Luke Schairer

RHD11

U18

Height:

6' 3"

Weight:

195 lbs

DOB:

Jan. 30, 2008

RHD

us

TIER 6

NTDP

63

Giorgos Pantelas

RHD12

BRANDON

Height:

6' 2.25"

Weight:

210 lbs

DOB:

Apr. 24, 2008

RHD

CA

TIER 6

WHL

64

Vertti Svensk

LHD9

SAIPA

Height:

6'

Weight:

169 lbs

DOB:

Nov. 9, 2007

LHD

FI

TIER 6

LIIGA U20

Tier Honorable Mention

Adam Andersson

C

LEKSAND

Height:

6' 4"

Weight:

205 lbs

DOB:

Jul. 2, 2008

C



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

SE

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

J20

Nils Bartholdsson

RW

RÖGLE

Height:

5' 10"

Weight:

175 lbs

DOB:

Apr. 25, 2008

RW

SE

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

J20

Lucian Bernat

RW

TAPPARA

Height:

6' 4"

Weight:

198 lbs

DOB:

Jun. 8, 2008

RW

SK

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

LIGA U20

Dayne Beuker

C

U18

Height:

5' 10.25"

Weight:

168 lbs

DOB:

Mar. 23, 2008

C

us

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

NTDP

Rudolfs Berzkalns

C

MUSKEGON

Height:

6' 3.5"

Weight:

204 lbs

DOB:

Mar. 3, 2008

C

LV

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

USHL

Myles Brosnan

RHD

DEXTER

Height:

6'

Weight:

194 lbs

DOB:

Oct. 19, 2007

RHD

us

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

USHS

Rian Chudzinski

RW

MONCTON

Height:

6' 0.5"

Weight:

191 lbs

DOB:

Dec. 31, 2007

RW

us

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

QMJHL

Callum Croskery

LHD

SOO



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

Height:	176 lbs
6' 0.75"	DOB:
Weight:	Feb. 21, 2008
187 lbs	C
DOB:	RU
Jan. 29, 2008	TIER HONORABLE MENTION
LHD	MHL
CA	Yaroslav Fedoseyev
TIER HONORABLE MENTION	RHD
OHL	CHELYABINSK
Beckham Edwards	Height:
C	6' 1"
SARNIA	Weight:
Height:	187 lbs
6' 0.75"	DOB:
Weight:	Nov. 5, 2007
187 lbs	RHD
DOB:	RU
Jan. 6, 2008	TIER HONORABLE MENTION
C	MHL
CA	Jakub Floris
TIER HONORABLE MENTION	RHD
OHL	LUKKO
Colin Fitzgerald	Height:
C	6' 3"
SOO	Weight:
Height:	198 lbs
6' 2.25"	DOB:
Weight:	Feb. 19, 2008
211 lbs	RHD
DOB:	SK
Apr. 1, 2008	TIER HONORABLE MENTION
C	LIIGA U20
CA	Tomas Galvas
TIER HONORABLE MENTION	LHD
OHL	LIBEREC
Viktor Fedorov	Height:
C	5' 10"
NIZHNY NOVGOROD	Weight:
Height:	168 lbs
5' 10"	DOB:
Weight:	Feb. 11, 2006



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

LHD

CZ

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

CZECHIA

Mans Gudmundson

RHD

FARJESTAD

Height:

6' 2"

Weight:

185 lbs

DOB:

Jun. 9, 2008

RHD

SE

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

J20

Landon Hafele

C

U18

Height:

5' 11.75"

Weight:

179 lbs

DOB:

Sep. 18, 2007

C

US

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

NTDP

Beckett Hamilton

C

RED DEER

Height:

5' 11"

Weight:

170 lbs

DOB:

Mar. 28, 2008

C

CA

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

WHL

Chase Harrington

LW

SPOKANE

Height:

6' 0.75"

Weight:

194 lbs

DOB:

Oct. 30, 2007

LW

CA

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

WHL

Max Isaksson

C

VÄXJÖ

Height:

6'

Weight:

185 lbs

DOB:

Jan. 28, 2008

C

SE

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

J20

Evan Jardine

C

YOUNGSTOWN

Height:

6'

Weight:

185 lbs

DOB:

Oct. 23, 2007

C

US

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

USHL

Simon Katolicky

RW



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

TAPPARA

Height:

6' 4"

Weight:

202 lbs

DOB:

Jul. 24, 2008

RW

cz

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

LIIGA U20

Jonas Lagerberg Hoen

RW

LEKSAND

Height:

6' 2"

Weight:

185 lbs

DOB:

Oct. 24, 2007

RW

se

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

J20

Zach Lansard

RW

REGINA

Height:

5' 11.75"

Weight:

173 lbs

DOB:

Jul. 29, 2008

RW

ca

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

WHL

Jean-Cristoph Lemieux

LW

SUDBURY

Height:

5' 11.25"

Weight:

190 lbs

DOB:

Jun. 19, 2008

LW

ca

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

OHL

Ethan Mackenzie

LHD

EDMONTON

Height:

6' 0.75"

Weight:

188 lbs

DOB:

Sep. 2, 2006

LHD

ca

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

WHL

Charlie Morrison

LHD

QUEBEC

Height:

6' 3.25"

Weight:

198 lbs

DOB:

Oct. 12, 2007

LHD

ca

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

QMJHL

Olivers Murnieks

C

SAINT JOHN

Height:

6' 0.25"

Weight:

200 lbs

DOB:



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

Jul. 31, 2008

C

LV

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

QMJHL

Landon Nycz

LHD

UMASS

Height:

6' 2"

Weight:

201 lbs

DOB:

Oct. 4, 2007

LHD

us

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

NCAA

Zach Olsen

RW

SASKATOON

Height:

6' 1"

Weight:

202 lbs

DOB:

Mar. 16, 2008

RW

CA

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

WHL

Michal Orsulak

G

PRINCE ALBERT

Height:

6' 4.25"

Weight:

225 lbs

DOB:

Aug. 26, 2007

G

CZ

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

WHL

Victor Plante

LW

U18

Height:

5' 9.5"

Weight:

163 lbs

DOB:

Mar. 10, 2008

LW

us

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

NTDP

Patriks Plumins

G

ZEMGALE

Height:

6' 3"

Weight:

203 lbs

DOB:

Jan. 7, 2008

G

LV

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

LATVIA

Martin Psohlavec

G

KARLOVY VARY

Height:

6' 5"

Weight:

185 lbs

DOB:

May 6, 2008

G

CZ

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

CZECHIA U20

Alan Shaikhislamov



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

RW	6' 2.25"
UFA	Weight:
Height:	195 lbs
6' 1"	DOB:
Weight:	Jan. 11, 2008
187 lbs	RW
DOB:	CA
Sep. 4, 2008	TIER HONORABLE MENTION
RW	OHL
RU	Niko Tournas
TIER HONORABLE MENTION	RW
MHL	MONCTON
Maksim Sokolovskii	Height:
LHD	6' 2"
LONDON	Weight:
Height:	199 lbs
6' 7"	DOB:
Weight:	Feb. 17, 2006
238 lbs	RW
DOB:	US
Jul. 12, 2008	TIER HONORABLE MENTION
LHD	QMJHL
RU	Ossi Tukio
TIER HONORABLE MENTION	LHD
OHL	ILVES
Tyus Sparks	Height:
C	6' 1.75"
SPOKANE	Weight:
Height:	186 lbs
5' 11.5"	DOB:
Weight:	Nov. 3, 2007
180 lbs	LHD
DOB:	FI
Jan. 4, 2008	TIER HONORABLE MENTION
C	LIIGA U20
US	Vilho Vanhatalo
TIER HONORABLE MENTION	RW
WHL	TAPPARA
Carter Stevens	Height:
RW	6' 3"
GUELPH	Weight:
Height:	187 lbs



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

DOB:

Jan. 18, 2008

RW

FI

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

LIIGA U20

Parker Vaughan

RW

NORTH BAY

Height:

6' 1"

Weight:

194 lbs

DOB:

Mar. 6, 2008

RW

CA

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

OHL

Braidy Wassilyn

C

LONDON

Height:

5' 11"

Weight:

195 lbs

DOB:

May. 28, 2008

C

CA

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

OHL

Cooper Williams

C

SASKATOON

Height:

6' 0.5"

Weight:

164 lbs

DOB:

Feb. 18, 2008

C

CA

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

WHL

Blake Zielinski

RW

DES MOINES

Height:

5' 11.5"

Weight:

188 lbs

DOB:

Mar. 5, 2008

RW

us

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

USHL

Cole Zurawski

RW

OWEN SOUND

Height:

6' 0.75"

Weight:

193 lbs

DOB:

Feb. 6, 2008

RW

CA

TIER HONORABLE MENTION

OHL

The Athletic LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390199 Websites

The Athletic / How the NHL's youngest teams are pushing for the Stanley Cup

By James Mirtle

May 4, 2026 Updated 7:41 am EDT

It's a stat that speaks volumes about the sea change happening across the NHL right now.

Four of the five youngest teams in the league at the start of the 2025-26 season are all into the second round of the playoffs, with the Montreal Canadiens joining the Buffalo Sabres (who they'll face in the Atlantic



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

Division final starting on Wednesday in Game 1), Philadelphia Flyers and Anaheim Ducks as the faces of a new generation in Round 2.

In all, there are 17 skaters who are 22 years old or younger in the NHL's final eight, most of whom are concentrated on these four teams, with four apiece on the Canadiens, Flyers and Ducks, and two on the Sabres. It's a group that includes some of the postseason's leading scorers (Leo Carlsson and Cutter Gauthier in Anaheim) and top defensemen (Lane Hutson in Montreal).

What's just as interesting is who's not here in Round 2.

Three of the four teams with the most playoff wins over the past decade are gone, with the Florida Panthers missing the playoffs and the Tampa Bay Lightning and Dallas Stars both eliminated in Round 1. Gone, too, are many other postseason mainstays and Cup winners of this era: the Edmonton Oilers (at the hands of the Ducks), Boston Bruins (eliminated by the Sabres), St. Louis Blues and Washington Capitals (both missed the playoffs altogether).

In fact, of the franchises that have won a Stanley Cup over the past 18 years, only the Colorado Avalanche and Vegas Golden Knights are still left standing, meaning we have a high likelihood of a new champion. And the only other team that's been consistently in the contender conversation in recent years that's still alive is the Carolina Hurricanes, who are being led by their youngest talents (Logan Stankoven, 23, and Jackson Blake, 22).

In many ways, what's happening is a continuation of what was a fascinating regular season in 2025-26, a campaign characterized by the fact that several unexpected teams made a big leap up the standings. Part of the explanation for that shift goes back to what's been happening in the NHL since the pandemic-induced flat-cap years, when established contenders all locked in their top talent with max-term deals and free agency dried up almost entirely amidst the hoarding.

It was a strategy that worked for years, with teams such as the Panthers, Lightning, Golden Knights, Stars and Bruins seemingly having a stranglehold on division titles and going deep every spring thanks to having their superstars committed long term. What seems to have changed of late is that those teams' cores have begun to age, with injuries to key veterans (Aleksander Barkov, Tyler Seguin, Victor Hedman, among others) and all of those long playoff runs adding up. Plus, some key players aged out of the league entirely (Patrice Bergeron in Boston comes to mind).

On the flip side, some of the franchises that entered rebuilds five, 10 or even 12 years ago (in the case of the long-exiled Sabres) have finally had those tough seasons at the bottom of the table begin to bear fruit. But, in some cases, their rises have been meteoric.

Montreal, for example, finished dead last in 2021-22 and in 28th place the next two seasons after that. Anaheim was the worst team in the NHL three years ago and third-last a year later. Just last season, Buffalo and Philadelphia failed to hit the 80-point mark, finishing firmly in draft lottery territory. Of those four clubs, only the Canadiens have had a sniff of the playoffs the past five seasons, as their front offices trusted what had often been a painful process of trying to climb back up the standings.

None of them, to my eye, looks like a flash in the pan, either. In fact, they're all likely still on the way up, set to become the new challengers for division titles in the Atlantic, Metro and Pacific as the old guard fades out. You can't help but watch a kid like 19-year-old Porter Martone come in and make an impact immediately for the Flyers and have it feel like the start of a journey for a franchise that had won just one playoff series in the past dozen years.

You wonder, too, if more of these challengers are coming, after the leap up the standings the Utah Mammoth and San Jose Sharks took during the season. Can they also start to do damage against the established

contenders as soon as next season and will that mean an even more youthful group of playoff clubs a year from now?

You also wonder what it means for the larger conversation around how to build a winner in this league. When you talked to executives around the NHL the past few years, there's been a lot of fear building over whether the type of tear-it-down rebuilds that were the norm early in the salary cap era were still worth it. Massively long playoff droughts, ugly seasons and executive firings in big hockey markets like Buffalo, Detroit and Chicago have been painful, not only in those cities but also for the league as a whole, and they became cautionary tales.

There's been a lot more shine put on teams that have done the one- or two-year retools of late — like the Capitals last season and the Bruins this year — likely in part because executives running struggling organizations want to believe it can be done in a shorter, less arduous timeline than trying to build around teenagers through the draft. But I wonder if that begins to change as some of these upstart clubs have more success — and as new cautionary tales emerge around (a) locking in all your greybeards on seven-year deals or (b) using half measures to try and climb the standings faster than is prudent.

After all, some of these much-lauded retools appear to be a path to mediocrity, with a team that can maybe nab a wild-card spot but struggles to truly contend. And some of these build-through-the-draft teams have shown you can sometimes turn things around faster than you think, and that when you do, you may have a higher ceiling, given you've been collecting Carlssons and Juraj Slafkovskys at the top of the pick pile. (Not to mention the headlines Macklin Celebrini made in becoming a Hart Trophy candidate at just 19 years old.)

With the death of free agency looking very real right now, one of the biggest stories in the NHL going forward is going to be about how teams continue to find and keep elite talent, and just how vital that very high-end player is to winning championships.

