



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

## The News & Observer

### Inside Rod Brind'Amour's pivotal decision that led to a Hurricanes win in Game 2

By: Chip Alexander

Carolina Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour had a decision to make, and time was running short.

The Canes trailed the Philadelphia Flyers 2-1 on Monday, midway through the third period of Game 2 of their Stanley Cup playoff series. The line of Sebastian Aho, Andrei Svechnikov and Seth Jarvis was stuck in neutral. So why not change things up?

Brind'Amour moved Jarvis to Jordan Staal's line, shifting Jordan Martinook to Jarvis' spot on the Aho line. Jarvis, in turn, soon took a drop pass from Nikolaj Ehlers and ripped a shot for his first goal of the playoffs, tying the score.

The Canes went on to a 3-2 overtime win on Taylor Hall's goal at a rollicking Lenovo Center, grabbing a 2-0 lead in the second-round Eastern Conference series that now moves to Philadelphia for the next two games.

Moving Jarvis wasn't a gut, on-the-spot decision by Brind'Amour. It was something he had discussed in pregame planning with longtime assistant coach Jeff Daniels, who works with the Canes forwards.

'We've got to do it now'

It also was part of the continual chess match between head coaches in the course of a playoff series and in the heat of the games, anticipating moves in advance, having a good gauge on their players and what could happen if things are stagnant.

"I run things by (Daniels) almost basically every shift, like, 'What do you think?'" Brind'Amour said. "We're always talking about, 'If this isn't working, what's your go-to?'"

"The guys get it. If we're struggling or things aren't going right, you almost look for it."

During Game 2, Daniels said, "We've got to do it now." Meaning, shuffle the lines. Now.

Jarvis moved.

"Most of the time nothing happens, but (Monday) night that was the spark that we needed," Brind'Amour said.

Jarvis, too.

"With Jarvy, we know how much he cares," Brind'Amour said. "He wants to be the difference every game, every shift. We know how valuable he is to us. Hopefully that springboards him and gets him feeling good about his game."

Seth Jarvis' extra inspiration

Brind'Amour said Daniels, who won the Cup as a player with the Pittsburgh Penguins and helped coach the Canes to the 2006 championship, has a calming presence with the

forwards, a diverse group. He has conversations daily with them and "knows the mindset they're in."

Jarvis had to be in a good mindset Tuesday, one would think. His childhood buddies from Winnipeg rolled into Raleigh and were at Lenovo Center to sound the warning siren before the game. Crank it they did — hard.

"When they sound the siren and we're down 2-0 right away, I was a little nervous, and I was about to un-invite them forever," Jarvis quipped.

And after the win, after scoring his first goal?

"I saw them after the game and one had his shirt off and another was piggybacking on somebody," Jarvis said. "I might have to keep them around more often."

Series shifts to Philly

Things will be just the opposite in Philadelphia this week. No time for fun or frivolity. The Flyers fans should be in a foul mood when it comes to the Hurricanes. They might chirp or chide Brind'Amour, an extremely popular player with the Flyers for parts of nine seasons before being traded to Carolina in January 2000.

Brind'Amour, a member of the Flyers Hall of Fame, said he has never been booed in Philly — "I never gave them reason to," he said. But he never tried to knock them out of the Stanley Cup playoffs and end their season, either.

Flyers coach Rick Tocchet changed up his lines for Game 2 after being shut out 3-0 in Game 1 by Frederik Andersen. The Flyers have played the first two games without injured forward Owen Tippett, but he could return during the series and add another dimension to the offense with his speed.

Brind'Amour was noncommittal Tuesday about his lines for Game 3. Aho and Andrei Svechnikov had a minimal impact in Game 2 — Svechnikov was called for three penalties, twice for high-sticking and then a hooking call in overtime.

In Wednesday's practice before leaving for Philadelphia, the Canes had Aho with Svechnikov and Jarvis, and Martinook back with Staal and Ehlers in the line rushes.

Tocchet will have the last change at home, meaning he can adjust his lines and defensive pairs to best match up with the Canes. That's another part of the coaching chess match and strategy, although coaches typically try to downplay its significance.

Hurricanes news and notes

- Brind'Amour said Tuesday that defenseman Alexander Nikishin had been cleared medically to play. Nikishin suffered a concussion in Game 4 of the Canes' sweep of the Ottawa Senators in the first round, and veteran Mike Reilly replaced him in the first two games with the Flyers.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

**NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026**

- The Canes have six straight wins to open the playoffs — impressive, but three shy of the record set by the Edmonton Oilers in 1985. But they now go into Xfinity Mobile Arena to play the Flyers, as Brind'Amour put it, with “their fans all jacked up, as they should be.”
- Brind'Amour is counting on his team's collective playoff experience to again be a factor on the road. The Canes took

a 2-1 victory over the Senators in Game 3 of the opening round as Logan Stankoven and Jackson Blake scored while Andersen did his thing in net with 21 saves.

“I thought we had a great Game 3,” Brind'Amour said. “So, hoping the same. But we understand what the environment is going to be like.”



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

## The Athletic

### Beyond intensity, Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour leans on preparation, staff to lead

By: Cory Lavalette

RALEIGH, N.C. — The perception of Carolina Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour is pretty universal: a hard-working player who brought that mentality to coaching, using his enthusiasm and on-ice resume to earn the respect of — and get the most out of — his players.

But there's more to Brind'Amour than the person fans see screaming and scowling behind the bench or stomping around the dressing room in a postwin video looking like some combination of Godzilla and Chris Farley's famous Matt Foley character.

"I think a lot of people have more dimensions to them than they're given credit for a lot of the time," Carolina defenseman Sean Walker said, "and I think Rod's a great example of that."

Brind'Amour's work ethic from his playing days is legendary. Yes, "Rod the Bod" is a convenient enough nickname, but you don't get it unless you have the bod to back it up.

At 55, Brind'Amour still puts in the work in the weight room — he's at the arena early, and some of that time is spent maintaining the physique that made him an archetype of how hockey players prepare off the ice.

But there's more to Brind'Amour's preparation than dumbbells and dead lifts.

"He lives and bleeds hockey," Hurricanes winger Jordan Martinook said. "It doesn't matter if he's coaching us or coaching (sons) Brooks or watching Skyler — his life revolves around this game, and he wants the absolute best for us. So when that's the case, he's going to be prepared more than anyone."

According to Martinook, it starts on day one of training camp. "We go over the same stuff every year, and when you have a consistent group that has been around for a while, it just feels like repetition and clockwork," Martinook said.

The philosophy of the Hurricanes, who hold a 2-0 lead in their second-round series against the Philadelphia Flyers entering Game 3 in Philadelphia on Thursday night, is built on aggressiveness — attack the other team, dictate the shape of the game and take advantage of opportunities.

To do that, Carolina needs to play its style and know its opponents' tendencies.

"It's hockey, so you have to still play the game, and it's fast, but every team has their own stuff that they like to execute," Hurricanes center Sebastian Aho said. "And the players know before going in what we are walking into."

Brind'Amour is quick to deflect the attention and redirect it toward his staff: assistant coaches Jeff Daniels and Tim Gleason, goalie coach Paul Schonfelder and video coach Chris Huffine.

"Any team that has success has to be prepared," Brind'Amour said. "I talk a lot about the staff that we have here. They do such an amazing job."

Huffine, who has as many years working for the Hurricanes as the franchise has years in North Carolina, came up more than anyone when players were asked about preparation.

"He's watched a lot of hockey over his time here, and so he knows what he's talking about," defenseman Jaccob Slavin said. "They dissect the game. They go look at everything and what works, what doesn't work."

General manager Eric Tulsy, the fourth Carolina GM to inherit the team's film wizard, credited Huffine and his longtime partnership with Brind'Amour as a reason for the team's consistent success.

"Chris is fantastic and is a huge help to Rod in maintaining our attention to detail," Tulsy said. "The two of them have been working together forever and have a great relationship. Chris is really good at seeing what the other team is doing and how we should respond, and Rod leans heavily on his video breakdowns."

Brind'Amour said Huffine "prepares us as well as (anyone) possibly could," likely the reason the latter has lasted through five coaches.

"He's just so good at his job that everybody that comes in, even if they don't know him, you're like, 'Oh, yeah, we need to keep this guy,'" Brind'Amour said of Huffine, who was doing the job back when his desk was stacked with VHS tapes.

These days after road games, Huffine, Brind'Amour and the staff have their heads buried in their laptops on flights, breaking down clips to find a small edge or fix that can be relayed to the players in a video session.

"Our meetings are pretty spot-on all the time," Walker said. "There's usually not a lot that we don't know, and I think that's important. They do a good job of giving us tools that are going to help us win every game."

Though footage of Brind'Amour pacing the bench like a caged animal is readily available, what happens behind closed doors in the film room is shielded from public view.

But Brind'Amour, again, knows how to use those moments to prepare and motivate his players.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

"Roddy always says to us every day before the practices when we're watching videos, 'We're going to get 1 percent better by watching this video,'" Hurricanes winger Andrei Svechnikov said.

Brind'Amour has talked ad nauseam about the work Gleason has done with the defense and penalty kill, and about how Schonfelder has managed the team's goalies. Daniels, an assistant under Peter Laviolette when Carolina — and a certain first-year captain — won its only Stanley Cup in 2006, is also a valuable resource to Brind'Amour, who made Daniels his first hire when he was promoted to head coach in 2018.

That trust was evident in Game 2 against the Flyers, when another overlooked aspect of Brind'Amour's coaching skill — his in-game tactics — paid dividends.

With Carolina trailing 2-1 in the third period, Daniels suggested to Brind'Amour that he flip wingers Martinook and Seth Jarvis to try to provide a spark.

"We talked about before the game, 'OK, if this isn't working, what's your go-to?'" Brind'Amour said of his pregame discussions with Daniels. "And (the change) was Jeff saying, 'Hey, we've got to do it now.' So that's what I rely on for that."

It worked: Jarvis, moved to the right of Jordan Staal, picked up a drop pass from new running mate Nikolaj Ehlers and zipped a shot past Flyers goalie Dan Vladar to tie the score en route to a 3-2 overtime win.

"Kudos to Roddy and JD for doing that switch," said Martinook, who moved to Jarvis' spot with Aho and

Svechnikov with the line swap. "I said that they got rid of the dead weight and got the goal. ... That's coaching right there."

Though Brind'Amour vigorously chews his gum behind the players on the Hurricanes bench, Daniels is often stoic, blending into a background of red and white. But Brind'Amour leans on his trusted adviser.

"He's just a calming influence guy," Brind'Amour said of Daniels. "We think the same, and he's been around forever, and so he knows. And he knows the players as well. He's been with these guys forever, too. He sits with all the forwards every day going over stuff. So he knows the conversations he's had with them, he knows the mindset that they're in. ... It's an invaluable resource that we have."

The light shines brightly on Brind'Amour — perhaps the only coach in the NHL who draws more of the spotlight than any star forward, shutdown defenseman or starting goalie. But his behind-the-scenes help is as important to the team's success as any in-game adjustment or fiery motivational speech.

Still, those pregame and postgame speeches carry weight, even if there's much more to Brind'Amour than his unmatched enthusiasm and intensity.

"He's intense — he's in the game," Slavin said. "If we need a little bit of motivation, he's not afraid to give it to us. And if things are going well, he's not afraid to share that encouragement."

"So from a bench boss perspective, he's great."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026



## Logan Stankoven's trip home to see his dad helped rejuvenate him for the playoffs

By: Pat Welter, WRAL Sports

Logan Stankoven has not just been the story of the Carolina Hurricanes' start to the Stanley Cup Playoffs, but the entire NHL. He is tied for the league lead in goals. A trip home to speak with his dad, Wes, helped him get his head right for the end of the season and playoffs.

Raleigh — There's a refrain in the Carolina Hurricanes' locker room right now.

"Just pass it to Stank."

Other WRAL Top Stories

Simple answer and an analytically correct one. Logan Stankoven is currently tied for the NHL lead in playoff goals with 6 and is the youngest player ever to begin the playoffs on a five-game goal streak.

"I don't expect to score every game and have a series like I did last series," the Hurricanes 23-year-old forward said after scoring two goals in game one vs. the Philadelphia Flyers. "I just try to provide secondary scoring."

Stankoven can't seem to miss right now, but that wasn't the case during the regular season.

"I think it goes back to how many chances I had throughout the season to score," Stankoven said. "These guys setting me up and hitting posts or goalies making good saves. I felt like since the Olympic break things have started to turn."

Everyone needs a break every once in a while and for Stankoven the break also meant a trip home to British Columbia.

"My dad's been my biggest supporter and I always like to talk with him," Stankoven said. "Obviously I was disappointed in how the first part of the season went. Puck wasn't bouncing and I felt I wasn't going to be able to hit my end goals. I just came back motivated and knew I had more to give."

Logan's father, Wes Stankoven, won't take the credit for the turnaround, but he was happy to be a sounding board for his son.

"He's very competitive and he had some goals this year, his goals were to get to 40 points, 20 goals and 20 assists," Wes said. "At the Olympic break he had 18-19 points and he said 'Dad I don't know if I'm going to get 30.' I said 'you know what just go out there and have fun. Don't put all this

pressure on yourself and keep working hard. Keep it light, keep it positive."

Logan finished the regular season with 21 goals and 21 assists and that hot streak has continued into the postseason. Pretty big impact from one of the smallest players on the ice at a listed 5'8 and 165 pounds.

"From a small age people always said just wait until bantam and hitting, he's not going to make it far," Wes remembered. "He did well in that and major and midget hockey. With junior hockey, he led teams all the time in scoring and points. He's always worked hard and overcame adversity."

Wes played goalie himself and coached Logan in his youth hockey days. Wes was a backup for the Portland Winterhawks, a junior hockey team in the Western Hockey League. One of his claims to fame is playing with former Hurricane defenseman Glen Wesley.

"He's always been there to support me and help me through my journey," Logan said. "It's been a lot of ups and downs, obviously a lot of great memories, but pro hockey is tough. Everyone's journey is different. The first half of the season didn't go as planned. Being able to go home and chat with him and come back rejuvenated was huge."

It's not easy for Wes and Logan's mother, Deana, to make it out to games coming all the way from Kamloops, British Columbia. The family and Logan's sister Macie, who also played hockey, were able to come to Raleigh for a five-game stretch in November. Wes and a crew full of family and friends took a red-eye flight to make it to Raleigh for game one versus Philadelphia. Logan scored two goals in the win.

"I often tell family and friends that everyone I know, knows Logan," said Darryl Tocher, Logan's mom's cousin, who was in town for games 1 and 2 versus Philadelphia. "The text messages I get from people I hardly even know that cheer me on and cheer him on, just 'go Logan go,' just so proud of his achievements and where he's gotten to today."

The whole hockey world is getting to see, what the Stankoven family has known all along.

"It's hard to explain," Wes said. "It's kind of surreal sometimes, sitting on the couch and watching your son play hockey at that level. You only dream of that stuff. We're just very thankful for the opportunities he's had and how far he's made it in hockey."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026



## Preview: Round 2, Game 3 at Philadelphia

By: Walt Ruff & Peter Dewar

Canes take 2-0 series lead on the road as the action shifts to the Keystone State

PHILADELPHIA - With two wins in tow, the Carolina Hurricanes head north looking to push the Philadelphia Flyers to the brink of elimination in Game 3.

---

When: Thursday, May 7

Puck Drop: 8:00 p.m. ET

Watch: TNT, truTV, HBO Max; SN, CBC, TVAS

Listen: 99.9 The Fan, Hurricanes App

Series: 2-0 CAR

The Series So Far...

Game 1: Logan Stankoven (2G), Jackson Blake (1G, 1A) and Mike Reilly (2A) led the way offensively while Frederik Andersen recorded a 19-save shutout in a 3-0 win.

Game 2: Taylor Hall's OT winner completed the comeback as the Canes erased an early two-goal deficit for their sixth straight win this postseason.

Seeking Seven...

With Monday's victory, the Canes became the seventh team since 2000 to start a postseason 6-0. It's the third time the club has recorded a playoff winning streak of that length or more at any point in a playoff run.

Should the Canes take Game 3, they would tie the longest postseason winning streak (7) in franchise history, which came in 2006 en route to Carolina's first Stanley Cup.

On Hall-iday...

Taylor Hall's torrid start to the postseason continued on Monday with his first career playoff overtime goal. 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).

Leading the team with nine points (3G, 6A) as the only player with points in all six 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).

In Net...

As long as Frederik Andersen says he's ready to roll, it seems as though it's his net to lose. The veteran Dane is 6-0 this postseason and leads the league in GAA (1.02) and save percentage (.958), while co-leading in shutouts (2).

Brandon Bussi would be the next expected option in the event Andersen needs a break. The first-year backstop wrapped up the regular season on a heater, following up his first set of consecutive losses (0-3-0) with a 6-0-1 run and allowing two or fewer goals in four of those wins.

Pyotr Kochetkov also remains waiting in the wings. Although he made two conditioning loan starts with Chicago (AHL) following multiple lower-body surgeries this winter, his last NHL action came on Dec. 20.

On The Other Side...

After suggesting that his team wasn't "mentally prepared" for Game 1, Head Coach Rick Tocchet was much more pleased with his team's performance in Game 2.

"We played a good hockey game," he said, before going on to note his team's improved energy: "Mentally and physically, I just thought we had more energy and I think we believed that we can compete with this team."

Jamie Drysdale and Sean Couturier scored the team's first goals of the series, helping the Flyers become the first team to lead the Hurricanes in a game this postseason.

Special teams play was the story in Game 2. Each club tallied a power-play goal in the first period but wound up going 1-for-7 (PHI) and 1-for-6 (CAR) at the end of the night.

Speaking post-game, Tocchet praised the looks his team generated on the man advantage, but said that the final touch was somewhat lacking: "You've got to make the play. We had three times where, if we just get it over their stick, our guy gets a tap-in. You've got to make a play..."

Injury Report: Christian Dvorak was labeled "more day-to-day" after not skating on Wednesday, but the team's other practice absence, Noah Cates, has been ruled out for the series with a lower-body injury. On a positive note for Philadelphia, Owen Tippett did skate with the team after missing the first two games, while 2024 first-rounder Jett Luchanko was recalled to the active roster.

Injury Updates...

Defenseman Alexander Nikishin (concussion) was knocked out of the first-round series finale. He has not participated in a second-round game yet, but has been



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

**NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026**

practicing with the team, and Rod Brind'Amour said on May 5 that he has been cleared to return.

## What Are We Wearing?

The Canes will wear their WHITE uniforms for the contest. They will wear white for every road game in the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

## What's Next After This Game?

The Canes are scheduled to practice on Friday before the puck drops for Game 4 on Saturday.

Next Game: Saturday, May 9 | Round 2, Game 4 at Philadelphia | 6:00 p.m. ET | [How To Watch](#)

Next Home Game (if necessary): Monday, May 11 | Round 2, Game 5 vs. Philadelphia | Time TBD | [How To Watch](#) | [Tickets](#) | [Parking](#)



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026



## Stanley Cup playoffs daily: Previews, stats, schedule, bracket - ESPN

By: ESPN staff

Now that Game 1 of the Buffalo Sabres and Montreal Canadiens series is in the books, the full second round of the 2026 Stanley Cup playoffs is officially underway.

On Thursday, the action continues with Game 3 of the Carolina Hurricanes-Philadelphia Flyers series, with the battle moving to Philly for this matchup and Game 4 on Saturday.