Because even the most well-run franchise is going to be challenged to win year after year beyond a six- or seven-year window, especially as they trade picks and young players in order to chase a Cup. We're seeing some of that across the playoffs so far, where only a few familiar contenders are still in the mix, and some green newcomers are making them sweat about how secure their spot is in that group long term.

It's all pretty interesting. And it feels good for the league, too.

The Athletic LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390200 Websites

The Athletic / Who will go No. 1 in 2026 NHL Draft? McKenna leads race ahead of lottery

By Corey Pronman

May 4, 2026 6:00 am EDT

With the NHL Draft Lottery taking place on Tuesday, there still isn't a consensus for who will be the No. 1 pick in 2026. The media has largely circled Penn State's Gavin McKenna, but the discourse in the league is a little different. Because there isn't a prospect separating from the pack, who wins the lottery will, in part, dictate which player goes first, depending on organizational need and philosophical preference. I've polled NHL scouts and front office executives to get a pulse on the top of the board. Based on my own evaluations of their toolkits and what I'm hearing from my NHL sources, here is how I handicap the odds for which top prospect will go first in June.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

Gavin McKenna, LW, Penn State (NCAA)

Odds to go No. 1: 50 percent

McKenna entered the season as the consensus top name, and he remains clearly the most talented offensive player in the class. McKenna was a top player in college hockey this season, displaying his off-the-charts puck skills, vision and overall offensive creativity. He had a great World Juniors for Canada as well.

Teams are very excited by his potential to be an 80-plus point winger who can run a first power-play unit. The only real debate in NHL circles is whether his lack of physicality and tendency to be pushed to the perimeter will limit his impact at the next level, especially in the playoffs. I think most expect McKenna to be the leading scorer from this class, but will that be enough to be the top pick? We'll see.

Ivar Stenberg, LW, Frölunda (SHL)

Odds to go No. 1: 20 percent

Stenberg has turned this into a two-player race for the top forward spot thanks to a phenomenal draft year playing against men for Frölunda in the SHL and helping lead Sweden to a gold medal at the World Juniors. He's an electric offensive talent who routinely makes difficult plays look effortless.

What has scouts buzzing this season is how hard he works and his ability to win battles against grown men. Teams mostly view his game as a notch or two below McKenna in terms of pure skill/offensive flash, but that he works harder and his game translates more effortlessly. If there's a knock on his projection, it's that you probably aren't drafting a future superstar at No. 1, given his 5-foot-11 frame, fine but not great foot speed and lacking McKenna's special stick. He profiles as a 60-80 point winger that coaches can depend on. It would be a very unsexy No. 1 pick, but given his talent and historic season in Sweden, it's very much in play.

Chase Reid, RHD, Sault Ste. Marie (OHL); Caleb Malhotra, C, Brantford (OHL)

Odds to go No. 1: 20 percent (combined)

In the draft, teams tend to prioritize centers and defensemen. Executives generally say that if all things are equal, or even close to equal, they will prioritize those positions over wingers. That leads to the two premium position players in this draft who many scouts would argue could pass that test compared to McKenna and Stenberg.

Reid has been an offensive catalyst for the Soo Greyhounds this season. He possesses the speed, hands, vision and shot to be an offensive and possession force in the NHL. He was excellent for Team USA at the World Juniors, too. He plays an aggressive offensive style, and while he isn't overly physical, his reach and compete level allow him to make plenty of stops. He projects as a major-minutes NHL defenseman who will run a first power-play unit.

There are mixed opinions from teams on whether they think Reid projects as a No. 1 defenseman, or more of a No. 2-3. If a team does think he's a legit No. 1, or has a good chance to become a No. 1, that would arguably be more valuable in the NHL than a high-flying small winger.

Malhotra has shown massive development over the last 12 months, ending his season on a high note as one of the best players in the OHL playoffs. He's a 6-foot-2 two-way center whose offensive play has flourished as time has gone on. Whether he can become a true elite scorer at the next level is still up for debate, but there are enough people who believe in his offensive upside that he's become a legit consideration at the very top of the draft.

Keaton Verhoeff, RHD, North Dakota (NCAA); Carson Carels, LHD, Prince George (WHL); Alberts Smits, LHD, Jukurit (Liiga)

Odds to go No. 1: 10 percent (combined)

In my conversations with NHL scouts this season, Verhoeff, Carels and Smits have all been given at least one vote as the No. 1 player in the draft class. These are minority opinions, though, and I don't think it's at all likely that any of these players will get picked first. All three defensemen are great two-way players, but lack the offensive profiles and dynamic traits to go at the top pick, given the alternatives.

The Athletic LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390201 Websites

The Athletic / NHL playoff predictions: Second-round winners, Stanley Cup champion and more

By The Athletic NHL Staff

May 4, 2026 10:53 am EDT

The second round of the 2026 Stanley Cup playoffs is already underway, with the Carolina Hurricanes and Colorado Avalanche jumping to 1-0 series leads over the Philadelphia Flyers and Minnesota Wild, respectively.

With the other Round 2 matchups set, we made our picks. What do we expect? What have we learned so far? Who will be left standing for the conference finals?

The Athletic surveyed national writers Dom Luszczyszyn, James Mirtle, Harman Dayal, Sean Gentille, Mark Lazerus and Shayna Goldman to get their answers to these questions. We asked for a winner for each second-round series, plus updated picks to win the Eastern and Western Conferences, the Stanley Cup and the Conn Smythe.

Note: Picks for both Hurricanes-Flyers and Avalanche-Wild were made before the series started.

Luszczyszyn: As impressive as the Flyers were against the Penguins, it's hard not to side with a decisive Hurricanes victory after seeing what they did against a better Senators team. There are levels to this and Carolina is several tiers above the teams in Pennsylvania.

Mirtle: I can see the Flyers gritting (Gritty-ing?) out a couple of low-scoring victories, but they're likely to be overwhelmed territorially in this series, which will put a ton of pressure on goalie Dan Vladar.

Dayal: I'm not counting the Flyers out because Rick Tocchet put on a coaching masterclass in Round 1, Vladar is in sensational form, and their forward group has gotten a nice boost with Porter Martone's early impact. That said, the Hurricanes pose a completely different stylistic challenge than the Penguins. I believe Carolina's elite forecheck will give Philadelphia's blue line far more challenges breaking the puck out of its zone than Pittsburgh's forecheck did. And ultimately, I'm concerned about how the Flyers will manufacture offense against the Hurricanes' smothering style, especially after Carolina limited Ottawa to just five goals scored in all of Round 1.

Gentille: I wasn't surprised to see Flyers-Penguins go down the way it did, but I'd have picked either team to lose here pretty quickly. Some of Philly's younger guys looked gassed.

Lazerus: We have yet to reach the stage of the playoffs in which Frederik Andersen typically turns into a pumpkin, and the Flyers aren't quite good enough to make Rod Brind'Amour's stubborn aversion to in-series adjustments an issue. What Philly has done is admirable and surprising, but I share Sean's view that the young Flyers might have hit the wall later in that Pittsburgh series.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

Goldman: The Canes are the deeper and more well-rounded team. This is their series to lose. But maybe Philly can make it interesting, as they have for the last month-plus. Maybe last round against Pittsburgh taught the Flyers a thing or two. Maybe we'll see them be a little more opportunistic to steal a game or two.

Luszczyszyn: The Avalanche are the league's best team, pick against them at your own peril. But I love the way the Wild are playing and they finally have the star power to hang with the best of the West. A standout performance from Jesper Wallstedt could make this a close and classic series.

Mirtle: Colorado and Nathan MacKinnon have felt like they're on a mission all season. This should be a great, close series, but I don't see the Avs run ending this early, even with the way Quinn Hughes has elevated Minnesota's play.

Dayal: The Wild finally have the star power in Hughes, Kirill Kaprizov and Matt Boldy to match Colorado's top-end talent. However, I think Colorado's puck-moving, speed up front, and center depth make for a completely different beast at five-on-five than what a Dallas team missing Roope Hintz brought to the table against Minnesota in Round 1. Between that and some health questions surrounding Jonas Brodin and Joel Eriksson Ek, I'm giving the Avs a slight edge, but this series could genuinely go either way.

Gentile: I like the Wild enough to have picked them in Round 1, but the Avs are a better version of the Stars, top to bottom.

Lazerus: Well, somebody's got to pick them. Jesper Wallstedt was awfully impressive against Dallas, and the Wild did a tremendous job of keeping the dangerous Stars nowhere near their net during five-on-five play. My biggest concern with this pick is Minnesota's penalty kill, which might be weak enough to awaken Colorado's bafflingly long-dormant power play. Eriksson Ek being ruled out for at least the first two games definitely gives me pause, but I wrote the rest of this before that news broke, so dang it, I'm sticking with my pick, anyway.

Goldman: I'm with Harman on the Wild injuries. The longer Brodin is out, the more Middleton is playing top-four minutes and Minnesota is deploying a Jeff Petry-Zach Bogosian third pair that is going to get crushed by Colorado's speed. The Wild's stars are going to put up a good fight and challenge the Avs a lot more than L.A. to make it a series, though.

Luszczyszyn: My respect for the Ducks has grown exponentially after the first-round series, where they not only went toe-to-toe with Edmonton's superstars but legitimately dominated the Oilers for long stretches. Anaheim is a team on the rise, but Vegas presents a stylistic curveball that I'm not sure the Ducks are equipped yet to handle. Under John Tortorella, the Golden Knights are peaking at the right time.

Mirtle: Vegas' biggest vulnerability is in net, and I could see Anaheim's deep attack capitalizing on that over a long series. Plus Lukáš Dostál has the ability to steal a few games, which may be needed to advance.

Dayal: Vegas is light-years ahead of Edmonton defensively, which is a very different stylistic challenge for Anaheim. There is a path for the Ducks to upset the Golden Knights with how shaky the latter's goaltending has looked, but ultimately, we just saw Vegas stop a similarly fast, up-and-coming Utah team in Round 1 and I'm betting on a similar story in the second round.

Gentile: What Harman said. Anaheim is here because they overwhelmed Edmonton at five-on-five and smoked a bad penalty kill. If the Ducks can get to Carter Hart frequently enough, they'll have a shot, but I can't say I see that happening.

Lazerus: I have absolutely no faith in Vegas' goaltending. And while the Ducks' defense can be almost comically suspect, their offensive depth is impressive. Plus, Joel Quenneville might be the greatest in-series

adjuster in modern hockey history. His Chicago teams were 44-44 in Games 1-4, then 32-8 in Games 5-7, winning all nine series that were tied 2-2 through four games (winning 18 games and losing one in those nine series). Are these Ducks anywhere near those Blackhawks? Certainly not. Not yet, at least. But if the Ducks can steal one early, look out.

Goldman: Logic says this series is probably Vegas' to lose. The Golden Knights' defense is a lot tighter than Edmonton's and there's the experience factor to consider (which showed in Round 1 against Utah). That being said ... the Ducks' offense comes in waves and could overwhelm the Golden Knights' subpar goaltending. We already saw Vegas get beaten by Utah's speed, and while Anaheim's not nearly as fast, that mobility could still be a real strength. Add in the gutsy underdog mentality and maybe there could be another upset.

Luszczyszyn: I don't think any second-round series has nearly the same juice as this one, which has all the makings of an all-time classic between two potential teams of destiny. I've been riding with the Sabres all year, no sense stopping now.

Mirtle: The playoff format paid off in a big way with this matchup. The new rebuild versus the old rebuild, two old Adams Division foes, two of the youngest teams in the league – there's a lot to love. Montreal is going to have to play better than they did to close out the Lightning, but they've shown all season they have that in them.

Dayal: Knocking off the Lightning in Round 1 is a legitimately impressive feat. Sure, Game 7 required a bit of luck, but for the first six games, the Habs looked very comfortable going toe-to-toe against one of the deepest, most talented Cup contenders in the league.

Jakub Dobeš has been unbelievable, Montreal's forward depth has been formidable, and they'll have Noah Dobson back for all of Round 2. I also have more faith in the Habs' power play than I do in the Sabres' man advantage, which slumped at 4.2 percent in Round 1 — we know how valuable special teams can be in a tight series.

Gentile: It's very unfair to make me choose.

Lazerus: I don't know who's going to win this series, but I know it's the series I'd most want to attend. Two of the greatest hockey markets on the planet, both starved for this kind of run. It's going to be unbelievable. The Canadiens defied all logic in Game 7 against Tampa Bay, but I think Buffalo has the magic here.

Goldman: Am I projecting seven games, or manifesting this one going the distance? It's going to have such a different feel from either team's Round 1 series, because it's two young teams with a lot of speed and skill going head-to-head. Montreal showed they can win games in different ways in Round 1, but I just think the Sabres have a little more versatility, which will give them the edge.

Luszczyszyn: Before the season started, one of my bold thoughts with the Sabres was that if their luck turned, they could see a tidal wave of good fortune. Gotta make up for a cursed 15 years, right? Buffalo is going all the way, baby.

Mirtle: I know Round 3 has been its kryptonite, but with the Lightning going down, this will be Carolina's easiest, Florida-team-free path to the final in eons. Everyone will continue to, understandably, question the Canes' goaltending, but they're deeper elsewhere than they've ever been and that depth will pay off in the war of attrition that is the playoffs. Plus, they could be coming off two short rounds to open things and be the most rested team in the conference finals. (And: Beer skates.)

Dayal: Part of this is because the Hurricanes' path through the East is easier than years past without Florida in the equation, but I also believe this group has found a new gear offensively. For all the talk about Carolina's elite defensive structure (which is deserved), I think people forget that it was also the highest-scoring offensive team in the East



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

during the regular season. They're more dynamic off the rush, and that Logan Stankoven line is dominating.

Gentile: At this point, I'm just going to pick them until they do it.

Lazerus: Buffalo always has the highest Stanley Cup Final TV ratings in the United States, despite the unending misery Buffalonians have endured. Imagine the numbers if the Sabres win two more rounds.

Goldman: Listen, I get it — it's the Canes' year, because of their path to this point and their total domination so far. But the Sabres are going to embrace being an underdog and keep disrupting things all the way to the Final.

Luszczyszyn: The league's best team looked undeniable all season and that continued in the first round against the Kings. It doesn't feel like they'll be stopped this year.

Mirtle: Sometimes it's best not to overthink these things.

Dayal: From top to bottom, they're the most complete team in the NHL.

Gentile: I appreciate the Wild for making my first-round prediction stand up, but yeah.

Lazerus: I sort of painted myself into a corner here by picking a pair of upsets in the second round. But Minnesota was arguably the third-best team in the league in the regular season. It's not that far-fetched.

Goldman: It can't be a team from the pillow fight Pacific, right? If the Wild didn't have such key injuries, maybe they would be able to ride the momentum. Instead, sometimes the easy answer is the best one: Colorado is the best team in the league.

Luszczyszyn: There is a limit to my Sabres love and it ends here. Famous last words, but this really does feel like it's Colorado's year.

Mirtle: A Carolina-Colorado Cup Final would be a lot of fun from a stylistic perspective, with the old stars-versus-depth debate playing out in a big way. I suspect it would go the distance, too. But it just feels right that Nathan MacKinnon, with the season he's had, isn't going to be denied adding a second championship after three years of postseason frustration.

Dayal: This feels like 2022 all over again.

Gentile: My pre-playoff pick is cooked, so I am honor-bound to move on to the team I had them beating in the final.

Lazerus: Maybe this is wishful thinking, but the Sabres have the goods, and no fanbase deserves it more.

Goldman: The Central is an absolute gauntlet, and that obviously will wear on whichever team makes it to the Conference Final and beyond. But the Avalanche are built for that, with one of their deepest lineups in years. If not now, when?

The Athletic LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390202 Websites

ESPN / Biggest questions for each second-round Stanley Cup playoff team – ESPN

Arda Ocal

The second round of the 2026 Stanley Cup playoffs is here, and I have a lot of questions. The first round had the best kind of chaos, with a small side of predictable.

To honor the pandemonium in hopes that it continues (and we all remain highly entertained), I present to you my biggest question for each remaining team in the postseason.

One category of question I'm going to take out of the running right away: goaltending. Because the starting goalies for several teams belong in the "they played great but are unproven in the playoffs" category through the first round, that gives us all uncertainty (but definitely adds to that chaos element mentioned earlier).

For context, here's the number of total playoff games each team's starting goalie in the postseason has played in his career:

Frederik Andersen (CAR): 90

Carter Hart (VGK): 20

Jakub Dobeš (MTL): 10

Dan Vladar (PHI): 9

Alex Lyon (BUF): 9

Scott Wedgewood (COL): 9

Jesper Wallstedt (MIN): 7

Lukas Dostal (ANA): 6

Andersen is the most experienced -- and is starving for a Cup Final appearance like the rest of the Canes -- and has more than double the playoff games than all the rest combined. Carter Hart played 14 games in the bubble playoff with Philadelphia, on top of this season. But really, this is a quite inexperienced group after Andrei Vasilevskiy's Lightning were knocked out and Sergei Bobrovsky's Panthers didn't qualify.

Here's what I'll be watching instead as Round 2 gets rolling:

Carolina Hurricanes

Have the Canes solved all their previous flaws?

This is the question we've been asking seemingly forever: Can Rod Brind'Amour's squad finally raise the Stanley Cup like he did as captain of the Canes in 2006?

Winning a series annually is automatic, and Carolina is off to a flying start against Philly. The Canes' style is predictable yet effective. They've been playing playoff-style hockey all season.

Looking at the incredible contributions of players such as Logan Stankoven and Frederik Andersen, who leads the playoffs in goals saved above expected: Is this finally the year they get over the hump and get the job done?

Philadelphia Flyers

Is Porter Martone for real?

The Flyers had a completely forgettable Game 1 in Carolina. The Hurricanes ate their lunch and walked away with a 3-0 victory. That blank scoresheet includes Martone's fourth game without a point in the postseason.

He still leads the team in goals, points and shots since his debut on March 30 -- he had two game-winning goals in the series against Pittsburgh. After a rough Game 1, a couple of hero moments would really cement Martone as a franchise cornerstone and fan favorite at only 19 years of age.

Buffalo Sabres

Can the power play contribute?

The Sabres took out the Boston Bruins in six games -- and did so scoring only one power-play goal all series. Only the Utah Mammoth, Ottawa Senators -- both eliminated -- and shockingly the Avalanche (albeit in a



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

four-game sweep) had that few goals with the man advantage in Round 1.

Special teams is a big factor in the playoffs. Can Buffalo find a spark after finally cashing in during Game 6? Or will the power outage on the power play end the Sabres' playoff journey?

Montreal Canadiens

Will the stars shine?

The Habs grounded the Lightning in seven games in the first round. It was only the third series in Stanley Cup playoff history that went seven games in which every single game was decided by one goal. Another way to say that -- it was very close.

In that series, Juraj Slafkovsky went pointless for Games 2-7 after a Game 1 power-play hat trick (and 30 goals in the regular season). Cole Caufield had one goal in the series (after a 51-goal regular season) and Nick Suzuki had five assists and one goal (after 29 goals in the regular season). The Habs are scoring by committee so far, but is it only a matter of time before the top line shows up and shows out?

Colorado Avalanche

Who will contribute from beyond the top players?

An efficient four-game sweep of the Los Angeles Kings included Gabriel Landeskog, Artturi Lehkonen and Nathan MacKinnon notching four points each. Cale Makar had two points (both goals), and Devon Toews had three. The superstars are primed to produce more this round.

But what will we see from Martin Necas and Nazem Kadri? What about Ross Colton (who was a healthy scratch in the series) and Valeri Nichushkin (scoreless so far)?

The Avalanche look scary on paper and on the ice, but teams need depth contributions in order to win in the postseason. Who will step up?

Minnesota Wild

Is Round 2 their toughest hurdle to winning the Cup?

The Wild took care of the Dallas Stars in six games in Round 1's heavyweight tilt. Now, they have a superheavyweight battle against Cup favorite Colorado. If the Wild get by the Avalanche, you could argue that they would have had one of the toughest front halves compared to back halves en route to the Stanley Cup in recent memory. If they beat the Avs, they certainly inherit Cup favorite status.

So, can Quinn Hughes & Co. possess the puck across the blue line and set up in the offensive zone with the ease they've shown all season to create scoring chances for Kirill Kaprizov and Matt Boldy? Or will the Avs' superstars prove to be too much? Whichever team wins, it will carry the mantle of the "team to beat" into the conference finals round.

Vegas Golden Knights

Will their high-scoring ways continue?

The Golden Knights found their scoring touch in their series against Utah, putting up five goals in each of the last three games of the series. Utah had a lead in the third period in every game except the final one, and Vegas found a way to get back into them -- a massive postseason success trait.

Will the Golden Knights be able to score at the same rate against teams with tighter checking, stronger defense and better goaltending throughout the playoffs?

Anaheim Ducks

Is Jackson LaCombe leveling up into a top-tier defenseman right before our eyes?

There were moments in the series against Edmonton when Lacombe made Connor McDavid look pedestrian. Granted, we now know McDavid was not at 100%, but the acclaim remains for Lacombe, who came out of the series as a more feared D-man on both sides of the rink.

Will that continue against Vegas? Are Jack Eichel and Mitch Marner the next to experience fits barreling down toward the Ducks' zone? Or can they figure out the key to overcoming one of the sport's rising stars?

ESPN LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390203 Websites

ESPN / 2026 NHL draft: Gavin McKenna, Ivar Stenberg top rankings -- ESPN

Rachel Kryshak

Rachel Kryshak is a professional data consultant specializing in data communication and modelling. She's worked in the NHL and consulted for professional teams across North American and Europe. She hosts the Staff & Graph Podcast and discusses sports from a data-driven perspective.

It's that time of year again! NHL teams who did not make the Stanley Cup playoffs will be laser-focused on lottery balls drawn at the NHL Network studios in Secaucus, New Jersey, on Tuesday (7 p.m. ET, ESPN). With so many possibilities and intrigue around the draft class, there are bound to be surprises.

There is no consensus on any player except Gavin McKenna, and even he has scouts questioning whether he should be the first player off the board. If your team needs a high-end defenseman, this is the year. There are a handful of prospects projected to become foundational pieces on the top pair.

My projections model is most heavily favored in this iteration of the rankings, with a few adjustments made. For a refresher, the model weighs scoring statistics from the current season and last season, league strength, tracking statistics (defensive, physical and transition play), age, size and injuries. The injury factor is only weighed as a function of games played given the impact on sample size for projection volatility. The model has five outputs:

The biggest change this year is the addition of a statistical comparable. Note: This is not about what the comparable player has become in the NHL; it is a comparable to the player in their draft year, before being selected. The comparison accounts for the player's position, NHL production equivalency, and size (to a lesser extent). It is not a projection of what the prospect will become in the NHL. Example: Chase Reid's statistical comparable is Evan Bouchard. That does not mean Reid is going to become Bouchard, it means they are statistically comparable players in their respective draft years.

There are certainly some surprises on this draft ranking, and notably this is not how teams build their internal rankings. Players who appear that are lower down in the consensus lists -- or players who are not on this ranking who are consensus first-round picks -- should not be surprising. Given the model, this is likely related to production and statistical comparables. If a player has strong statistical comparables and produced well according to NHL equivalency, their projection and probability will be stronger. Players with strong 2024-2025 seasons (Ryan Roobroek) are higher than consensus, because the model does not ignore that production and it raises their overall prospect value score.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

Once more scouting and anecdotal information is accounted for in the coming weeks, this list will change. Here is how the top 32 rankings are shaping up right now:

1. Gavin McKenna, LW, Penn State University (NCAA)

NHL ceiling: Star

NHL floor: Second line

NHL probability: 88%

Most likely tier: Top line

Statistical comparable: Clayton Keller

2. Ivar Stenberg, LW/RW, Frolunda HC (SHL)

NHL ceiling: Top line

NHL floor: Second line

NHL probability: 91%

Most likely tier: Top line

Statistical comparable: William Nylander

3. Carson Carels, D, Prince George (WHL)

NHL ceiling: Top pair

NHL floor: Top four

NHL probability: 80%

Most likely tier: Top pair

Statistical comparable: Zach Werenski

4. Chase Reid, D, Sault Ste. Marie (OHL)

NHL ceiling: Top pair

NHL floor: Middle pair

NHL probability: 65%

Most likely tier: Top pair

Statistical comparable: Evan Bouchard

5. Daxon Rudolph, D, Prince Albert (WHL)

NHL ceiling: Top pair

NHL floor: No. 5 defenseman

NHL probability: 71%

Most likely tier: Top four

Statistical comparable: Noah Hanifin

6. Nikita Klepov, F, Saginaw (OHL)

NHL ceiling: Star

NHL floor: Middle six

NHL probability: 84%

Most likely tier: Top line

Statistical comparable: Kyle Connor

7. Keaton Verhoeff, D, North Dakota (NCAA)

NHL ceiling: Top pair

NHL floor: No. 5 defenseman

NHL probability: 70%

Most likely tier: Top four

Statistical comparable: Aaron Ekblad

8. Ethan Belchetz, LW, Windsor (OHL)

NHL ceiling: Top line

NHL floor: Middle six

NHL probability: 82%

Most likely tier: Second line

Statistical comparable: Valeri Nichushkin

9. Caleb Malhotra, C, Brantford (OHL)

NHL ceiling: Top line

NHL floor: Third line

NHL probability: 74%

Most likely tier: Second line

Statistical comparable: Matty Beniers

10. Adam Novotny, LW/RW, Peterborough (OHL)

NHL ceiling: Top line

NHL floor: Bottom six

NHL probability: 77%

Most likely tier: Second line

Statistical comparable: Timo Meier

11. Mathis Preston, F, Vancouver (WHL)

NHL ceiling: Top line

NHL floor: Non-NHL

NHL probability: 73%

Most likely tier: Middle six

Statistical comparable: Oliver Bjorkstrand

12. Oliver Suvanto, C, Tappara (Liiga)

NHL ceiling: Middle six

NHL floor: Fourth line

NHL probability: 89%

Most likely tier: Third line

Statistical comparable: Eetu Luostarinen

13. Viggo Bjorck, C/RW, Djurgardens IF (SHL)

NHL ceiling: Second line

NHL floor: Bottom six

NHL probability: 63%

Most likely tier: Middle six

Statistical comparable: Connor McMichael

14. Wyatt Cullen, F, USNTDP

NHL ceiling: Top six

NHL floor: Bottom six

NHL probability: 57%



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

Most likely tier: Middle six

Statistical comparable: Travis Konecny

15. Tynan Lawrence, C, Boston University (NCAA)

NHL ceiling: Top line

NHL floor: Bottom six

NHL probability: 59%

Most likely tier: Middle-six center

Statistical comparable: Nick Schmaltz

16. Yegor Shilov, C, Victoriaville (QMJHL)

NHL ceiling: Top line

NHL floor: Middle six

NHL probability: 61%

Most likely tier: Second line

Statistical comparable: Jared McCann

17. Ryan Roobroeck, C, Niagara (OHL)

NHL ceiling: Top line

NHL floor: Fourth line

NHL probability: 85%

Most likely tier: Middle six

Statistical comparable: Sean Couturier

18. Alberts Smits, D, Jukurit (Liiga)

NHL ceiling: Top four

NHL floor: Depth defenseman

NHL probability: 52%

Most likely tier: Middle pair

Statistical comparable: Ryan Pulock

19. Ilya Morozov, F, Miami University (NCAA)

NHL ceiling: Top six

NHL floor: Third line

NHL probability: 44%

Most likely tier: Middle six

Statistical comparable: Will Cuyllé

20. J.P. Hurlbert, F, Kamloops (WHL)

NHL ceiling: Top six

NHL floor: Non-NHL

NHL probability: 41%

Most likely tier: Second line

Statistical comparable: Nikolaj Ehlers

21. Ryan Lin, D, Vancouver (WHL)

NHL ceiling: Top pair

NHL floor: Non-NHL

NHL probability: 40%

Most likely tier: Bottom pair

Statistical comparable: Bowen Byram

22. Ryder Cali, C, North Bay (OHL)

NHL ceiling: Second line

NHL floor: Fourth line

NHL probability: 85%

Most likely tier: Bottom six

Statistical comparable: Jordan Kyrrou

23. Adam Valentini, F, University of Michigan (NCAA)

NHL ceiling: Top six

NHL floor: Non-NHL

NHL probability: 66%

Most likely tier: Middle six

Statistical comparable: Bryan Rust

24. Tommy Bleyl, D, Moncton (QMJHL)

NHL ceiling: Top pair

NHL floor: Non-NHL

NHL probability: 42%

Most likely tier: Middle pair

Statistical comparable: Samuel Girard

25. Brooks Rogowski, C, Oshawa Generals (OHL)

NHL ceiling: Second line

NHL floor: Bottom six

NHL probability: 86%

Most likely tier: Third line

Statistical comparable: Pavel Zacha

26. Oscar Hemming, F, Boston College (NCAA)

NHL ceiling: Top six

NHL floor: Bottom six

NHL probability: 36%

Most likely tier: Third line

Statistical comparable: Mark Stone

27. Xavier Villeneuve, D, Blainville-Boisbriand (QMJHL)

NHL ceiling: Top pair

NHL floor: Non-NHL

NHL probability: 40%

Most likely tier: Middle pair

Statistical comparable: Mario Ferraro

28. Liam Ruck, F, Medicine Hat (WHL)

NHL ceiling: Top six

NHL floor: Bottom six



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

NHL probability: 30%

Most likely tier: Second line

Statistical comparable: Brock Boeser

29. Elton Hermansson, RW/LW, MoDo (HockeyAllsvenskan)

NHL ceiling: Second line

NHL floor: Non-NHL

NHL probability: 29%

Most likely tier: Third line

Statistical comparable: Eduard Sale

30. Markus Ruck, F, Medicine Hat

NHL ceiling: Top six

NHL floor: Bottom six

NHL probability: 25%

Most likely tier: Second line

Statistical comparable: Brendan Brisson

31. Marcus Nordmark, LW, Djurgardens IF (U20 Nationell)

NHL ceiling: Top line

NHL floor: Non-NHL

NHL probability: 63%

Most likely tier: Middle six

Statistical comparable: Jake Neighbours

32. Maddox Dagenais, C, Quebec (QMJHL)

NHL ceiling: Second line

NHL floor: Bottom six

NHL probability: 43%

Most likely tier: Third line

Statistical comparable: Danny Nelson

ESPN LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390204 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Things we learned: Golden Knights cash in on missed icing call

Emily Sadler

The Vegas Golden Knights claimed Game 1 against the Anaheim Ducks by a score of 3-1 Monday night, but their game-winning goal in Monday's series opener didn't come without its share of controversy.

The goal in question — a Pavel Dorofeyev dish to Ivan Barbashev net-front to give Vegas a 2-1 lead late in the third — probably should never have happened, considering the play that launched it looked a lot like icing.

But it wasn't called that way. Despite the fact that Barbashev hadn't yet reached centre ice when he flipped the puck deep into Anaheim's zone, officials deemed it no icing and allowed the play to continue.

An in-game explanation from ESPN's rule analyst Dave Jackson pointed out that because it appeared Vegas forward Jack Eichel had a slight edge on Ducks defender Jackson LaCombe in the footrace to retrieve the puck, with LaCombe slowing, it was ruled not to be icing.

Watch it again, and it's hard to see how LaCombe didn't have the edge there. On a call as subjective as this, the defender likely should've gotten the benefit of the doubt.

Ducks head coach Joel Quenneville was absolutely incensed on the bench, and, well, he had a point. It was an extremely consequential call, given how tight this game was (it was tied 1-1 at the time, and getting dangerously close to overtime). Vegas went on to secure the win with an insurance empty-netter by Mitch Marner to take a 1-0 series lead and leave a bad taste in Anaheim's mouth.

"Clearly, I disagreed with the call. And it was clearly icing," Quenneville said, adding that the officials didn't give him an explanation. "Their guy stopped skating, which really made me annoyed.

"We just scored, it was a huge call and it was an easy call."

Big-Game Brett stays true to his nickname

Vegas Golden Knights forward Brett Howden is having himself a post-season. After a quiet start to the playoffs, the 28-year-old has gone on a scoring spree of late. He scored two short-handed goals against Utah in Round 1, including a double-OT winner, and now has at least one goal in four straight games thanks to his series-opening marker against the Ducks.

Howden's chemistry with Marner has been on full display. And as impressive as Howden's clutch goal-scoring has been, his goal against Anaheim was all Marner.

The centreman's thread-the-needle pass to Howden was a special play, and a continuation of Marner's playoff hot streak after scoring the game-winner to close things out against Utah on Friday.

Ducks' red-hot power play freezes up vs. Vegas

One of the biggest stories heading into the second-round series between Anaheim and Vegas was the state of the clubs' special teams and how they stack up. In one corner, we've got a Ducks power play that capitalized on 50 per cent of its opportunities against the Oilers in Round 1, registering at least one PP marker in all six games. In the other corner, the Golden Knights' penalty kill — a unit that not only shut down the Mammoth's PP, but outscored it short-handed.

So far, with just one game's worth of data to examine, the Golden Knights have the edge. In four power-play opportunities, Anaheim didn't score with the man advantage. (The Ducks also held Vegas scoreless on two opportunities.)

Can Anaheim regain form for Game 2?

Flyers bounce back, but can't close out vs. Hurricanes

The Philadelphia Flyers learned some hard lessons Saturday night in Carolina. Turns out they're quick studies — the squad that lost 3-0 in Game 1 got off to a flying start in Monday night's Game 2 to change the tone of this series.

The Flyers came out doing everything right: hard forechecking, tons of pressure, finding shots. Everything head coach Rick Tocchet preached post-game on Saturday, they applied two days later. They were rewarded for the strong start, scoring twice early in the first frame, but then ... the goals dried up.

Even despite the lack of scoring following the first period, the Flyers were still dictating much of the game. They lost their grip when Seth Jarvis tied things up in the third period, but bounced back yet again in overtime, dominating the offensive play.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

But all it takes is one good opportunity, and that's what Carolina ultimately got as Taylor Hall buried the winner late in extra time to claim the 3-2 victory.

There are silver linings to be found in Philly's outing, considering how well the Flyers adjusted their game, but silver linings don't win you a series. Down 2-0 heading back home, the Flyers are already up against it.

Hall's turning back the clock in Carolina

If you want to fall down a fascinating hockey rabbit hole, go give yourself a refresher on Hall's career. Edmonton's first-overall pick in 2010 and New Jersey's Hart Trophy winner in 2018 became something of an NHL journeyman after his Devils tenure ended.

The past few years have been defined by multiple stops and health setbacks, but this year in Carolina has felt different. In 80 games with the Hurricanes, he registered 18 goals and 48 points and looks right at home in Rod Brind'Amour's system.

And this spring, he's really heating up. Through six games of these playoffs, Hall has already hit a new career high in points in a single post-season with nine. (His previous personal best was eight in seven games with the 2022-23 Bruins.) The 34-year-old has registered at least one point in every playoff outing so far this year, with Monday's overtime game-winner clearly the biggest.

His late-OT tally capped the Hurricanes' three-goal comeback victory. Playing alongside Logan Stankoven and Jackson Blake, Hall has been one third of the club's most electric, productive line — and his surge on the stat sheet has been a great story so far.

Flyers-Hurricanes is a tough one for power plays

Elite as Carolina's penalty kill is, the Hurricanes' power play leaves something to be desired. Philadelphia's has fared even worse all year, including in the post-season. So, imagine our surprise when both sides scored on their first power-play opportunity of the night.

Flyers defenceman Jamie Drysdale cashed in less than five minutes into Game 2, launching an offensive surge that saw Sean Couturier follow it up with an even-strength marker just 39 seconds later to take an early 2-0 lead.

Nikolaj Ehlers scored his first of the post-season midway through the first frame to get Carolina on the board.

Considering the flurry of first-period goals and special-teams action, you'd be forgiven for thinking we were in for a barnburner of an offensive showdown à la Sunday's series opener between Minnesota and Colorado.

But that's not how this one played out at all. The Flyers and Hurricanes took turns going on the man advantage, with neither side able to build on the early success as goaltenders took over. The Flyers ended the matchup one-for-seven on the power players, with Carolina finishing one-for-six.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390205 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / 7 things we learned from new Maple Leafs execs John Chayka and Mats Sundin

Luke Fox

TORONTO — Toronto Maple Leafs icons Doug Gilmour, Darcy Tucker, and Wendel Clark all sat front row, stage left.

Stage right sat Kathryn Chayka and her three young children — Capri, Monterey, and Steel — all decked out in small, box-fresh CHAYKA Leafs road sweaters, all gripping Carlton the Bear stuffies and looking up at Dad.

Dad would be John Chayka, once the youngest general manager in NHL history and today the latest GM charged with ending the drought in Toronto.

"At the end of the day, this is the most important decision that I will likely make in my tenure at MLSE," CEO Keith Pelley had predicted.

Pelley landed on the Ontario-born Chayka and Legends Row icon Mats Sundin, who has moved his family from Stockholm to "the hockey capital of the world" (Sundin's words).

From a Q&A on a Real Sports dais, separate scrums off-camera, an eavesdrop on a 32 Thoughts: The Podcast recording, and our own one-on-one chat with the new GM, here is what we learned about the relationship, the challenge, and where Sundin and Chayka stand on the roster...

The search

Chayka described his hiring as "both an exhaustive and frankly exhausting process," as he survived a series of interviews with different people and different formats.

Pelley said he spoke with 27 people about the job opening before landing on his one-two punch. Neil Glasberg of The Coaches Agency, Pelley said, did not have a vote but facilitated meetings with a slew of candidates.

The CEO also stressed that he conducted his "due diligence" on Chayka, whose Coyotes tenure included illegal testing of prospects and ended ugly, when the GM sought employment elsewhere without approval.

Pelley also shot down a rumour that Chayka was a client of Glasberg's and that Leafs alumnus Tie Domi was involved in the process "whatsoever."

Domi is, however, the link between Chayka and Sundin's personal relationship. The two men met in London, through Tie, watching Max Domi's Knights compete for a Memorial Cup while Chayka was a budding star at Western's Ivey Business School.

"I've watched a lot of hockey with Tie, and I've been very fortunate to come across a lot of NHL players, ex-players, managers, coaches that I feel very fortunate to have learned from," said Chayka, who speaks with Tie monthly.

"I didn't play in the NHL. So, to understand from someone who's done it, their perspective, the locker room perspective, the players' mindset, it's been incredibly valuable for me. And Tie is one of hundreds of people that I've learned from."

The structure

That Chayka, as GM, and Sundin, as senior executive adviser of hockey operations, were unveiled as a team keeps the power structure vague.

Chayka is running hockey operations, yet he doesn't view himself above Sundin.

"The best idea should win. And if that's my idea, that's great. But oftentimes it's not going to be. And if it is, we got a problem," said Chayka, who anticipates Sundin to wield a big voice in shaping the team.

Pelley desires a collaborative approach on everything.

"In fact, I don't even think Mats knew what his contract title was until he got the contract himself," Pelley said. "I can tell you, unequivocally, that



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

these two gentlemen are totally focused on one thing, and that is bringing the Stanley Cup to Toronto.

"The chemistry they have is phenomenal. I think we're in for a real treat."

OK. So, what if Chayka has an idea that Sundin doesn't like?

"We don't do it," Chayka said. "That simple."

The captain

Auston Matthews has been noncommittal on his desire to play out the final two seasons of his contract.

"He holds a big stake in everything we do, and I want to go and listen and hear what he has to say," Chayka said.

The former Coyotes GM has known Matthews, his family, and his agent, Judd Moldaver, since his time in Arizona. But now their relationship changes.

That connection starts anew with the shared goal of winning a Stanley Cup.

Sundin and Chayka will meet with Matthews over the next couple of weeks. They'll make a pitch explaining Toronto's competitive window is still open and propose a plan to bounce back from 2025-26's disappointment.

Just as important: They will listen to the player's thoughts on the state of the team.

"That'll kind of help sculpt our vision a bit as well," Chayka said. "I think he deserves some answers about where we're at and where we're headed, and give him a forum to provide feedback and ask questions."

Chayka said the Coyotes spent their entire existence searching for a defensively responsible goal scorer at centre. He's not about to let one walk out of Toronto without a fight.

"We are incredibly fortunate to have Auston. It is our job to sell him on what we are capable of in terms of reaching the ultimate goal. I know that is what is most important to him," Chayka said.

"How we do that is not a sales job. It is more about what the vision is, what the plan is, and what concrete steps we're going to take to get the team to where he wants it to be."

Added Sundin, who passed the franchise goal-scoring crown to Matthews midseason: "It's very fortunate to have a player of that calibre. And let's hope that he's committed to lead this team and through the next period as well."

The coach

Chayka spoke on the phone with Craig Berube Sunday night and plans to sit down face-to-face with his inherited head coach and Sundin this week to pick Berube's brain on what worked and what didn't with the current roster.

The GM is open to retaining Berube, who has two more seasons on his contract.

"It's hard to find great coaches. He's a great coach. I was lucky to work with Rick Tocchet in Arizona. Obviously, there's a deep friendship there, and I think they share notes and ideas on things. So, I'm not starting from zero," Chayka said.

"I think he is a tremendous coach, a Stanley Cup coach, and a good person."