Unlike in Round 1 when the Flyers jumped out to a 3-0 lead on the Pittsburgh Penguins, Trevor Zegras & Co. are now in an 2-0 hole, looking to stage their own comeback.

Here's what to watch in the game, along with scores and highlights from Wednesday's games, and updated playoff stat leaders.

Thursday's schedule

Carolina Hurricanes at Philadelphia Flyers

Game 3, 8 p.m. ET (TNT) | CAR leads 2-0

In Stanley Cup playoff history, teams that go up 2-0 in a seven-game series have a 363-58 series record (winning the series 86% of the time).

The Flyers have lost three straight best-of-seven series in which they trailed 2-0. But they do have a history of miracle comebacks. They are one of four teams to come back from a 3-0 hole, doing so in the 2010 conference semifinals against the Boston Bruins.

All four games the two teams played in the regular season went to overtime. The Hurricanes won one game in OT and two in a shootout, and the Flyers won the final matchup in a shootout.

Taylor Hall scored the winning overtime goal in Game 2, the first such goal of his career in his 13th playoff OT game. He's riding a six-game point streak, the longest playoff-opening point streak in franchise history.

Teammate Seth Jarvis also scored a goal in Game 2, the 20th of his playoff career. He is the third player in franchise history to reach the milestone, joining Sebastian Aho (who has 37) and Andrei Svechnikov (23).

The Flyers' young stars began the postseason strong but have faltered of late. Zegras had four points through the first four games against Pittsburgh, but none in the final two games of that series and the first two of this one.

Porter Martone scored the winning goals in Games 1 and 2 of the Penguins series but was held off the scoresheet in

Games 4-6 against Pittsburgh and Games 1-2 against Carolina.

Thursday's best bet

The bet: Hurricanes at Flyers, under 5.5 (-142)

The Flyers return home down 2-0, having mustered only two goals in the first two games. Carolina is one of the stingiest defenses in the NHL, ranked No. 1 in shots on goal against during the regular season, and its suffocating style has carried over into the playoffs. Eight of the past nine Hurricanes games have finished under the total.

Philadelphia is likely to match that physical style given the situation and being in front of its home fans. Six of the Flyers' eight playoff games have finished under the total. This feels like another low-scoring game regardless of which team wins. -- Tyler Fulghum

Wednesday's scoreboard

Buffalo Sabres 4, Montreal Canadiens 2

Sabres lead 1-0

The Sabres faithful were once again in high spirits for this contest at KeyBank Center, and their team rewarded the energetic reception with a Josh Doan goal at 4:31 of the first period. That was followed up by a power-play tally at 13:26 from Ryan McLeod on a slick series of passes, but the Canadiens pulled within one at 19:16 via a Nick Suzuki tally with the man advantage.

Buffalo pulled away in the second, getting goals from Jordan Greenway (his first of the playoffs) and Bowen Byram (his fourth). Kirby Dach dropped the Sabres' lead to 4-2, but the Habs didn't get any closer. Game 2 of the series is Friday in Buffalo. Full recap.

Anaheim Ducks 3, at Vegas Golden Knights 1

Series tied 1-1

After looking a bit outmatched in Game 1, the Ducks turned the tables in the second contest. Calder Trophy finalist Beckett Sennecke scored his second goal of the postseason to kick things off in the second period, and that was followed by Leon Carlsson's fourth of the playoffs at 6:36 of the third. Vegas coach John Tortorella pulled the goalie to ignite his offense, but Anaheim's Jansen Harkins notched at empty-netter at 16:30 to push the lead to three goals.

A Mark Stone goal at 19:54 ruined the shutout bid for Lukas Dostal, but wasn't nearly enough to win the game. The series now shifts to Anaheim for Games 3 and 4, the first of which is Friday evening. Full recap.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

## The Hockey News

### Carolina Hurricanes @ Philadelphia Flyers Game 3: Lineups, Game Preview and How to Watch

By: Ryan Henkel

The undefeated Hurricanes carry a two-game lead into Philadelphia, looking to maintain their postseason perfection.

What - Game 3 (2-0)

When - 8 p.m., Thursday, May 7

Where - Xfinity Mobile Arena; Philadelphia, PA

How to Watch - TNT, truTV, HBO MAX, CBC, Sportsnet, TVAS

The Carolina Hurricanes are still perfect in the postseason, but they'll have their work cut out for them tonight as their series against the Philadelphia Flyers shifts to their home ice.

Carolina found a way in a gritty Game 2, as Taylor Hall scored the eventual OT winner.

It was a good win for the Canes as they had to overcome some early adversity (namely their first time trailing all postseason).

They even found a way to win with Logan Stankoven actually not scoring a goal for once.

Seth Jarvis and Nikolaj Ehlers each grabbed their first of the playoffs and hopefully it can be a springboard for those guys to get going even more.

Once again, Frederik Andersen had a solid game and the Hurricanes are going to need that once again tonight in Philly.

#### Streaks

Taylor Hall (3g, 6a) has points in every game of the postseason so far (6 games).

Seth Jarvis (1g, 3a) has points in three straight games.

Jackson Blake (1g, 3a) has points in back-to-back games.

#### Milestone Watch

N/A

#### Game Notes

Carolina went 3-0-1 against Philadelphia this season, with every game being decided beyond regulation.

The Hurricanes have quite a few Flyers connections on the roster: Shayne Gostisbehere was drafted by Philly in 2012 and played there from 2014-2021; Sean Walker played for the Flyers for part of the 2023-24 season; Nicolas Deslauriers spent parts four seasons in Philadelphia and was traded just this past trade deadline; and Rod Brind'Amour played in 633 games as a Flyer from 1991-2000.

The two teams have never faced off in the playoffs before.

Sebastian Aho (15g, 35pts in 35gp) and Taylor Hall (15g, 38pts in 38gp) are point-per-game players for their regular season careers against Philly.

#### Key Matchups

#### Projected Starting Goalies

Frederik Andersen: 6-0; 0.958 Sv%; 1.02 GAA

Dan Vladar: 4-4; 0.928 Sv%; 1.89 GAA

#### Leading Scorers

Goals - Logan Stankoven (6) / Travis Sanheim, Jamie Drysdale & Porter Martone (2)

Points - Taylor Hall (9) / Rasmus Ristolainen (5)

#### Power Play

Carolina - 12% (3/25)

Philadelphia - 10.7% (3/28)

#### Penalty Kill

Carolina - 93.8% (30/32)

Philadelphia - 86.2% (25/29)

#### Hurricanes Projected Lineup

Andrei Svechnikov - Sebastian Aho - Seth Jarvis

Taylor Hall - Logan Stankoven - Jackson Blake

Nikolaj Ehlers - Jordan Staal - Jordan Martinook

William Carrier - Mark Jankowski - Eric Robinson

Jacob Slavin - Jalen Chatfield

K'Andre Miller - Sean Walker

Shayne Gostisbehere - Mike Reilly

Frederik Andersen

Brandon Bussi

Injuries and Scratches: Alexander Nikishin, Jesperi Kotkaniemi, Nicolas Deslauriers, Pyotr Kochetkov

#### Flyers Projected Lineup

Owen Tippett - Trevor Zegras - Travis Konecny

Tyson Foerster - Cristian Dvorak - Matvei Michkov

Alex Bump - Denver Barkey - Porter Martone

Luke Glendening - Sean Couturier - Carl Grundstrom

Travis Sanheim - Rasmus Ristolainen



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

Cam York - Jamie Drysdale

Nick Seeler - Emil Andrae

Dan Vladar

Sam Ersson

Injuries and Scratches: Jet Luchanko, Noah Juulsen, Carson Bjarnason, Oliver Bonk, Oscar Eklind, Jacob Gaucher, Helge Grans, David Jiricek, Carl Grundstrom, Alexsei Kolosov, Hunter McDonald, Garrett Wilson, Rodrigo Abols (ankle), Nikita Grebenkin (UBI), Noah Cates (LBI)

## LINKS

<https://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/article315626393.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/7259277/2026/05/07/rod-brindamour-hurricanes-coach-nhl-playoffs-flyers/>

<https://www.wral.com/sports/logan-stankoven-trip-home-to-see-dad-helps-rejuvenate-him-for-nhl-playoffs/>

<https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/preview-round-2-game-3-at-philadelphia>

[https://www.espn.com/nhl/story/\\_/id/48526483/2026-nhl-playoffs-stanley-cup-preview-stats-schedule-top-players-bracket-matchups](https://www.espn.com/nhl/story/_/id/48526483/2026-nhl-playoffs-stanley-cup-preview-stats-schedule-top-players-bracket-matchups)

<https://thehockeynews.com/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/game-day/carolina-hurricanes-philadelphia-flyers-game-3-lineups-game-preview-and-how-to-watch>

# SportScan

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

1390447 Carolina Hurricanes

Inside Rod Brind'Amour's pivotal decision that led to a Hurricanes win in Game 2

Chip Alexander

9-11 minutes 06/05/2026

Raleigh

Carolina Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour had a decision to make, and time was running short.

The Canes trailed the Philadelphia Flyers 2-1 on Monday, midway through the third period of Game 2 of their Stanley Cup playoff series. The line of Sebastian Aho, Andrei Svechnikov and Seth Jarvis was stuck in neutral. So why not change things up?

Brind'Amour moved Jarvis to Jordan Staal's line, shifting Jordan Martinook to Jarvis' spot on the Aho line. Jarvis, in turn, soon took a drop pass from Nikolaj Ehlers and ripped a shot for his first goal of the playoffs, tying the score.

The Canes went on to a 3-2 overtime win on Taylor Hall's goal at a rollicking Lenovo Center, grabbing a 2-0 lead in the second-round Eastern Conference series that now moves to Philadelphia for the next two games.