The defence

Sundin and Chayka both identified Toronto's blue line as an area in need of improvement. The Maple Leafs allowed 3.6 goals per game this season, more than any team in the conference.

"The way the team breaks the puck out, the way they defend, the way they move through the neutral zone, I think there needs to be a change of the mix. Or change the strategy," Chayka said.

"Adding to the defence corps is a priority. I don't have a crystal ball. We'll see what the options are as they come available. But we intend on being aggressive there."

That will demand creativity, however. Toronto's top seven defencemen are all under contract for 2026-27, and five of them have trade protection.

"Flexibility is a real asset, and obviously we don't have that in that position. I think we're gonna have to make some decisions and see how we can create some flexibility. But I'm aware that they're under contract. And again, it's a priority for us to try to find a way to improve it."

The trade bait

The biggest wow to emerge from Brad Treliving's final trade deadline as Leafs GM was that he explored the possibility of a Matthew Knies trade.

Knies has it all — youth, size, skill, cost certainty. What he does not have is any trade protection. But Knies does have two new sets of eyes on his situation.

"Matthew Knies is like a really unique player. I think his blend of size and skating and skill is really, really hard to find," Chayka said. "I'm not aware of what happened at the deadline or what previous regimes thought. I think Mats and I are going to go through and evaluate the roster and make some decisions."

"Ultimately, if you're making a decision, you're trying to get better. I think you'd be really hard-pressed to do better than Matthew Knies."

The goal

Everyone at Monday's podium was careful not to place a timeline on success. Chayka would not commit to a season by which he envisions the Maple Leafs as a Cup contender, nor would he promise playoffs in 2027.

The executive is smart enough to keep expectations low as he reshapes an aging roster in a speeding division.

"The optimistic, hopeful side is that this team has a lot of latent upside. A lot of the players underperformed. I think there is a lot of opportunity to get in there and find ways to do a better job with the internal group," Chayka said.

The front office knows it must hit on trades and free agents as well as get healthy bounce-back campaigns from core pieces like Matthews and Chris Tanev.

"I just think there's no margin for error in this market to get the ultimate job done," Chayka said.

"Talking to some of the scouts already, there's a belief that we can get some momentum back in this group. And I think momentum is a funny thing in sports. If we can do that, I think it'll take care of itself."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390206 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Things we think we know: McDavid, Draisaitl want more out of Oilers

Mark Spector

EDMONTON — Things We (Think We) Know. Series V, Volume I.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

Things We Know

I've covered 35 years of the National Hockey League, give or take. Which means I've been to 35 years of exit interview press conferences, roughly speaking.

Not once — on a team I was covering or some other team that I watched from afar — have I heard the top two franchise players come out in such strong unison about the need for fundamental change the way Leon Draisaitl and Connor McDavid did on Saturday morning in Edmonton.

Together, they eviscerated their front office with quotes both literal and implied.

And when Draisaitl, invoking McDavid's contract status, said, "He is signed for two more years, and God knows where that goes," he broke the sacred covenant among hockey players of never opining on anyone else's contract status. That's how passionate Draisaitl was: he forgot to remain cool and say as little as possible.

This is good. They do this because they care.

Things We (Think We) Know

The passion and desperation outlined above weren't phony. These guys are well aware that the window is closing, that the Oilers may opt to trade McDavid a year from now if he won't re-sign, and that they all — players and management — lost the plot this past season.

That sets the 2026-27 season up as a "Last Dance" to some extent. Because there is no guarantee the 'Nuclear Option' will exist in Edmonton in 2027-28.

So, if you can entrust the reinvigorating of Edmonton's dressing room to the current leadership group — and I see no reason why you would not — then the true unknown falls to the people who are paid to stock that dressing room.

And that's where folks start getting nervous.

GM Stan Bowman made the disastrous Tristan Jarry trade, and although acquiring Jason Dickinson and Connor Murphy at the deadline was top-shelf work, let the record show the guy going the other way was Bowman's prize signing on July 1, Andrew Mangiapane.

The eight-year deal given to Trent Frederic was every bit as poor a transaction as the Jarry trade. And who the hell signs Jake Walman for seven years, anyhow?

If Bowman bats 1.000 from here on out, we believe that Edmonton can once again be a serious Cup contender. But what are the chances that Bowman — who absolutely defines the term "hit or miss" — stops missing?

Things We Know

From the very top — and we're talking owner Daryl Katz — there are heavy discussions taking place this week rooted in keeping McDavid in Edmonton. He is a revenue machine, driving ticket sales, playoff dates, apparel sales and ultimately, franchise value.

Then there's the personal pride of having to walk through the rest of a hockey life as someone who was gifted the greatest player in the world and never turned that into a Stanley Cup.

Full disclosure: Two management teams built two rosters that were good enough to reach two Stanley Cups in Edmonton. From there, I blame the players for not finishing the job, not a bunch of guys wearing suits in the press box.

But blame means nothing. Banners mean everything.

Edmonton needs one — next season. If you thought it was "Stanley Cup or bust" in 2024, wait until you see an organization where everyone from

the towel boy to the P.A. announcer has their job security based on bringing home Lord Stanley in 2027.

Things We (Think We) Know

There will exist an element of ruthlessness in Edmonton that we haven't seen before, starting now.

If Kris Knoblauch is not deemed able to wring every bit of success out of this team, he'll be fired. If Knoblauch bucks at the concept that his coaching staff needs retooling, same result.

If Bowman cannot present a tangible, realistic, executable plan for improving his goaltending and defensive play, he'll be vulnerable. If a GM like Julien Brisebois suddenly became available, Bowman's plan might not matter.

And in the dressing room, someone has to coach McDavid and Draisaitl. Not enable them — coach them.

They are open to it if anyone has the gravitas to be that coach.

"What makes Connor and I who we are is because we want to be out there in every situation," Draisaitl said on Saturday. "(But) we know very well — we've been around long enough to know that we need everybody. You need your third line to get their minutes for them to feel great about themselves. We're very aware of that.

"Connor and I are both (open to) whatever a coach wants from us. We're willing to do it if it makes our team better. If it gives us a better chance to win, we're open to it."

Things We Know

There are about 10 true No. 1's in the game — with surnames like Vasilevskiy and Hellebuyck — and another 10 Logan Thompsons or Lukas Dostals that are getting the job done in their markets as a No. 1. Short of a McDavid deal, Bowman can't trade for any of them.

So, if you are destined to be a team that must win with something less than an Ilya Sorokin or Igor Shesterkin, then you'd better shore up your defensive game. This season, Edmonton played Carey Price defence in front of Mikko Koskinen goaltending.

Things We (Think We) Know

Bowman outlined Edmonton's defensive game as a 200-foot problem, not a D-zone problem:

"There were times this year, even in the playoffs, when ... we've got the puck in the offensive zone, and then five seconds later, we're giving up two-on-ones. Those are things that aren't really a defensive zone issue," he said Saturday. "That happened in the wrong times for us this year, and it hurt us."

Let the record show, the disparity in defensive metrics between Edmonton's top players and other teams' top players was stark. McDavid wins the Art Ross and he's plus-17. Nathan MacKinnon has 11 fewer points, but he's plus-57.

A healthy Draisaitl was on pace for roughly the same production as Nikita Kucherov. But Kucherov was plus-43, while Draisaitl was plus-13. Evan Bouchard's game simply has to shed itself of some risk — even if it costs him some points.

It's not good enough anymore for these superstars to keep winning scoring races and front a defensive posture like Edmonton's.

Goaltending has been the low-hanging fruit here for too long. Bowman's job is to figure out what he has in net, and like so many teams that won with average goalies, play a game that can win in front of them.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.05.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

1390207 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Wild confident reality check will spark response: 'React the right way'

Iain MacIntyre

DENVER — For the first time, Kirill Kaprizov is trying to grow a playoff beard during the Stanley Cup tournament's second round, and so far the grooming mission is not flourishing.

His beard is sparse, a little like sprouting wheat during a drought.

"I've never had (one), I think," the 29-year-old Russian said Monday. "Usually every morning, before every game, yeah, I shave all the time. But now we'll see how long it can be. I hope a long one."

The duration of the Minnesota Wild's playoff beard-growing season depends partly on Kaprizov.

The world's most expensive hockey player was excellent in a six-game win against the Dallas Stars in the opening round of the National Hockey League playoffs.

But in the offensive rave party that was the Wild's 9-6 loss Sunday in their second-round opener against the Colorado Avalanche, Kaprizov was strangely ineffective, managing only one shot on target and a second assist.

As with half of Minnesota's lineup, this is Kaprizov's first playoff foray beyond the opening round, which was the final resting place of Wild playoff hopes in nine series over 11 seasons before their breakthrough last week against the Stars.

Like Kaprizov's baby beard, the second round is entirely new to 10 Minnesota players and most of their best ones, including wingers Kaprizov and Matt Boldy, top-pairing defenceman Brock Faber and starting goalie Jesper Wallstedt.

As a team, the Wild weren't ready for the Stanley Cup-favourite Avalanche, whose seven five-on-five goals in Game 1 were three more than Minnesota surrendered in its entire series against Dallas.

Everybody understood Colorado would be a difficult out. But after such a slack, uncharacteristic performance in Game 1, do the Wild understand that playoffs only get harder as the tournament progresses?

"I mean, from my experience, the first round has never been easy," veteran winger Vladimir Tarasenko, a two-time Stanley Cup winner elsewhere, said during off-day media availability at the Wild's downtown hotel. "It's hard to say which rounds are harder because in the first round, everybody is full of emotions, you know, everybody is kind of fresh.

"I think the most important part is to share the experience that things can go wrong sometimes. How you show up the next day is what's important. There is no point to, you know, feel sad about yesterday; you have to take your lessons and move on. Because some series take longer, some series you play every other day, and if you're not able to get (the) lessons and move on to the next game with the right mindset, it might be too late."

Minnesota coach John Hynes noted that his roster does include players with significant playoff experience — Tarasenko, Mats Zuccarello, Marcus Johansson, Zach Bogosian — and that the team's identity guards against it becoming overwhelmed by the playoffs' big stage.

"I think it goes back to, one, we do have a lot of guys with experience and I think that certainly helps," he said. "The way we handle our business as a team, in general, over the course of 82 games — not getting too high, not getting too low, making sure the results of a game don't overwhelm

you ... you just need to react the right way and respond to what was presented. That's how we go about our business. That's ingrained, that's a habit, that's how we do business as a team.

"We learned some good lessons in Game 2 of the Dallas series. We lost the game (4-2), but I'd say we took lessons out of that and (those mistakes) didn't happen again over the course of the series. We got better and stronger and the issues in that game were rectified, and that to me shows you where your team's at. And it's no different than last night."

Hynes reiterated that the Wild's many defensive mistakes in Game 1 are correctable.

Although he defended Wallstedt, who failed to make key saves when Minnesota needed them in the third period, the coach was non-committal about his goalie for Game 2 here Tuesday. So it's possible the Avalanche may see Filip Gustavsson.

But whoever is in net, Colorado will likely see a far different Minnesota team, heavy and robust and defensively tight.

The loss looked immediately like a reality check for the Wild and certainly got the players' attention. The way they were ventilated may actually turn out to be a good thing.

"(Quinn) Hughes said it after the game: you go in and you're so focused on one series," Hynes explained. "When you get through that ... it's two weeks' worth of games and one opponent and one thing. And then you come in (to another series) ... you can see it on video, right? But until you feel it, and 'OK, there's the speed and yes, this is a little bit different.' Colorado did a good job of that. We know they're a good team, but I do think that feeling it, going through it, not on point — we didn't get away with not being as good as we need to be in certain areas last night. And that was the learning lesson."

"Last night wasn't my good game or my best game," Kaprizov said. "How to say it, I don't know exactly. I know I need to play better and create more offence and play good defensively because playoffs, you don't want to give easy goals against. Offensively, you always can have some chances, especially when you play a lot of minutes. You just need to play the right way and help your team."

Boldy, the Wild's other elite offensive driver up front, also had only a single assist in Game 1's track meet.

"I think it's more not about who's able to score yesterday," Tarasenko said. "We have to play better defensively and try to limit their chances. Obviously, (they're) a very good team, and we have to keep going on our plan. People usually say everything could happen in the playoffs, and it was another thing I (have) never been part of. At the end of the day — I've said it before — it's important how you react. I don't think there is such a big difference to lose 9-6 or 0-1. It's down by one in the series. We have time to get some rest today and be ready for tomorrow."

And what does Tarasenko think of Kaprizov's wispy beard?

"I didn't pay attention," he said. "I have to take a look. I saw something yesterday, so I hope he grows it very long this year."

•

Tarasenko's one-handed breakaway deke on Sunday was reminiscent of former Avalanche superstar Peter Forsberg's gold-medal-winning goal for Sweden against Canada at the 1994 Olympics. Tarasenko was two years old. Does he remember Forsberg?

"Yeah, yeah, I saw his goal in the Olympics," Tarasenko said. "I know what you're talking about."

Forsberg's defining play against goalie Corey Hirsch was commemorated in Sweden by a postage stamp.

"I saw that, too," Tarasenko said. "It was a very big stage."



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390208 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Six thoughts on the Maple Leafs hiring Mats Sundin and John Chayka

Justin Bourne

There is no doubt that when the Maple Leafs announced the joint hires of John Chayka and Mats Sundin, there was a sort of general bafflement amongst the fanbase. That's observational, that's anecdotal, but from what I've seen and heard, the consensus seems to show an intense curiosity about two main questions.

How, and why, did the Leafs end up making the particular choices they did?

The third question, "How is this going to work," will get fleshed out in Monday's press conference (Sportsnet.ca, 1 p.m. ET / 10 a.m. PT). As for the dozens of other questions, well, we'll pick through those as time gets on.

This time around, the justifications for the choices hired to run the Maple Leafs cannot include "experience," as Sundin has yet to have any in a front office, and John Chayka had just four years as a GM (and one as an assistant), and they didn't go great. There were extenuating circumstances that are relevant — his age, the stability of ownership and more — but for now we'll just leave it as "limited experience with some controversial moments."