Moving Jarvis wasn't a gut, on-the-spot decision by Brind'Amour. It was something he had discussed in pregame planning with longtime assistant coach Jeff Daniels, who works with the Canes forwards.

'We've got to do it now'

It also was part of the continual chess match between head coaches in the course of a playoff series and in the heat of the games, anticipating moves in advance, having a good gauge on their players and what could happen if things are stagnant.

"I run things by (Daniels) almost basically every shift, like, 'What do you think?'" Brind'Amour said. "We're always talking about, 'If this isn't working, what's your go-to?'"

"The guys get it. If we're struggling or things aren't going right, you almost look for it."

During Game 2, Daniels said, "We've got to do it now." Meaning, shuffle the lines. Now.

Jarvis moved.

"Most of the time nothing happens, but (Monday) night that was the spark that we needed," Brind'Amour said.

Jarvis, too.

"With Jarvy, we know how much he cares," Brind'Amour said. "He wants to be the difference every game, every shift. We know how valuable he is to us. Hopefully that springboards him and gets him feeling good about his game."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

Brind'Amour said Daniels, who won the Cup as a player with the Pittsburgh Penguins and helped coach the Canes to the 2006 championship, has a calming presence with the forwards, a diverse group. He has conversations daily with them and "knows the mindset they're in."

Jarvis had to be in a good mindset Tuesday, one would think. His childhood buddies from Winnipeg rolled into Raleigh and were at Lenovo Center to sound the warning siren before the game. Crank it they did — hard.

"When they sound the siren and we're down 2-0 right away, I was a little nervous, and I was about to un-invite them forever," Jarvis quipped.

And after the win, after scoring his first goal?

"I saw them after the game and one had his shirt off and another was piggybacking on somebody," Jarvis said. "I might have to keep them around more often."

Series shifts to Philly

Things will be just the opposite in Philadelphia this week. No time for fun or frivolity. The Flyers fans should be in a foul mood when it comes to the Hurricanes. They might chirp or chide Brind'Amour, an extremely popular player with the Flyers for parts of nine seasons before being traded to Carolina in January 2000.

Brind'Amour, a member of the Flyers Hall of Fame, said he has never been booed in Philly — "I never gave them reason to," he said. But he never tried to knock them out of the Stanley Cup playoffs and end their season, either.

Flyers coach Rick Tocchet changed up his lines for Game 2 after being shut out 3-0 in Game 1 by Frederik Andersen. The Flyers have played the first two games without injured forward Owen Tippett, but he could return during the series and add another dimension to the offense with his speed.

Brind'Amour was noncommittal Tuesday about his lines for Game 3. Aho and Andrei Svechnikov had a minimal impact in Game 2 — Svechnikov was called for three penalties, twice for high-sticking and then a hooking call in overtime.

Tocchet will have the last change at home, meaning he can adjust his lines and defensive pairs to best match up with the Canes. That's another part of the coaching chess match and strategy, although coaches typically try to downplay its significance.

Hurricanes news and notes

- Brind'Amour said Tuesday that defenseman Alexander Nikishin had been cleared medically to play. Nikishin suffered a concussion in Game 4 of the Canes' sweep of the Ottawa Senators in the first round, and veteran Mike Reilly replaced him in the first two games with the Flyers.

Carolina Hurricanes center Logan Stankoven (22) celebrates with Alexander Nikishin (21) after scoring to take a 1-0 lead over the Ottawa Senators in the second period on Saturday, April 18, 2026 during the first round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C.

Carolina Hurricanes center Logan Stankoven (22) celebrates with Alexander Nikishin (21) after scoring to take a 1-0 lead over the Ottawa Senators in the second period on Saturday, April 18, 2026 during the first round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs at Lenovo Center in Raleigh, N.C. Robert Willett [rwillett@newsobserver.com](mailto:rwillett@newsobserver.com)

- The Canes have six straight wins to open the playoffs — impressive, but three shy of the record set by the Edmonton Oilers in 1985. But they now go into Xfinity Mobile Arena to play the Flyers, as Brind'Amour put it, with "their fans all jacked up, as they should be."

- Brind'Amour is counting on his team's collective playoff experience to again be a factor on the road. The Canes took a 2-1 victory over the Senators in Game 3 of the opening round as Logan Stankoven and Jackson Blake scored while Andersen did his thing in net with 21 saves.

"I thought we had a great Game 3," Brind'Amour said. "So, hoping the same. But we understand what the environment is going to be like."

News Observer LOADED: 05.07.2026

1390448 Carolina Hurricanes

Breaking down Canes-Flyers as series moves to Philly: What to watch in Game 3

Sean Gentille, Kevin Kurz

9-11 minutes 06/05/2026

As it shifts to Philadelphia for Game 3 on Thursday night, the Flyers-Hurricanes series is where many figured it would be after two games — with Carolina holding a 2-0 series lead as the more experienced, more battle-tested, and, frankly, more talented team. This could be pretty short.

But is it really that simple? Flyers beat writer Kevin Kurz and senior writer Sean Gentille, who has been covering the Hurricanes this round, talked out the matchup, the storylines and more.

Kurz: Let's just get right to it, Sean: The Hurricanes are 6-0 in the playoffs and seem to be on a roll. The Flyers didn't put up much of a fight in Game 1, but were better in Game 2. What have you taken away from the first two games, from a Carolina perspective?

Gentille: I actually think, for now, that they're balanced pretty evenly between satisfaction with their play and understanding that a) things haven't gone perfectly and b) they were a couple bounces away from leaving home in a tied series. There's a lot to like — everything they've gotten from the Taylor Hall-Logan Stankoven-Jackson Blake line; about 97 percent of what they've gotten from Frederik Andersen — but there are also some potential pressure points.

To start, the first line has generated one five-on-five goal in nearly six full games, which left Rod Brind'Amour concerned enough about the situation to shake things up in the third period of Game 2. It paid off when Seth Jarvis, who Brind'Amour moved to a line with Nikolaj Ehlers and Jordan Staal, scored a huge, game-tying goal, but it remains to be seen whether Jordan Martinook helps kickstart Sebastian Aho and Andrei Svechnikov.

If those guys stay cold, at some point, we know it'll burn them, but it also feels like the Flyers are running out of opportunities to exploit the situation. That's a long-winded way of saying that the Hurricanes aren't the Penguins, isn't it?

Kurz: Certainly not. When it comes to the Hurricanes, Rick Tocchet could probably channel his inner Dennis "they are who we thought they were" Green at the podium.

As far as how it's playing out so far, the Game 1 result was entirely predictable. The Flyers were still on a high from beating the Penguins in the first round, in what was the first taste of playoff hockey for so many of them. That they passed that test, with Sidney Crosby on the other side, had to be immensely satisfying — particularly the way they won it, in overtime in front of their own fans. They just didn't have enough time to emotionally gear up for that first game against Carolina, and the fact that they found out the date of it less than 48 hours before puck drop was less than ideal, too.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

But the Flyers did show us something in Game 2. They made adjustments, trying to better handle the Hurricanes' relentlessness. "We were able to use their forecheck against them, and just stick to our system, stick to our plan, and we were executing and getting a lot of looks," forward Travis Konecny said after the game. They finally got off to a quick start, and although the Hurricanes were the better team in the second and third periods, the Flyers controlled most of overtime. That game truly could have gone either way.

Kurz: Obviously, the Hurricanes are being driven by the Stankoven line, as you mentioned. Other than Stankoven, Hall and Blake, how would you evaluate the rest of the group so far?

Gentile: Aho, good as he is, doesn't play a particularly loud game, but he's still been far too quiet. Svechnikov was closer to bad in Game 2 — he took three penalties, including the offensive-zone stuff you see from him when he's pressing too hard. They're controlling a larger share of shots and expected goals than they did against the Senators, but they've also generated three scoring chances in 12:31 at five-on-five. Part of that is because relatively little of the games have been played at five-on-five, but still, not good enough. We'll see if Martinook sticks as the third man there.

On the third line, Ehlers has often looked like the most dangerous player on the ice. He's a luxury in that spot. The fourth line (Mark Jankowski between William Carrier and Eric Robinson) has basically played the Flyers to a draw, which is good enough — but it's worth saying that Robinson had an almost comical number of prime chances in Game 2. He's a useful guy, but if you're Brind'Amour, he's probably not the one you'd choose to have the puck on his stick in high-leverage situations. Maybe that line is one for Tocchet to try to exploit. I can imagine the Denver Barkey-Porter Martone-Alex Bump line carving out some zone time there ... but I'm also starting to wonder if Martone is (understandably) running out of gas. Where are you on that one?

Kurz: There's no question some of these young guys have hit a wall. A couple days ago, I asked Martone about adjusting to the schedule after his college season, and he acknowledged that "it's a lot different" — which, yeah, it is. But Martone, scoreless in five straight games, also recognizes that it's a learning experience. "I'm going to have to play 82 games in the regular season plus hopefully long playoff runs, so (it's) something I've got to get used to," he told me. That Martone can think in those sorts of terms during what has to be a frustrating stretch for him after such early success speaks to the kind of character he has.

But in the here and now, the Flyers are going to need Martone and some of the other young players to have a greater impact in Games 3 and 4 if they're going to make this thing interesting.

Barkey is an interesting case, playing center for just the second time in the NHL in Game 2. Tocchet putting him there in this kind of environment speaks to the kind of impression that the 21-year-old has made on his coach from a talent and maturity standpoint. That line was quiet in Game 2, but maybe Tocchet gets them some better matchups in Game 3, if he keeps them together. Matvei Michkov was among the Flyers' better players in overtime, including a pair of pretty good looks that could have ended the game. Perhaps he'll finally start to have an impact in the playoffs after he was so strong coming out of the Olympic break.