That doesn't mean the years ahead can't go well, but there's just no denying here that the track records aren't long.

But I also don't think it's all bad. The Leafs seem to really like Chayka, and it's presumably not because they're fond of losing. They legitimately think this can work, and so I've tried to see what they're seeing, and there's definitely a few angles past the discourse of "Tie Domi likes these guys" from which this could be successful.

Here are six thoughts on the whole situation:

1. The Leafs didn't hire a president, but they at least replaced the hockey-related absence of Brendan Shanahan

On Real Kyper and Bourne, I've been advocating for the Leafs to hire another president, as I felt it hurt Brad Treliving not having the Hall of Famer around every day to bounce around roster thoughts. Shanny was at damn near every game, practice and morning skate — and even though the Leafs had several AGMs last year, it couldn't be as useful as having a big-picture guy around on a daily basis.

Mats Sundin may have not been given the title of president, but he can at least be the big-picture guy I'm referencing. I'm less concerned with many of the other details of what a president may do (though I still think they'd benefit from one), but really I just wanted another set of experienced eyes on the team day in, day out. So, Sundin can be that.

2. Chayka has the underdog advantage

Whatever happens over Chayka's tenure, whenever it's over and however it's over, there's no doubt it will be fair to write then that "he came in amidst rampant skepticism." Hell, there's already an article out there about him and tampering and he's just taken the job. All eyes will be on this guy. That will always have been the backdrop for his tenure in Toronto.

Odd as it sounds, I see it as an advantage over just about everyone else who's taken over this team.

Brian Burke came in and immediately made promises about what the team would be, Brendan Shanahan and Lou Lamoriello offered Hall-of-Fame pedigree, Kyle Dubas came with the flair of a boy wonder, and even Brad Treliving was a well-known hockey guy taking over a team already near the top of the league. The second each was hired, fans expected a shortcut to the Stanley Cup.

Given the perception of his hire, as long as Chayka doesn't start out by promising immediate success, every competent move seems like it's going to come as a pleasant surprise to the fanbase. Stacking baby wins and not making glaring errors can slowly change minds. There's a reason coaches in every sport going into a new series will argue for their team's status as the underdog. We know Toronto is a high-pressure environment, but I honestly think everyone's initial skepticism of Chayka will take some of the pressure off the guy. Am I skeptical too? Yeah of course, I think the facts insist on some skepticism here. But because of that, Chayka's got that old "nobody believes in us" advantage of a 12th-seeded college basketball team in March Madness, and he could use the lack of expectations to build more slowly.

3. Will Chayka (and Sundin) have the heart to be ruthless?

At the end of the day, Chayka is the one who's going to have to report to MLSE president Keith Pelley and bear the brunt of the final calls, so that's why I've got Sundin in brackets there. But for awhile now, it's been said that the Leafs need some tangible changes, including many people who think the coach should go.

In the past, this idea of "I need to evaluate everyone" before making decisions — namely with Treliving and the Mitch Marner contract situation — has really hurt the team. You just need to know the lay of the land on Day 1. Where the team is at is not proprietary information — it's not hard to follow along with their contracts, it's all very public. And so if you've followed the team at all — which presumably Chayka has if they're hiring him — you know you can't move forward with the same people in every role.

So is he going to get hired and start by letting people go? By making trades? The draft is in a month, so how soon will hard conversations be had with Morgan Rielly, Max Domi and others? I actually kinda like that there's news out there that he's already been in contact with people under contracts, as he's clearly ready to get going immediately. I'll take that over "I just need to come in and look around and get the lay of the land."

4. The Leafs need someone who's always looking for an angle, and that seems to be Chayka

Say what you will about all the Chayka drama from Arizona, the one thing you can't take from the guy is that it seems like he's always got an idea, or an angle, and that's just about exactly what I've been saying the Leafs need now. They're in tough and need to get creative about how to add. They can't just do the paint-by-numbers "add UFA on UFA day" and "trade guys on trade day" stuff they've been doing.

Chayka made 24 trades in four years with the Arizona Coyotes, he took on bad money to get other assets, he put together deferred contracts, he was just open to other ways of doing things. And if you look at this here, you can see how many of the very good teams in the league are built these days.

Time for the Leafs to get tradey.

5. The Leafs really just wanted Sundin involved

When push comes to shove, I don't think Sundin is going to be making the hard personnel decisions, and I think the organization protected him from intense scrutiny with the title "Guy who's going to be around every day" or whatever it is exactly (OK fine, it's senior executive advisor).



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

What this feels like to me: they didn't want to hire a full-on president, and just wanted to stick with GM only. But they wanted it to be an unproven guy with some baggage, and for both those things, Sundin is the perfect antidote. That's not to minimize his ability to help the team and organization — of course they really wanted him — but I think it allowed the Leafs to get their guy, while at the same time keeping fans happy. It allows them to have someone to focus on the stuff I mentioned in point one: the big picture, the culture, the franchise direction. "The brand," if you will.

They got Sundin, which allowed them to get Chayka.

6. The Leafs' fork in the road

Chayka and Sundin are taking over at a time when the franchise is at a pivotal crossroads. They've got two aging superstars and enough talent and goaltending to be competitive. They also finished fifth-last this past season.

For the players at the fringes, I see what Carolina has done, and wonder how different things could be for the Leafs if they had added guys like William Carrier and Eric Robinson and Taylor Hall and Sean Walker and Shayne Gostisbehere (instead of Brandon Carlo and Calle Jarnkrok and Dakota Joshua and Max Domi and Matias Maccelli).

Well, the Leafs believe they have their own analytics guy now to improve in those spots, and they've got their culture guy, and so they think they can get Auston Matthews and William Nylander and Matthew Knies back in the mix.

Whether that's true or not, well, stand by. It's happening, and we're off on the beginning of a new chapter of the Toronto Maple Leafs. Whether the book is an adventure with some great triumph at the end, or a tragedy, well, everyone's got their opinions on that. For Chayka and Sundin, the good news is those opinions don't matter much. The work starts now.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390209 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Conn Smythe Power Rankings: Who's topping the charts in the early going

Ryan Dixon

After a few seasons of the same players being in the playoff MVP chase, we now have a list of Conn Smythe Trophy candidates defined by some fresh faces.

It stands to reason, given all the team turnover in the 2026 Stanley Cup Playoffs, but there's a dearth of proven post-season talent when it comes to potential playoff MVPs.

With Jonathan Marchessault (a former Golden Knight who now plays for Nashville), Sam Bennett (a Florida Panthers whose team failed to make the playoffs) and Connor McDavid (bounced with the Edmonton Oilers in Round 1) all on the sidelines, not one Conn Smythe winner from the past three springs is still skating in Round 2.

Moreover, with Tampa Bay falling in seven games to the Montreal Canadiens, the only person left in the dance with a Smythe on his resume is Colorado's Cale Makar.

Just like the Cup itself, the pathway to a 2026 Conn Smythe feels about as open as it gets. And with so many signature performances in the first (and early second) round, there's no shortage of players making a case for themselves as the field gets whittled down to eight squads.

So, with that in mind, here is our power ranking of a dozen playoff MVP candidates now that the first round is completely in the books.

(Please note, this ranking is not taking into account how likely a player's team is to make a deep run; it's a list based on purely on how players have performed to this point.)

1. Logan Stankoven, Carolina Hurricanes

It's not just that Stankoven is scoring; it's that every goal he nets is an important one. The 23-year-old has scored the first goal of the game in four of Carolina's five playoff outings. In the one contest he didn't — the Game 4 clincher in Ottawa — Stankoven scored the goal that put Carolina up for good against the Senators. Four of his six tallies have come at five-on-five.

This has been a remarkable showing from the undersized centre.

2. Quinn Hughes, Minnesota Wild

Hughes had a signature performance in the Game 6 win that eliminated the Dallas Stars, notching two goals that included the opening strike and the game-winner. With three points in the zany 9-6 loss to Colorado on Sunday night, Hughes now leads the entire playoffs in scoring with 11 points and has more total time on ice than anyone in the derby.

3. Jackson LaCombe, Anaheim Ducks

LaCombe led all defencemen in scoring after the first round with nine points during Anaheim's six-game win over Edmonton. He had terrific underlying numbers while facing Connor McDavid and leading the Ducks in ice time during the series. You get the sense this is the spring where the entire hockey world learns what those who watch LaCombe closely have been saying for a while: this is one of the best young blue-liners in the NHL.

4. Cale Makar, Colorado Avalanche

Two classic Makar goals in Games 3 and 4 versus the Kings came at a point when things were very much in doubt. He scored twice in the rollicking 9-6 win over Minny to open Round 2, and his four goals — all of them scored at even strength — are the most by any defenceman in the post-season.

5. Frederik Andersen, Carolina Hurricanes

Andersen has played at least 25 career playoff games for each of the Anaheim Ducks, Toronto Maple Leafs and Carolina Hurricanes, and — get this — he has the exact same save percentage of .916 with all three clubs.

How's that for consistency?

Of course, "consistent" is the last word we've come to associate with Andersen in the past couple years, as injuries have made him an unreliable member of the Canes.

That said, he's reminding us what he's capable of when healthy, throwing down a crazy .961 SP driven by two shutouts.

Over time, the 36-year-old Andersen has come to be viewed as a goalie who can play well in spurts with a limited workload. Well, Carolina has already provided him lots of rest by dusting Ottawa in four games, and if the Canes can advance past Philadelphia in, say, five, we'll be seeing a well-rested Andersen in the Eastern Conference Final.

5. Jack Eichel, Vegas Golden Knights

Eichel was held off the scoresheet in Game 1 versus Utah, then had nine points in five games the rest of the way. He's undeniably the straw that stirs the drink in Vegas, and his two-way excellence gets more and more apparent this time of year.

6. Jakub Dobes, Montreal Canadiens



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

Dobes was great for the duration of Montreal's seven-game win over Tampa, but really stepped up as the set wore on. The rookie netminder posted a .961 SP from Game 5 on, including 32 saves in a 1-0, extra-time loss in Game 6 and 28 more in the decisive contest he stole his team in Tampa in Game 7.

A freshman tender finding success in Montreal in the spring? You don't say!

7. Matt Boldy, Minnesota Wild

Sportsnet contributor Michael Amato may have put it best:

Among players still on a Cup quest, only Stankoven can match Boldy's six goals. Boldy scored the vital OT winner to even the series with Dallas 2-2 in Game 4, found the net again in Game 5 and kicked in two ENGs in Game 6.

8. Alex Tuch, Buffalo Sabres

The one Sabres skater who entered the playoffs with all kinds of post-season experience is Alex Tuch, who led the squad with four goals in the first round. What a spring this could be for Tuch, wearing the uniform of the squad he grew up rooting for while the playoff-starved city goes nuts. Oh yeah, he's also eligible to become an unrestricted free agent on July 1.

9. Dan Vladar, Philadelphia Flyers

Vladar ended Round 1 with a .937 save percentage capped by a 42-save shutout in the 1-0 OT victory that propelled the Flyers past Pittsburgh, just when it appeared the Pens were poised to come back from an 0-3 hole and force Game 7. None of the Flyers seemed ready for what they got in Game 1 versus Carolina, but Vladar is Philly's best hope to make it a series.

10. Taylor Hall, Carolina Hurricanes

How can we not include the guy who has the highest points-per-game mark (1.60) of anybody still active in the playoffs? Stankoven has been getting lot of attention, and rightfully so, but it's the entire Canes line of Stankoven between Hall and Jackson Blake that's on fire.

With eight points, Hall has already matched his previous career high for a single post-season showing.

11. Alex Lyon, Buffalo Sabres

Lyon did not enter the series with Boston until the third period of Game 2. Earlier in that contest, Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen allowed a dump-in from centre to elude him, sending Sabres supporters into an immediate state of fright over the goaltending.

Enter Lyon.

Lyon was tremendous the rest of the way for Buffalo, posting a .955 save percentage and grabbing three wins for the team.

12. Tage Thompson, Buffalo Sabres

The first playoff game in Buffalo since 2011 was trending bummer for most of the night, until Thompson scored twice in less than four minutes to dig the Sabres out of a 2-0 hole and send them on the way to a thrilling 4-3 victory over the Bruins.

Thompson didn't score again in Round 1, but he still finished plus-7 with seven points in the six-game set.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390210 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Six things we learned in Round 1 of the Stanley Cup Playoffs

Rory Boylen

Round 1 of the Stanley Cup Playoffs ended on Sunday night with Montreal's triumph over Tampa Bay, but Round 2 began on Saturday with Carolina-Philadelphia, and continued on Sunday night with a wild opener between Colorado and Minnesota.

The opening round was a thrilling one for hockey fans, so just before we pivot entirely into our coverage of Round 2 and beyond, here's one last look back at Round 1 with some things we learned out of the gate.

Having a second goalie is more important than ever

Take a look around at the eight teams still standing. Which of them has a clearly defined No. 1 goalie?

Buffalo: Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen is the starter on paper, but split starts with Alex Lyon this season. Luukkonen started the first two games of the Bruins series, but after allowing seven goals Buffalo pulled him in Game 2, and turned to Lyon. Now Lyon, 33, has a 3-1 record and a .955 save percentage in these playoffs.

Montreal: Samuel Montembeault was the Canadiens' starter when the season began, but a rough start saw him lose grip on the job by December. Jakub Dobes, a 24-year-old backup who played 16 games last season, stepped in. He had hot-and-cold stretches in the middle of the season, too but gained momentum down the stretch. In these playoffs, he has been Montreal's no-doubt starting goaltender, a development few saw coming back in October. But if he does need to be replaced for any reason, 21-year-old Jacob Fowler is the guy after an extremely promising first 17 games in the league.