It was also notable that Tocchet moved Trevor Zegras (who we sometimes forget just turned 25) back to the wing after Zegras had been a center for the previous month and a half. Game 2 was Zegras' best game since the first part of the Penguins series, as he seemed much more active offensively — but it still didn't result in him getting on the scoresheet for the fourth straight game.

The veterans are also going to have to do more too, of course. Konecny's costly overtime miss — a shot on goal, according to the official play-by-play — was precisely the kind of chance that everyone knew going into this series the Flyers were going to have to bury. Had he done

it, the Flyers would have followed their blueprint for success against Carolina: be opportunistic, play at least even special teams, and rely on Dan Vladar to make key stops when they're under attack.

Gentile: The goaltending situation for both teams is interesting. Vladar was definitely great in Game 2 despite some rickety moments, and Frederik Andersen gave the Hurricanes what they needed after a pretty brutal first-period brain fart that led to Jamie Drysdale's goal.

Andersen looks the way he does when he's at his best, too. He's playing positionally sound enough to force the Flyers to pick corners, which Hurricanes defenseman Sean Walker brought up after Game 2. The flip side is that he's got plenty of playoff stinkers on his resume, and even though he looked strong against a good bit of volume on Monday (34 shots), he's got to allow more than two goals at some point, right? Right??

Kurz: He had better. What would help the Flyers' case would be the return of Owen Tippett, whose injury still looms large in this series. It sounds like he's still potentially an option for Game 3, so maybe the two-day break will help him, but his absence has been noticeable. Opposing defenses would have no choice but to pay attention to him because of his game-breaking speed — Tippett was second in the NHL this season in 22-plus mph speed bursts (61), behind only Connor McDavid (151). The Flyers already aren't a fast team; without Tippett, that shows, especially against a team like Carolina.

There's also concern now for Noah Cates, who, according to Tocchet, is day to day. If the versatile Cates misses any time, that would probably result in Zegras moving back to the middle and Barkey staying at center. Or, perhaps Sean Couturier — who has been the Flyers' best forward in the series so far — gets an opportunity up in the lineup, with some more dangerous scoring wingers. The wear and tear of having to fight so hard just to make the playoffs, coupled with a young team that isn't used to this sort of grind, may simply be catching up with the Flyers.

We'll see how it all plays out. In the meantime, everyone grab your beer skates and enjoy a breather before we all reconvene for Thursday's Game 3.

The Athletic LOADED: 05.07.2026

1390535 Websites

The Athletic / 2026 NHL Selke Trophy finalists: Will it be Suzuki, or a different first-time winner?

By Sean Gentile

Anthony Cirelli of the Tampa Bay Lightning, Brock Nelson of the Colorado Avalanche and Nick Suzuki of the Montreal Canadiens are the finalists for the Frank J. Selke Trophy, awarded to the forward who best excels in the defensive aspects of the game, the NHL revealed on Friday.

The award is voted upon by members of the Pro Hockey Writers' Association, and the winner will be announced next month. In 2024-25, Florida Panthers center Aleksander Barkov won for the second straight season and the third time overall. He tore his ACL and MCL in training camp, though, opening the door for a first-timer to take home the trophy this year.

Cirelli, long the Lightning's defensive lynchpin up front, has passed some of his defensive workload to teammate Yanni Gourde, but Tampa Bay still won Cirelli's minutes by a stunning 60-29 ratio. He also was a finalist last year, along with Barkov and Florida's Sam Bennett.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

Nelson is thriving in a significant role in all situations for the Avalanche, this season's Presidents' Trophy winners who hold a 2-0 second-round series lead over Minnesota. Nelson was traded from the New York Islanders last season and signed a three-year, \$22.5 million extension with the Avalanche last summer. He would be the first Avalanche player to win the Selke.

Suzuki, considered the favorite to win, recorded the highest Defensive Rating among the finalists. He excelled against elite competition on both sides of the puck, and in the regular season, the Canadiens won his five-on-five minutes 72-39. Suzuki's production also likely gives him a leg up. He finished with 101 points, a career best, and led the way on a young Montreal team that took another enormous step forward. If there's a knock against him, it's that he played the fewest short-handed minutes among the finalists.

The Selke Trophy was first awarded in 1978 to Bob Gainey of the Canadiens, a Hockey Hall of Famer who would go on to win it three more times consecutively.

The Athletic LOADED: 05.07.2026

1390536 Websites

The Athletic / PWHL expanding to Detroit for 2026-27 season

By Max Bultman and Hailey Salvian

DETROIT — The PWHL is expanding to Detroit for the 2026-27 season, the league announced on Wednesday. Detroit is the first of what could be up to four new teams the league is introducing via expansion.

The team, which was unveiled as PWHL Detroit, will play at Little Caesars Arena, home of the NHL's Detroit Red Wings and NBA's Detroit Pistons.

PWHL Detroit is the league's ninth franchise, joining the original six markets in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Boston, New York and Minnesota and the league's first expansion teams in Seattle and Vancouver.

"When we talk about expansion, there's really one simple question we talk about and we ask ourselves: where does women's professional hockey belong?" the PWHL's executive vice president of business operations Amy Scheer said Wednesday. "The answer was always Detroit. So it took us a year to get here, but we're finally here. You are Hockeytown, and how could you not have women's hockey as part of Hockeytown?"

According to the league's news release, Detroit's bid was led by Ilitch Sports and Entertainment, which owns the Red Wings and MLB's Detroit Tigers. The bid means that IS+E will be a partner to the PWHL, not a franchise owner, as the PWHL operates under a single-entity ownership model. Mark Walter — the billionaire owner of the Los Angeles Dodgers — and his wife, Kimbra, own the league and its nine teams, a difference from other major pro sports leagues such as the NHL, NFL and MLB.

"It's a part of our vision, bringing people — the fans of Detroit — down to the District Detroit, creating amazing experiences for fans," said Ryan Gustafson, President and CEO of Ilitch Sports + Entertainment. "We've had games here before, they've made it very clear to us, (the) PWHL, that they wanted to be in Detroit, and our fans made it really clear that they wanted it here."

The PWHL has hosted four neutral-site games at Little Caesars Arena, drawing 53,586 fans over the last three years. The last game, on March 28, was the most well-attended (15,938) in Detroit and came on a day when the Red Wings played a few hours later, showcasing that double-

headers could be an effective workaround to the arena's busy schedule. That game, between the Montreal Victoire and New York Sirens, was also the first to air on national television in the United States, which was broadcast on ION.

Gustafson said they anticipate a mix of doubleheaders on Red Wings game days and standalone games at the arena, and said that Ilitch Sports + Entertainment would be "great partners in making sure that the schedule aligns with the needs of the PWHL."

"We feel very confident in how we can do here from a business perspective," said Scheer, who credited Ilitch Sports as excellent partners for the league. "Whether it's a standalone date, whether it's a doubleheader with the Red Wings, we feel we will be very successful here in Detroit."

Like last year, there was a long list of criteria the PWHL examined when deciding where to expand this season, including market size, fan support, infrastructure and what kind of economic opportunity exists in the market, among other factors.

"There's a lot of reasons that (Detroit) makes a lot of sense," said Jayna Hefford, the league's executive vice president of hockey operations.

With access to Little Caesars Arena and its attached practice ice, the BELFOR Training Center, the league will be in a "best-in-class" facility. The team will have dedicated locker rooms and "everything that is required in our league," said Hefford.

"We're really excited about what the experience will be like for our players to be, day-in day-out, in such an incredible building that knows what success looks like at the highest level," she said.

Geographically, it makes sense for the league to add another team in the American Midwest, alongside Minnesota, the lone Midwest franchise for the PWHL's first three seasons. Minnesota is still hundreds of miles from Detroit, but it at least offers the Frost a rare quick flight for an away game.

Detroit also offers a strong girls hockey ecosystem with programs such as Little Caesars and Honey Baked already represented in the league by Boston Fleet captain Megan Keller and top prospect Kirsten Simms.

Members of that grassroots hockey community — many wearing Little Caesars jerseys — were on hand for the announcement Wednesday, both in seats and on the stage, with two Little Caesars players speaking at the podium ahead of the reveal.

Detroit, home to the league's newest team, will also host the 2026 PWHL Draft next month. (Courtesy of the PWHL)

"We are honored to bring the PWHL to a sports community where women and girls have already put hockey on the map, and advance that incredible culture by offering young athletes a professional league they can strive for," Hefford said in the league's news release.

"These kids that are playing as part of the Little Caesars Program, we want them to play in the PWHL," Scheer said. "(If) they can't play, we want them to work in the PWHL."

As part of the team's announcement, the league revealed PWHL Detroit's primary colors, black and silver, which will be complemented by white with a red accent — a nod to the Red Wings' red and white winged wheel logo. Team jerseys will feature an Ally Financial patch on the chest, as the Detroit-based company will be the team's inaugural partner. The team's permanent name and logo will be announced at a later date.

The PWHL unveiled the Vancouver Goldeneyes and Seattle Torrent's branding before the start of the 2025-26 season. However, due to manufacturing deadlines, each expansion team played its first season in a more generic jersey with the city name stitched diagonally across the front of the sweater, paying homage to the designs worn by the league's original six teams in 2024.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

Scheer said the Detroit team will similarly wear "Detroit" jerseys in its inaugural season. Hefford added that the league is "well underway" in the process of staffing hockey operations leadership for the franchise, but had "nothing to share yet."

The league also announced that Detroit will host the 2026 PWHL Awards (June 16) and the entry draft (June 17) at the Fox Theatre, "in celebration of the PWHL's newest market."

"It's going to be fun to bring another league event to this market," said Hefford. "They've had four takeover games and now to be able to host a draft, I think it's a great way to build momentum for this team as they continue to build and get ready to start play next season."

On Sunday, the PWHL Players Association sent its members a guide to the expansion roster-building process that included multiple signing windows and no traditional expansion draft. In an email obtained by The Athletic, PWHLPA executive director Malaika Underwood told players, "We have been told the league intends to move forward with a four-team expansion."