Carolina: The three-headed beast. Pyotr Kochetkov and Frederik Andersen figured to split the starts for a third year in a row, but the 26-year-old Russian would have the inside track to get more starts and be the playoff No. 1. However, Kochetkov was injured in the pre-season, got four starts in November, and then was ruled out "probably" for the season in December. Third-stringer waiver pickup Brandon Bussi was given a shot after Andersen became injured as well and he immediately got so hot the Canes extended his contract past this season. However, Bussi cooled off significantly after the Olympic break, so Andersen has taken over the playoff starts and leads the league with a .961 save percentage so far. Kochetkov is available again and Bussi is the backup.

Philadelphia: Prior to this season Dan Vladar had a career high of 30 games in a single NHL season, which he played in last season with Calgary. This year, he was one of 18 goalies with at least 50 starts. Of the remaining goalies in the playoffs, Vladar's 52 regular-season starts are second only to Anaheim's Lukas Dostal (55). Vladar, surprisingly, is one of the few no-doubt No. 1s left in the playoffs, but he's not someone anyone would have presumed would be in this position back in September. Samuel Ersson is Vladar's backup.

Colorado: Last season the Avalanche made two trades to re-work their goalie tandem. MacKenzie Blackwood started the most games and had a great year, while backup Scott Wedgewood also put up strong numbers. And in the 2025 playoffs, Blackwood started every one of their seven games. This season, Wedgewood got the majority of starts and was statistically the better goalie of the two. Perhaps he should have gotten more Vezina Trophy attention. In the 2026 playoffs, Wedgewood has started every game. Colorado won its first game of the second round in a crazy 9-6 contest, but if the 33-year-old did have a short run of cooler play, Blackwood is still a tremendous option to turn to in a pinch.

Minnesota: Filip Gustavsson started 49 games to Jesper Wallstedt's 33 and was above Wallstedt on Sweden's depth chart at the Olympics. In fact, Wallstedt was a trade candidate at the deadline if the Wild were to



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

find a significant roster upgrade elsewhere. But after running cold in the middle part of the season, Wallstedt got red hot after the Olympics and had far better results in Minnesota's last 25 games. He's started all seven of Minnesota's playoff games now — if the Wild want to turn to their other goalie, they'd be turning back to someone who was their No. 1 all season.

Vegas: Injuries really threw the Golden Knights' goalie mix into a blender this season as none of their three main guys started even 30 games. In fact, Akira Schmid led the way with 29 starts. When Adin Hill returned he started 13 games for Vegas, and won just five with an .872 save percentage. Then Carter Hart returned in April, won all six of his starts, and the Golden Knights rode the hot hand into the playoffs. Now Hart is starting over Vegas' Stanley Cup winner.

Anaheim: Like Vladar in Philadelphia, Lukas Dostal in Anaheim is their clearly-defined No. 1. This is one that could have been foreseen, given Dostal had started most of Anaheim's game for the previous two seasons as well. Still, he wasn't amazing in Round 1 — according to MoneyPuck.com, Dostal has the worst Goals Saved Above Expected of any netminder in the playoffs so far. The Ducks had to replace him early in Game 5 against Edmonton, but turned right back to him in Game 6, where he shut the door for a series win.

Interestingly, when you look back at recent Stanley Cup champions, almost all of them had a solid starter who everyone would label a "No. 1 NHL goalie." From Sergei Bobrovsky to Andrei Vasilevskiy and Darcy Kuemper circa 2022. But those types are getting fewer and fewer and it's more important than ever to have a capable No. 2, or a strong tandem as opposed to leaning on just one guy through thick and thin.

Alex Tuch is becoming a very interesting unrestricted free agent

The upcoming UFA market is not exactly full of top-line, game-changing players. There isn't one player that you'd consider a "franchise superstar."

But take a look at Luke Fox's latest list of UFAs and you'll see Buffalo's Alex Tuch at the top. The Sabres couldn't get him re-signed in-season, but also didn't trade him at the deadline, keeping him for a very important playoff run. Now they've won a playoff series and Tuch's value keeps going up. Through six playoff games he's Buffalo's leading scorer, with all seven of his points coming at even strength.

Now we're looking at the top winger on the market who surely could chase more than \$10 million, or even \$10.5 million, on the open market. Buffalo will have to entertain paying that, unless the Syracuse. N.Y., native cuts some slack to stay with an emerging team.

It's high time to work on effective goal-line technology

Game 4 in the Edmonton-Anaheim series was a crucial turning point when the young Ducks' overtime win gave them a 3-1 lead. Ryan Poehling's winning goal brought a tinge of controversy to it because we couldn't actually see an angle showing the puck completely across the goal line.

The call on the ice was a goal, but were the officials positioned well enough to clearly see it? If the ruling on the ice were different, would it have changed the decision from the Situation Room? Using some common sense, it would appear highly likely the puck did cross the line and, thus, the correct call was made. But in the world of modern sports where baseball uses technology to check balls and strikes, tennis to make correct in/out calls on the line, and soccer to review offsides, the NHL could use its own goal line technology to make the right call without a shadow of a doubt.

But is that technology as easy to implement as it might seem?

"A number of things that make it more difficult to develop a technology that can be relied upon are all the activity that is going on around the net at the time, and the fact that bodies, gloves and sticks — and on

occasion pucks — are in the way. Posts are in the way," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said during an appearance on The Fan Pre-Game on Sportsnet.

"It is difficult to have a definitive technology that sees through all that traffic, even in the form of something embedded in the puck. We haven't found a fail-proof technology yet."

There's another idea floating about that's far less "high tech" and, instead, is just another coat of paint.

The diameter of an official NHL puck is three inches, so what if there were a second line in the net, three inches behind the goal line? If the flat puck touches that second line, you'd know it's fully crossed the goal line.

The problem with that idea comes when the puck is on its side, pointing north-south. In that case, the "back" side of the puck would just be hanging over the second line instead of being directly on it, and it wouldn't be as clear-cut with the net camera if it were actually in or not due to the "parallax angle."

So this idea isn't a cure-all solution, but it would help and be a small step in the right direction.

In his interview, Daly went on to explain this wasn't a "burning issue" with the league and that sometimes mistakes happen in sports (not that this was one).

But what if this happens in Game 7 OT of the Stanley Cup Final?

The team turnover is real

There was a lot of turnover into the playoffs this season. Anaheim got back in after years of rebuilding, along with Utah. Ottawa was a monster when it came to underlying numbers, to the point that even league-average goaltending all regular season could easily have landed them a more favourable first-round matchup. Montreal took another big step forward, and Buffalo snapped a nearly decade-and-a-half long playoff drought.

Now that we're into Round 2 the Ducks, Sabres and Canadiens all won and look very dangerous — one of Buffalo or Montreal will be in the Eastern Conference final.

There are a lot of heavy favourites left, but the guard is changing and none of the new arrivals are, or were, pushovers.

This has to be Carolina's season to get through the East

Which brings us to the Carolina Hurricanes, a team that's been knocking on the Stanley Cup door for every one of Rod Brind'Amour's seasons behind the bench. Already with a dominant win over Philadelphia in Game 1, the door is wide open for Carolina to finally break through.

To make this related to the Maple Leafs for a quick second: Through all 10 seasons when Toronto appeared to have an open Cup window, two in particular stand out as missed opportunities. In the 2020 bubble, the Leafs still hadn't won a series in its Core Four era and faced Columbus in Round 1. A perfect chance to break the ice, but they never had a series lead and were shutout in Game 5. And in 2021, Toronto won the North (aka Canadian) division in the regular season, then faced Montreal in Round 1 before they engaged in their rebuild. This was certainly Toronto's best chance to get to Round 3 — instead they blew a 3-1 series lead and were again ousted in Round 1.

These Canes have had more playoff success than those Leafs. Brind'Amour has led Carolina to three conference finals, but they've been blown out in each one.

Without a Florida or a Tampa Bay around anymore, the Canes are the clear favourite, the regular-season winners, and by far the most experienced bunch left in the East. This has to be their season to get



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

through to the final, or else it will look like their biggest missed opportunity.

Dylan Guenther has one of the most team-friendly contracts in the NHL

The Utah Mammoth may have been eliminated in Round 1, but their takeaways should be entirely positive.

Notably, the combination of Dylan Guenther and Logan Cooley were dominant at 5-on-5. When those two were on the ice together, Utah had nearly 67 per cent of the expected goals, over 57 per cent of the shots, and actually outscored Vegas 5-3. The duo will be a lot to handle in the years to come.

Specifically, Guenther has to have one of the best, most team-friendly deals in the entire NHL. Making \$7.142 million through the 2032-33 season, the 23-year-old signed this extension in September of 2024 after he had scored 18 goals in 45 games. He scored 27 goals in the last year of his ELC, then hit 40 this season. In the series against Vegas he scored three times — one of which gave Utah a lead, and another that tied a game in the third period.

Consider that Guenther, the ninth-overall pick of the 2021 draft, has basically the same cap hit of second-overall pick Matty Beniers, and that he makes less than 2020 first-overall pick Alexis Lafrenière, two players he's vastly outperformed early in their careers.

With Guenther under a great contract as their leading sniper, with Clayton Keller and lineman Logan Cooley (who will begin his \$10 million AAV contract next season) the Mammoth are in a great spot to keep building from here. Having Guenther locked in to such a great rate for so long will give them a competitive advantage.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390211 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canadiens flip instant classic series with miraculous Game 7 win

Eric Engels

TAMPA, Fla. — In the end, the coin came up Canadiens.

It flipped seven times in this series. Just once more to the Montreal side in Tampa Bay.

Three of the Canadiens' four wins over the Lightning came at Benchmark International Arena, and this last one, which saw them held to just nine shots on net — and none in the second period of the game — was sealed by a miraculous goal.

"We got a bounce with (Alex Newhook)," said coach Martin St. Louis.

The Canadiens weren't going to eliminate the Lightning without at least one big one.

"They're a great team, they're well coached, they've got a lot of skill, a lot of their players play the right way, they're hard to play against, chippy," said Kaiden Guhle. "They're a hard team to beat."

They're a championship team. A team that, in more than one way, gave birth to this version of the Canadiens.

"After the (Stanley) Cup Final (in 2021), there was a lot of tough times, and a lot of guys left and we started this rebuild," said Nick Suzuki.

He was one of six current Canadiens to suffer through that loss to the Lightning before delivering yet another big push down on their contention window.

Suzuki opened the scoring 18:39 into Game 7 on Montreal's fourth shot, and it wasn't until he blocked the last of Tampa's 55 attempts on the night that he could exhale and contemplate the Canadiens' journey to this point.

"It's definitely been probably faster than most people expected, but when you get a lot of great players together in a great system, great leadership, things can turn quickly," Suzuki said. "I don't know if we're the youngest team in the playoffs, but we've got a lot of gamers, and we have a lot of guys that want that moment and are able to raise their game to a different level."

Jakub Dobes did that from start to finish, and not just in Game 7.

The 24-year-old rookie goaltender stopped 181 of the 196 shots he faced in this series, and he conjured miracle after miracle in the final game, outduelling the greatest goaltender of a generation in Andrei Vasilevskiy.

"Dobes kind of stole the game," said St. Louis.

If he could take back the words, "kind of," we're sure he would.

"He's super confident in himself, which you love to see," said Suzuki of Dobes. "He puts the work in every single day away from the rink in preparing himself to go into games in a proper mindset, which I learned a lot of his routine last night, which was pretty cool. ... He's a gamer. He's been doing that since he got to our team, and we're going to need him to continue playing well as we go along here."

Before we get to Buffalo and to the challenge that awaits the Canadiens in Round 2 versus the resurgent Sabres, some review is in order of the closest playoff series in recent memory.

It was the third series in NHL history to have all seven games decided by a single goal. There was just one two-goal lead the whole time, and it lasted less than six minutes. Each punch was countered, each goal replied to until the final one stood, and the shots were just about even until the Lightning decided to deny the Canadiens any for 26:57 of Sunday's game.

The Canadiens couldn't find Vasilevskiy's padding, let alone his net, between Suzuki's goal at the end of the first and the wrister he hit Vasilevskiy with 5:36 into the third period.

"That was their best stretch of the series," said Lane Hutson. "It showed they've been here before."

Before Sunday's loss made it a fourth consecutive first-round exit, the Lightning were perennial winners of games like these.

They set the foundation of their standard on their run to the 2015 Cup Final. By 2020, they turned it into the golden one of the league with their first of back-to-back Cup wins. And then they fell just two wins short of winning a third straight in 2022.

At the start of that year, the Canadiens began their rebuild.

A month later, St. Louis, a former Lightning legend, took over the bench in Montreal and tried to emulate everything he'd learned from watching this Tampa team.

"How long has (Jon Cooper) been here (coaching the Lightning)? It's been 13 years," he said. "You look at the steps they took, and it's something that we've tried to replicate. It's an organization and team that set the standard, and I watched the Lightning a lot before I was coach, and with good reason. Not just because I played for the Lightning, but also because of how they play."

"When I took the job as coach, I wanted to have a team that could play in possession, that could defend, that had a good power play. I tried to absorb a lot of the things the Lightning did and bring them here to Montreal, and it was the biggest challenge to go beat that team in the first round. We were two teams with the same attitude, but they had more



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

experience in the playoffs. We stayed on task to get through the highs and lows, and we learned a lot."

Especially about what it takes to not only win, but to beat a champion.

St. Louis talked about timely power-play goals in Game 1, depth scoring in Game 3, a winning goal in Game 5 produced on a good line change as an example of the details required, and miraculous goaltending in Game 7.

"You need a little bit of everything," he said, "and I feel that's what we got in this series."

What the Canadiens needed two-thirds of the way through Game 7 was a dose of perspective.

Suzuki said St. Louis delivered it.

"I think he's one of the best coaches in the whole world," said Suzuki. "It feels like he says the right thing in every single situation, knows how to get the best out of his guys. Obviously, no one was happy with that second period, and he comes in all fired up, getting us going for the third, really motivating the guys."