In a statement on Sunday, the league said "nothing is finalized at this time." When asked about the email, Scheer said, "It could be two, it could be three, and it could be four" teams.

The expansion process laid out by the PWHLPA document is tentatively set to begin May 28 — just over three weeks away from Wednesday's announcement.

The Athletic LOADED: 05.07.2026

1390537 Websites

The Athletic / NHL playoffs: The statistical gap between Eastern and Western goalies has been staggering

By Jesse Granger

An interesting trend is developing in this year's Stanley Cup playoffs regarding goaltending statistics.

Through the opening round and the handful of second-round games that have been played, the goalies in the Eastern Conference are drastically outperforming their Western Conference counterparts, and by a wide margin.

Even in a sample size that remains fairly small, the gap between the two conferences is shocking.

The 11 playoff netminders in the East have saved an impressive 38.3 goals above expected (GSAX). The top eight goalies in the postseason, in that metric, all come from the Eastern Conference. The Carolina Hurricanes' Frederik Andersen leads the way with 11.1 GSAX and two shutouts, which already matches his career high. The Philadelphia Flyers' Dan Vladař, Montreal Canadiens' Jakub Dobeř and Buffalo Sabres' Alex Lyon all had an exemplary opening round to help their respective teams advance.

Save percentage

.896

.922

Goals saved above expected

-20.8

38.3

Goals against average

2.93

2.01

Shutouts

0

5

Even many of the losing goalies in the East put up impressive numbers before bowing out. Andrei Vasilevskiy was excellent for the Tampa Bay Lightning despite falling in a low-scoring Game 7 to Montreal. Jeremy Swayman and Linus Ullmark were the only reasons their teams were competitive in their series.

Meanwhile, the other side of the bracket has truly felt like the Wild West, with shootout games on nearly a nightly basis. Sunday's 9-6 Game 1 between the Colorado Avalanche and Minnesota Wild was an extreme example, but the Anaheim Ducks and Edmonton Oilers filled the nets with goals in their opening-round series, as did the Utah Mammoth and Vegas Golden Knights.

The top Western goalie by GSAX — the Colorado Avalanche's Scott Wedgewood — is barely breaking even at 1.99. As a whole, the Western Conference goalies have stopped 21.3 goals below expected.

The question is: Are the Eastern goalies this superior to Western goalies, or are the styles of hockey being played on opposite sides of the bracket leading to these numbers?

The East had an unusually strong season in the crease. For the first time in nine years, all three finalists for the Vezina Trophy — Vasilevskiy, Swayman and Ilya Sorokin — came from the same conference. Washington Capitals goalie Logan Thompson led the league with 35.63 GSAX in the regular season and had a strong argument to be a finalist as well. Igor Shesterkin missed significant time for the New York Rangers with an injury, but still finished with a .912 save percentage and 21.09 GSAX, which ranked fifth in the NHL.

Some of the Western Conference goalies had strong regular seasons as well. Colorado's combination of Wedgewood and MacKenzie Blackwood allowed a league-low 203 goals against to win the William M. Jennings Trophy. Karel Vejmelka emerged as a true workhorse and backstopped the Utah Mammoth to their first playoff appearance since relocating to Salt Lake City.

However, several of the Western powers had down years in net. Filip Gustavsson struggled mightily for the Minnesota Wild following the Olympic break, which is why Jesper Wallstedt started the playoffs. Jake Oettinger had an admittedly disappointing season for the Dallas Stars. Vegas, Edmonton and Anaheim all qualified for the playoffs despite finishing in the bottom six in save percentage league-wide.

Connor Hellebuyck had a legendary performance to win the Gold Medal for Team USA at the Olympics, but a pedestrian NHL season with the Winnipeg Jets by his standards, which included knee surgery in November.

Here were the top 10 goalies in GSAX during the regular season, with Eastern goalies in red and Western goalies in blue.

Top 10 GSAX Regular Season

Logan Thompson

35.63

.912

Ilya Sorokin

27.50



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

.906

Jeremy Swayman

26.50

.908

Andrei Vasilevskiy

23.57

.912

Igor Shesterkin

21.09

.912

Scott Wedgewood

20.80

.921

Jet Greaves

18.00

.907

John Gibson

16.44

.901

Devin Cooley

16.31

.909

Joel Hofer

15.20

.910

The Eastern Conference clearly had the stronger goalies in general, even in a down season for future Hockey Hall of Famer Sergei Bobrovsky.

Still, the current metrics that are used to grade goaltending are heavily influenced by the environment. Goals saved above expected is a step in the right direction because it uses historical data to determine the quality of chances a goalie is facing based on shot location and other variables, but it still has plenty of issues. It doesn't have a way to quantify screens, which are an increasingly popular way to beat the modern goalie. The stat also doesn't account for deflections off a goalie's own teammates, which are exceptionally unpredictable and difficult to stop but typically register as a routine shot attempt from distance.

Goalies who face a higher volume of outside shots excel in these advanced metrics, suggesting those shots from distance are overvalued, and high-danger attempts, such as backdoor screens and low-to-high one-timers in the slot, aren't valued enough.

This isn't to say these metrics aren't helpful. They're the best tools we have at the moment, based on the data the league provides the public, and they offer far more context than traditional statistics such as save percentage and goals-against average.

These metrics are improving by the year, but they still don't succeed in completely removing the impacts of a goalie's environment from his individual statistics. That's important, because anecdotally, the top Western Conference teams do seem to play a more wide-open style with a mentality to outscore their opposition rather than smother them with defensive structure.

Colorado, Edmonton and Anaheim all play some of the most high-event hockey in the NHL, while Carolina, Ottawa and Philadelphia are shot-suppression machines. Even Minnesota has trended more offensively than in seasons past, and that has shown early in its series against Colorado. There were high-flying teams in the East as well. Buffalo and Montreal made it this far on the backs of their offensive attacks. Tampa Bay and Pittsburgh were among the league leaders in offense during the regular season, but saw scoring dry up in the first round of the playoffs.

Purely from a goals-per-game perspective, the eight playoffs teams from the Western Conference weren't higher-scoring than those in the East. In fact, seven of the top 10 highest-scoring teams in the NHL during the regular season were from the East.

Top offenses in regular season

1

Colorado Avalanche

3.63

2

Carolina Hurricanes

3.55

3

Pittsburgh Penguins

3.54

4

Tampa Bay Lightning

3.49

5

Buffalo Sabres

3.45

6

Edmonton Oilers

3.44

7

Montreal Canadiens

3.40

8

Ottawa Senators

3.35

9

Dallas Stars

3.33

10

Boston Bruins

3.27

If you average the goals per game for all eight teams in each playoff bracket, the numbers are very close, but the Eastern teams were actually higher-scoring.

West



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

3.26

2.94

East

3.37

2.97

It's tough to find a number that indicates the Western Conference playoff teams are vastly superior offensively, and yet every goaltending statistic leans heavily in favor of the Eastern Conference. These metrics themselves are far from perfect, but they're painting a clear picture.

It shouldn't be that surprising, considering three of the four "Tier 1" goalies in the 2025-26 preseason Goalie Tiers ranking were from the East. The top 10 of that list was split evenly, with five goalies per conference, but several of the Western netminders — Oettinger, Jordan Binnington, Juuse Saros and Dustin Wolf — had down seasons while several top Eastern goalies — Swayman, Thompson and Sorokin — had the best season of their careers.

With so many young goalies just now entering their primes as NHL starters, this landscape could change quickly in the coming years, but for now it's clear the East has a decided advantage in the crease.

The Athletic LOADED: 05.07.2026

1390538 Websites

The Athletic / Your NHL lottery team knows where their pick is now. Here's why they should trade it

By Sean McIndoe

Last night saw the hockey world settle in to watch the NHL draft lottery, an annual event in which a collection of ping-pong balls reward whichever franchise and its fans are found to be the most noble and pure of heart.

So now we know the NHL's order for this June's draft, pending any trades. And it really feels like we're only saying that last part to be polite. It's exceedingly rare to see a team trade a pick in the first half of the first round, at least once the lottery has come and gone and the pick order is locked in. And that's especially true if you ignore trades where teams move up or down a few spots, like the Flyers moving up to 12th last year in a minor draft-floor deal with the Penguins. As far as anything bigger, we might see a move every year or two, like last year's Noah Dobson trade, or the Senators getting Alex DeBrincat in 2022. But it's rare.

And that's a shame, because every lottery team should be open to trading their pick. Yes, all of them.

Being "open to" trading a pick isn't the same as actually doing it, of course. But it's hard to shake the feeling that most teams walk out of the lottery with their draft pick and decide it's completely untouchable. Don't even ask. Making a big move with an early-ish first is off the table.

But it shouldn't be. So today, in what will no doubt turn out to be an act of utter futility, let's try to convince all 15 lottery teams they should trade their first-round pick.

(Yes, 15 teams. You're off the hook, Detroit. Always nice to see someone hand in the assignment early for extra credit.)

We'll start with the 16th pick and work our way to the first choice, which is to say that we'll start on high difficulty and work our way up to virtually impossible. Let's do this.

16. Washington Capitals

Obviously not, because: They need to start preparing for the end of the Alexander Ovechkin era, which is either very close or has already arrived. They've got a decent pipeline and Ryan Leonard, but they are going to need more to get back into contention someday.

OK, but... : If Ovechkin isn't done, don't you owe it to him to do everything you can to let him take a last swing at winning something? The situation isn't quite as dire as it would be if he didn't have that one ring from 2018, but true legends deserve every run they can get.

Could trading a mid-round pick for immediate help push the Caps back into contender status? Unlikely, but not impossible — just look at what the Penguins pulled off this year with Sidney Crosby. At the very least, that kind of return to the postseason has to be the bar if Ovechkin comes back, right?

14. Columbus Blue Jackets

Obviously not, because: They're slowly but surely building something in Columbus, but nobody thinks they're one or two veterans away from a Cup. So stay patient and keep stocking the cupboard.

OK, but... : You always hear about the two-year window that Edmonton has with Connor McDavid or Toronto with Auston Matthews, but should we be having a version of that conversation about Zach Werenski? The presumptive Norris winner has two years left on his deal, and he's in his prime as probably the best player the franchise has ever had. Staying patient is fine, but when you've won just a single seven-game series in your history, a little bit of urgency feels appropriate.

13. New York Islanders

Obviously not, because: You're building around Matthew Schaefer, and the playbook for this sort of thing is clear: If you're lucky enough to land a true franchise player, you surround him with other young talent that can all hit their peak at the same time.

OK, but... : That's pretty convincing, and the Islanders are one of several teams where this feels like an especially tough case to make.

But what if Schaefer isn't the typical elite prospect, but something even better? He just finished one of the greatest rookie seasons any blueliner has ever had, after all. What could year two be like? Or year three? It's at least possible the Islanders didn't just stumble into a great prospect, but found a true unicorn.

And if that's the case, then trying to get some winning done right now — before he potentially resets the blue line market on his second contract — could be the right play. A No. 13 pick probably doesn't help you much at all during that two-year window, but you could flip it for something that could.

The short version: If Mathieu Darche doesn't trade this pick it's because he doesn't believe in Matthew Schaefer. Cool, who's next.

12. New Jersey Devils

Obviously not, because: They have a new GM, and new GMs use their draft picks, they don't trade them away.

OK, but... : The Devils are one of a handful of lottery teams that could at least convince itself a Cup is in play. Granted, they'd need to stay healthy for a change, but that's going to be the case for any team. The Devils have spent the last three years being hyped as a quasi-contender and have won just a single playoff game in that time. With Nico Hischier entering the last year of his deal, and not sounding especially enthused about the direction of the franchise, we may be reaching shoot or get off the point territory in New Jersey.

11 and 15. St. Louis Blues



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

Obviously not, because: They have a new GM, and new GMs use their draft picks, they don't trade them away. Wait, we're going to be using that one a lot, aren't we...

OK, but... : Alex Steen isn't exactly new, having been with the organization for a while, and you'd assume he's been working closely with Doug Armstrong on the team's recent strategy. That strategy seems to be centered on telling everyone you want to trade all your best players and then not doing that, so anything could be in play here.

But while the Blues seem to be closer to a rebuild than to contention, they're an easier case to make for our purposes than just about anyone else, for a simple reason: They have two picks in the top 15. They could trade one and use the other. Or they could try an NFL-style move and package both picks to try to move up closer to the top of the draft. Or they could do what the Canadiens did last year in similar circumstances, and flip both picks for a star player. More picks means more options, and some of those options could absolutely involve the trade market.

### WHAT YOU SHOULD READ NEXT

NHL Mock Draft 2026: Gavin McKenna to the Toronto Maple Leafs as we pick for every lottery team

After the lottery concluded Tuesday, a collection of our NHL reporters combined for a mock draft of the first 16 picks.

#### 10. Nashville Predators

Obviously not, because: They're about to have a new GM, and new GMs... you know what, you get it.

OK, but... : The Predators are a classic team that's a bit too old and a bit too flawed, and we know what direction that usually goes. But it's also possible whoever takes over for Barry Trotz might look at a roster built around aging stars like Roman Josi, Filip Forsberg, Ryan O'Reilly and Steven Stamkos, plus a 31-year-old goalie, and decide it's time to take a swing. It wouldn't necessarily be the right choice, but it's plausible.

#### 9. Florida Panthers

Obviously not, because: Years of contending have depleted the farm system, making this a rare and unexpected opportunity to do some restocking.

OK, but... : Flags fly forever. The Panthers did the perpetual rebuild thing for the better part of two decades, so they can tell you all about how unpredictable top-10 picks can be. They have a championship core right now, and the goal should be getting the group into as many deep playoff runs as possible before the bill comes due.

That's why the Panthers were an easy choice for most likely team to trade their pick in yesterday's lottery power rankings. If anything, the only argument against the Panthers trading this pick now is that it would make more sense to use it on a prospect and then trade him down the road when any holes on the current roster have fully revealed themselves.

#### 8. Winnipeg Jets

Obviously not, because: We know the drill in Winnipeg, where the best and maybe only way to land a star is to draft and develop one. That means keeping and hitting on high picks, not shopping them for short-term help.

OK, but... : That makes all the sense in the world, right up until the best player that the draft-and-develop approach has ever yielded starts sounding like a guy who wants to win now. Connor Hellebuyck's comments were more nuanced than some made them out to be, but they still loom large. When he says, "To just put that same product on the ice, I don't think it worked for a reason," that might be enough to make Kevin

Cheveldayoff think twice about the value of drafting a prospect who's unlikely to make an impact for a few more years.

As Hellebuyck said: "Can you get the pieces that you need?" Not without trading something of value, no, probably not.

#### 7. Seattle Kraken

Obviously not, because: Matty Beniers is a good player, but the fact he's head-and-shoulders above everyone else the Kraken have ever drafted tells you how badly this team needs to hit a home run on a draft pick. Now's their chance.

OK, but... : Patience is nice and all but (gestures at enormous shadow cast by an incoming NBA team) maybe now's not the time.

#### 6. Calgary Flames

Obviously not, because: The Flames have spent the last few years trading away virtually every good veteran player on the team, collecting picks and prospects along the way. They can call it a rebuild or a retool or whatever you want, but we all know what's happening in Calgary. And it should be, because it's exactly what this franchise needs.

OK, but... : This one's pretty straightforward. They've got a new arena on the way, and ownership would probably prefer to have at least a winning-adjacent team to help pack the building. It's hard to move the needle all that much with a No. 6 pick, at least right away. (Even Matthew Tkachuk, one of the best sixth picks ever, took until his third year to crack 50 points.)

Would trading the sixth pick for immediate help be much better? Not really. But what about using the pick as a starting point to try to move up to one of the top three spots? That feels a little more intriguing, right? And the Flames would have plenty of ammo to help make it happen.

#### 5. New York Rangers

Obviously not, because: They're "retooling," as you may have noted from their most recent letter to fans, or from them trading Artemi Panarin for pennies on the dollar. Rebuild strategy can be tricky, but a good rule of thumb is that they typically don't involve trading away top-five picks.

OK, but... : Wait, are we sure the Rangers are rebuilding? I mean, they were, or at least they were sure planning to back in January when they sent out that letter. But that was before the Panarin trade that they had no real choice on but that didn't yield much. And it was also before a deadline that saw them fail to move Vincent Trocheck despite his value being at a post-Olympics high. Mix in veterans who would be hard (and maybe impossible) to move, like Mika Zibanejad and J.T. Miller, not to mention the world's most expensive goalie, and over \$16 million worth of a veteran top defensive pair, and the Rangers might be starting to realize what they want and what they can actually do are two different things.

If that's the case, they can keep trying anyway. They could also decide to steer into the skid.

#### 4. Chicago Blackhawks

Obviously not, because: You're aware of the Kyle Davidson experience, yes? His bosses are, and they seem to be enjoying it.

OK, but... : There's no such thing as too many prospects. But there is such a thing as not enough veteran talent, and at some point you wonder if Davidson and the Hawks aren't taking this whole "we'll worry about actually winning someday down the line" thing a bit too far. Connor Bedard is about to start his fourth year in the league, and it would be nice for him to play a meaningful game in the second half of a season at some point. If he did that with a pair of NHL-caliber wingers, even better.

Also, Laz agrees with me, and he's never wrong about anything.

Here's everything Scott Wheeler is thinking about and hearing after Tuesday night's NHL Draft Lottery.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

### 3. Vancouver Canucks

Obviously not, because: This stupid league is rigged so who even cares.

OK, but... : You're going to see a lot of takes over the next few days about how the Canucks have never had the first pick, but that's not true. They've never used one, but they did have one, back in 1999, for a few minutes. They also had the fourth pick that year. And then eventually, the second and third, which they used to change the course of franchise history by picking the Sedin twins.

The Canucks owned all of those top picks that year because their GM, Brian Burke, didn't sit around and mope about bad luck. He knew who he wanted, and so he got to work and made it happen. He made calls, he plotted out scenarios, he put a series of deals together, and he threatened to fight other GMs in a barn unless they agreed. That last one might not be accurate, but I'm betting it probably was. The point is, he didn't take no for an answer. And he didn't let some ping-pong balls get in the way.

You wanted a top-two pick? Cool, go get one. Or get something even better. You've got more than enough ammo to make it happen, you just need a little bit of that Burkie mojo to see it through. Step one: Hire a GM who knows how to get things done instead of just talk a good game about what might have been.

### 2. San Jose Sharks

Obviously not, because: They've been rebuilding for years, and while this season represented a big (and mostly unexpectedly early) step forward, the work isn't done yet. The lottery gods have rewarded you again, and you say thank you very much, draft another stud, and start shopping for discounts on bulk ring purchases in a few years.

Stay the course, in other words, and it will pay off. Soon, just not quite yet.

OK, but... : Much like the Islanders, the Sharks may have a unicorn of their own in Macklin Celebrini. With only one more year left on his rookie deal, there probably isn't time to take a real swing at a Stanley Cup before his cap hit soars. But that doesn't mean you don't want to keep last year's momentum, and at this point some immediate help might do more to get you there than yet another prospect to throw on the pile. And as an added bonus, the Pacific is wide open right now, as the cross-state Ducks have shown. It's there for the taking. So go take it.