After his press conference, on his way out of Benchmark International Arena, St. Louis told us he jolted the Canadiens; made them realize that, despite their freeze-up in the second, they had a chance to go win the third and the series; that they had given up a huge advantage on the shot clock but only a power-play goal to Dominic James; that the score was still tied 1-1 and a lead was available to them if they could just flip momentum.

Newhook, who beat the Lightning in 2022 with the Colorado Avalanche to become the only Cup winner on the Canadiens, snatched it back from behind Vasilevskiy's net with 8:53 to go.

And then the Canadiens held the lead and prevailed with the lowest shot total ever recorded in an NHL playoff win.

Was there some luck in it? Of course.

You don't advance without it.

But the Canadiens fought for this. From Suzuki, who scored 101 points in the regular season before finally breaking through Anthony Cirelli's dogged coverage to record his first at five-on-five of the series Sunday, to Noah Dobson, who missed the first six games with an injury to his left hand before taking 25 shifts in Game 7.

They earned respect.

"We couldn't have played it any better, and it still wasn't good enough," said Cooper. "So at some point, too, you have to tip your cap to Marty St. Louis and the Montreal Canadiens and Jakub Dobes. They made a plan and stuck to it. They got the lead, protected it, and when they broke down, their goalie was there for them. And that takes something, too, because it's not like they just won one game like this. They won three prior games to get to this game. And it comes down to one game. And that's why sports is pretty incredible live theatre ..."

It gave us a sensational series unlike any we've covered.

The coin just came up Canadiens in the end.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390212 Websites

TSN.CA / Chayka sidesteps questions about 'really complicated' past as he tries to 'catch a moving train' with Leafs

Mark Masters

MLSE held a news conference at Real Sports Bar & Grill on Monday.

The Leafs formally introduced John Chayka as general manager and Mats Sundin as senior executive advisor, hockey operations during a media session on Monday that featured uncomfortable questions and some tense moments.

Chayka is returning to the NHL for the first time since spending four seasons as the general manager of the Arizona Coyotes. He resigned right before the start of the 2020 COVID bubble summer playoffs.

One journalist told MLSE president and CEO Keith Pelley that he polled prominent voices around the hockey world and received an overwhelmingly negative response to the hiring.

"I must have talked to different people," Pelley shot back.

Pelley was pressed for more details.

"We've conducted due diligence, and it was deep due diligence," Pelley said. "It was a thorough process and I am quite happy with where we've landed."

Oftentimes a news conference introducing a new hire is a chance for a team to turn the page and find a fresh start, but Chayka's past featured prominently on Monday.

After Chayka left the Coyotes, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman suspended him for a year due to "conduct detrimental to the league and game." Bettman found that Chayka "breached his obligation" to the Coyotes by pursuing a job with the New Jersey Devils.

Arizona also had to forfeit a second-round pick in 2020 and first-round choice in 2021 because it was determined that Chayka and the Coyotes had violated the league's combine testing policy.

During Monday's news conference, Chayka was offered the opportunity to clear the air regarding his Arizona exit.

"I'd just say that Arizona was a really complicated situation," the native of Jordan Station, Ont. responded. "It was the biggest challenge I've ever taken on in my life. It was honestly the hardest thing I've ever done and also, in a lot of ways, the most rewarding."

While Chayka, who became the youngest GM in NHL history at 26-years-old when he initially got the job in Arizona, did not go into detail about how his tenure in the desert ended, the now 36-year-old did offer some takeaways from the experience.

"It really teaches me the value of stability," he said. "Through no one's fault, there was a lot of work being done to try to find a new arena, new ownership, et cetera. As those things happened, there is a lot that gets missed. The value of stability and alignment [are] two key tenets I take from that."

Chayka read from prepared remarks at the start of the news conference and acknowledged he would be facing questions about his past and path to this point.

"I've made decisions I am proud of, and I also have made mistakes I've learned from," he said. "I am human. I own all of it, and I am better because of it."

Pelley was asked about Chayka's controversial track record in Arizona.

"I've read all of the reports," Pelley said. "I've talked to numerous people — I won't reveal who I talked to — who were close to the process. We've done extensive due diligence, and I am very comfortable and confident in where we've landed."



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

Chayka stressed that he has “a lot of really great relationships around the league” and pointed out that he was able to complete a lot of transactions with the Coyotes.

“There are always going to be naysayers,” Chayka added. “That is the reality of this. The one thing I really love about this opportunity in this market: You either win or you lose. The rest is kind of noise.”

Chayka, who had his wife and three young children watching from the first row at the news conference, admitted the media scrutiny in Toronto will be far different than what he’s dealt with previously. But he also mentioned that it is the passion of this market that makes this a dream job.

“It is special,” said Chayka, who fell in love with the game by going to Maple Leaf Gardens with his dad as a kid. “It has been a long path. I am still a young guy, but it is tough to put into words, if I am honest. It is a historic franchise. You’re the steward of a brand that is globally recognized. It is a big obligation as well. I embrace that.”

Pelley revealed that the Leafs spoke with 27 people in what he described as a “comprehensive” search process, which began after Brad Treliving was fired on March 30. What ultimately convinced Pelley that Chayka is the right man for the job?

“We were incredibly impressed and encouraged by John’s vision that he shared with us,” Pelley said. “One of the key characteristics that came through in the entire process: He is methodical and measured.”

Pelley objected to the idea that Chayka will need to play catch up after being out of the league for almost six years.

“There is no concern from my side,” he said. “He knows the players in the league.”

“I didn’t live off the grid,” Chayka said. “I stayed obsessed with the game, our league, the role of process, data, and integrated decision making.”

Pelley defended the search process, which was guided by Neil Glasberg from The Coach’s Agency. He denied a report that former Leaf Tie Domi, who is a close friend of Sundin, was involved.

“There have been countless erroneous reports and inaccurate information over the past six weeks,” Pelley said.

Chayka’s vision for the team in the short term is unclear as he is still gathering information.

“We’re going to have a very detailed plan,” he assured. “We are trying to catch a moving train here. We have scouting meetings coming up in the next two weeks — amateur and pro — and we have the combine followed by the draft and free agency. Really, the first order of business is connecting with the players and getting feedback.”

The Leafs are coming off a disastrous season, which saw them plummet from the top of the Atlantic Division to fifth-last in the overall standings.

Chayka is not ready to set a timeline for Toronto’s return to contention.

“The optimistic, hopeful side is that this team has a lot of latent upside,” Chayka said. “A lot of the players underperformed. I think there is a lot of opportunity to get in there and find ways to do a better job with the internal group. Having said that, it is a reality that we will have to make some changes and fill some holes. There are some fundamental ways in which we’re going to have to change the team.”

In particular, Chayka highlighted a need to improve on defence. Toronto finished 31st in goals against per game despite having a top-10 penalty kill.

“There are a ton of amazing pieces that are very valuable,” Chayka said of the roster. “I’m really focused on that and getting that back on track. There are parts of the game and parts of the roster that we need to improve on. I don’t think it is any secret. I think the defence core needs to be improved. We need maybe a different mix and maybe some different looks, with how we exit the zone and move through the neutral zone. There are just a lot of ways in which we can improve the team — team speed — but ultimately, we’re sitting here in May. It is a long offseason. It is my job to go out and make some moves to make the team better.”

Chayka has exchanged text messages with Leafs captain Auston Matthews.

“I just came from an organization where we spent our entire existence looking for that exact player,” Chayka said. “We are incredibly fortunate to have Auston. It is our job to sell him on what we are capable of in terms of reaching the ultimate goal. I know that is what is most important to him.”

On locker clean-out day, Matthews was asked about his future with the team.

“I can’t predict the future,” he said. They have to hire new leadership at management and stuff like that. So, I don’t really know. Like I said, I can’t predict the future.”

The star centre, who grew up in Arizona and continues to live there in the summer, has two years remaining on his contract.

“I can’t predict the future [...] They have to hire new leadership at management and stuff like that. So, I don’t really know. Like I said, I can’t predict the future.”

Auston Matthews answers questions about his future with the Leafs. pic.twitter.com/ue8VT7IXjV

— TSN (@TSN_Sports) April 16, 2026

“I’ve grown up around Auston, or he has grown up around me, I guess,” Chayka said. “He is an incredible player and an incredible person. I know the team hasn’t gotten to the level he would like or the fans would like. I think he understands that. We are talking about an Olympic champion, a top goal-scorer, and an amazing person. It is my job to build around him.”

The future of Craig Berube as head coach is also still to be determined. Chayka spoke to the veteran bench boss on Sunday night.

“He is a guy who has been a respected leader for decades in the National Hockey League,” Chayka said. “I think he is a tremendous coach, a Stanley Cup coach, and a good person. We had a good conversation. It was brief. We will get together later this week with Mats and go through it all. Mats and I are coming in as outsiders. He spent the past few years with the team. We want to listen, learn, understand his perspective, and go forward from there.”

Pelley believes that Chayka and Sundin will work well as a team.

“When we identified an opportunity to go in a different direction and bring two stellar, complementary hockey minds together in John and Mats, we jumped on it,” Pelley said. “We jumped on it.”

Pelley pointed out that the pair first met back in 2012 at the Memorial Cup.

“They’ve kept in touch,” Pelley stressed. “More importantly, the respect they have for each other, and the way they talked about each other, was palpable during the entire process.”



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 5, 2026

"The things I can complement him with are things that really come out of the experience of 18 years [as a player in the NHL], 13 years with the Leafs, and 11 years as captain," Sundin said. "He is a super-intelligent, progressive, hard-working guy. He understands the game."

Chayka appreciates how humble Sundin is despite being a Hall-of-Fame player.

"If we are going to take on this challenge, it is going to take special people," Chayka said. "Mats Sundin is a special person."

"We have completely different experiences," Sundin said. "He has a different background. But we both have a really common vision of what a winning team looks like, which is very important. There is no prestige. He is hardworking. There is a mutual view that winning is the only thing that matters."

This will be Sundin's first job in an NHL front office.

"It was actually great timing," he said. "My kids are a little older. I've been watching the game from the outside and I've done some work for the Swedish national team and watched prospects in Europe while also watching the whole league develop. It was a perfect time to come back with a perspective from the outside for a long time."

Pelley thanked the 55-year-old Swede for moving his family back across the Atlantic Ocean to Toronto where he last played during the 2007-08 season.

"At the time of the interviews, it was really fascinating; neither John nor Mats talked about titles at any time," Pelley revealed. "They only talked about goals, and that is to win the Stanley Cup. In fact, I don't even think Mats knew what his title was until he got the contract himself. I can tell you, unequivocally, that these two gentlemen are totally focused on one thing, and that is bringing the Stanley Cup to Toronto."

TSN.CA LOADED: 05.05.2026

1390213 Websites

TSN.CA / Habs need more from their big guns in Round 2

Travis Yost

Perhaps the Montreal Canadiens survived Game 7 Sunday night in Tampa Bay more than anything else – it's not often you see a team with nine total shots in an elimination game live to talk about it, but that's precisely what happened.

Now Montreal sits four wins from the Eastern Conference Final, with another division rival standing in their path.

Dispatching a team the quality of the Tampa Bay Lightning was no small feat; after seven games the daylight between these two teams was non-existent. Power-play goals were five apiece; the Canadiens were one goal better at even strength, outscoring the Lightning 11-to-10.

But goaltending is heavily deterministic in outcomes of series come playoff time, and there is no doubt Jakub Dobes outplaying Andrei Vasilevskiy was the ultimate difference maker. In fact, one could argue the only goalie who showed better in the first round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs was Carolina's Frederik Andersen:

Yost1 (Travis Yost)

When two teams are this close in quality, goaltending is going to be the difference more times than not. Tampa Bay might have had more of the puck throughout the series – and especially in Game 7 – but Dobes' 28 saves on Sunday were enough to get the job done.

It goes without saying that Montreal will need Dobes to outplay Alex Lyon and Buffalo in the second round. But to dispatch this Sabres team, Montreal urgently needs to get its top line going.

It's been rare, perhaps exceptionally rare, that Montreal's young guns at the top of the lineup have been held in check like they were against Tampa Bay.

The main reason Montreal was so competitive all year (including a late-season bid for the divisional crown) was because of their dynamic trio at the top of the lineup. Cole Caufield, Nick Suzuki, and Juraj Slafkovsky formed one of the league's deadliest lines all season long; a terrifying combination of playmaking ability and finishing skill that can get to opposing defences in a hurry.

That was not the case against Tampa Bay. The Lightning threw a heavy dose of Anthony Cirelli, Brandon Hagel, and Nikita Kucherov against Montreal's best line (with a lot of J.J. Moser and Darren Raddysh behind them) and had tremendous success.

The Canadiens' top line was four goals underwater in the series. Without the trio of Alex Texier, Kirby Dach, and Zach Bolduc outscoring Tampa Bay 6-0 (+6) in their minutes, we might not be talking about Montreal making a second-round appearance:

Yost2 (Travis Yost)

Given their track record of success over the past several seasons, it's easy (and likely fair) to chalk this up as a one-off – the Lightning are one of the few teams in the league with the personnel to match up against Montreal's best, with players like Hagel and Cirelli in particular known for their incredible defensive prowess.

And part of winning in the postseason is not relying on the same few players to outperform every single night; if that were the case, the Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl-led Edmonton Oilers would have multiple Stanley Cups by now.

Give credit to Montreal's depth for picking up the slack when the team needed it most. But the Canadiens are going to need more from their big guns if they want to upset the Sabres in round two.

Buffalo is a different sort of problem for Montreal; they may not have an elite five-man matchup unit a la Tampa Bay, but they have incredible depth and will be able to roll three lines and three pairings confidently, just like they did against the Boston Bruins in the first round.

Buffalo is not a perfect team but you won't find many lineups deeper than this group; that's going to create problems for Montreal's depth players, too.

In short: Montreal survived the first round on elite goaltending and depth scoring. Advancing against a team like Buffalo will require their star trio to reclaim their dominance.

TSN.CA LOADED: 05.05.2026