### 1. Toronto Maple Leafs

Obviously not, because: A team with no prospects and little hope just spent 24 hours getting dunked on by the entire hockey world for their new front office, then immediately won a long-shot draft lottery that could change everything. There is zero chance they'd trade this pick. Come on.

OK, but... : John Chayka's an analytics guy, right? I feel like Keith Pelley may have mentioned that once or twice. Well, one thing analytics guys love to do is trade down in drafts to accumulate extra pick value. And you'd think that would be especially true for a team lacking in picks and prospects.

No? Not convincing? OK, let's try this angle: We're told the franchise's top priority is keeping Auston Matthews, and while adding an elite young winger might help convince him to stick around, it's possible he's not all that interested in waiting. If that's the case, and the Leafs want to add an immediate impact player, they just went from having exactly zero assets they could trade for that guy to having one. Which might be all they'd need.

Still no? OK, what if you put yourself in Chayka's shoes and realized the reaction to your hiring had made it clear you're already on the clock. None of the prospects in this year's draft are expected to be immediate impact players. You can make the obvious move and then wait for it to pay off, hoping against hope that your already perilously short

honeymoon period hasn't already run out of time before then. Or you can show everybody how smart you are by making a big, creative move that nobody sees coming, the way a true visionary would.

Still not on board? Yeah, me neither.

Fine, screw it: Matthews and the first pick for Connor McDavid, who says no?

The Athletic LOADED: 05.07.2026

1390539 Websites

The Athletic / What we learned about the 8 NHL teams eliminated in Round 1

By Shayna Goldman

At the end of the day, it doesn't matter that the Tampa Bay Lightning played an almost perfect Game 7.

The Lightning put up a masterclass in defensive structure when it mattered most, limiting the Canadiens to zero shots on goal in the second period, and only nine in 60 minutes.

Blame poor puck luck in Game 7 or Jakub Dobes' excellence — both were unquestionably difference-makers here.

But those aren't the only reasons why the Lightning's season ended on Sunday night.

What if Nikita Kucherov made better puck touches with the clock ticking on the season? What if Andrei Vasilevskiy had a better start to the series? What if Oliver Bjorkstrand was trusted to play in Games 1-2, since his line with Dominic James and Gage Goncalves was the most effective in Game 7? What if Victor Hedman were ready to return sooner?

What if this version of the Lightning showed up more consistently throughout the series?

Tampa Bay has all the time in the world to 'what if' the elimination away, but it won't change the final result: a fourth consecutive first-round exit. And now it's time to face the reality that their Stanley Cup window is closing.

As much as the winning side of every matchup should get the spotlight, there is something to learn about the losing side after every series, whether it's the good and promising, or the bad and ugly that put the team in that position.

So as eight teams shift into offseason mode, let's take a look at what we learned about them from Round 1.

Tampa Bay Lightning

The window is closing

The Lightning's strategy has revolved around its star-studded core. But despite putting up game-breaking regular seasons, versions of this core haven't gotten it done in four straight postseasons now.

Kucherov and Brayden Point didn't hit that next gear in Round 1. It took six games for Playoff Vasy to round into form, too. And despite some real efforts from the supporting cast, it wasn't enough to advance to Round 2.

So the question isn't just what's next for Tampa Bay, it's whether there is still a way to maximize this core for another run before it's too late. The problem is, there's a cost to contending: a depleted pipeline, limited trade assets and little cap flexibility.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

Some teams spend all that with less to show for it, while the Lightning have two Stanley Cups plus a third trip to the final. And to Tampa Bay's credit, management has found creative ways to deal with a rotating cast of substitutions. The Lightning may not have a ton of draft capital, but they still find hidden gems to develop through the system. James was the latest example of that, along with Darren Raddysh and J.J. Moser.

But even if Tampa Bay spots and develops that talent, retaining it is another challenge. Raddysh's glow-up may be the most recent price-out of Tampa Bay, with Moser's extension kicking in next year.

Even with more graceful aging curves for star talent, Father Time spares no player or team. So the pressure is on to find a way to extend this window, or take a step back altogether to reset before it's too late.

### Edmonton Oilers

#### The clock is ticking

When Connor McDavid signed a two-year extension, it put the Oilers on the clock. It gave management up to three years to build a real contender around the best player in the world, or at least prove this team is trending in the right direction.

Instead, as Leon Draisaitl succinctly put it on breakup day, this team is "not trending in the right direction" and has taken a "big step backwards."

The star players seem to grasp both the team's current standing and the pressure surrounding McDavid's contract. But does the front office?

As easy as it is to chalk up this year's disappointing Round 1 exit to injuries, their shortcomings stemmed a lot deeper than that. The defense, which only improved post-Olympics after Paul Coffey returned behind the bench, collapsed in front of an incredibly cautious goaltending tandem. A lack of footspeed was glaring, too. But it's going to be incredibly difficult to get out of this jam.

Bringing in a full-time defensive coach would help. Shaking up the personnel on the back end would go a long way, too. But the Oilers don't have a lot of cap space or trade assets. And there aren't a ton of movable contracts, either. This year's moves — from acquiring Tristan Jarry and two more years of his contract, to extending Trent Frederic for eight years, to sending out draft picks to move Stuart Skinner and Andrew Mangiapane — put the Oilers in an impossible situation. So before figuring out how to get out of this jam, it's worth talking about who should be trusted to spearhead this.

### Dallas Stars

#### Jason Robertson is a star

Robertson was on another level all season long, answering any questions on whether he was truly franchise-caliber. He shot the puck more often and efficiently, and boosted his puck-moving play between his breakouts and primary passes. It just had to translate in a playoff environment, especially with looming contract talks ahead.

The narrative around Robertson's playoff pedigree tends to get overblown because he has legitimately made an impact in postseasons past for Dallas. Even last year, coming off an injury, he gave his team a much-needed spark.

Making an impact isn't the same as having clutch signature performances to help the Stars move further than years past, though. And that's pretty much fueled the question around whether he has the chops to truly be a No. 1 forward — and paid like one.

Robertson answered any lingering questions this spring, though. He was by far the Stars' best and most consistent player in Round 1. Not only did he contribute on the power play, he was one of the few much-needed five-on-five producers despite being without his mainstay center. That added up to a 2.63 average Game Score that not only leads Dallas but ranks 10th among all players in Round 1.

That should be enough to answer any questions around his game, and whether he's worth a raise this summer — especially since it's only getting harder to acquire stars around the NHL.

### Pittsburgh Penguins

#### It's the end of an era

There were basically two ways for this to play out. If the Penguins went on a deep run after unexpectedly reaching the playoffs, it was going to be this magical Last Dance moment for Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and Kris Letang. But if Pittsburgh flamed out early, it was always going to open the door to questions about the long run.

It could have been worse this spring; the Penguins were almost swept by a rebuilding Flyers team that went on a late-season push to make the postseason. Pittsburgh, at least, won two games to make it a series. But extending the series doesn't do enough to change the big picture. It could be time to officially turn the page on this chapter and look forward to the next.

The Penguins really didn't mortgage their future this year by competing, at least. Kyle Dubas and the front office made forward-thinking moves along the way that improved the team on the fly; the Stuart Skinner and Egor Chinakhov trades were prime examples. Elmer Söderblom looks like a low-key savvy add, too. But it may be time to take a more drastic approach.

Crosby isn't going anywhere unless he chooses to. The Letang contract may be unmovable, too. Erik Karlsson had a fantastic regular season; could this be a chance to sell high on the last two years of his deal? Then there's the Malkin situation; he had a resurgent regular season, but was a step behind in Round 1, which will be front-of-mind when his contract expires on July 1.

### Los Angeles Kings

#### Safe is death

To the Kings' credit, management did try to address its offensive woes. The team probably would have looked a lot different with Kevin Fiala and Artemi Panarin in the lineup at the same time. The Fiala injury situation was completely out of L.A.'s hands and just terrible luck.

But that Panarin trade doesn't erase the team's missteps to that point, like the decision to run it back with Jim Hiller despite last postseason's failures. It doesn't take away all of Ken Holland's one-dimensional signings that made the blue line older and slower with Cody Ceci and Brian Dumoulin, while trading away Jordan Spence.

Holland didn't build the Kings' foundation or core. But in Year 1 of his tenure, he didn't do enough to change what was broken, either. He leaned further into it, and it unsurprisingly burned L.A. It landed them in the worst possible playoff position for a Round 1 matchup against an even deeper and dynamic opponent. And it ended the Kings' playoff hopes even quicker than years past. That's why the Round 1 lesson is the same for L.A. two years in a row.

As on-brand as this direction was for an old-school GM like Holland, he of all people should have some understanding of what's gone wrong for the Kings in the past, seeing as he was on the other side of three of those four Round 1 eliminations to the Oilers.

### Boston Bruins

#### The Big Bad Bruins aren't cut out for 2026

Led by an elite core trio and a high PDO, the Bruins reached the playoffs against the odds — only to crash out early against the Buffalo Sabres.

The good news is management seemed to recognize this team's ceiling and didn't overpay at the deadline for Band-Aids in exchange for future



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

assets. Even if the team didn't do anything to further a retool started last spring, the front office didn't do anything to hamstring it, either.

The bad news is that this roster is extremely flawed and may not be built to thrive in today's speed and skill game. The Bruins' 1-2-2 neutral zone system, known as "The Clog," had its moments of efficiency in the regular season and even in Round 1. But if teams like the Sabres were able to cut through with speed, Boston didn't have the footspeed to catch up. And when there was a speed mismatch, the Bruins couldn't always stop their opponents' forecheck with physicality.

A blue line with players like Charlie McAvoy and Nikita Zadorov will always embrace some of that Big Bad Bruin energy, and there can still be value to that playing style even in today's NHL. But the current trends around the league center around speed, skill and up-and-coming talent — and the Atlantic Division is the prime example, with the Sabres and Canadiens left standing. So Boston is going to have to go against the grain of some of their veteran players and identity to find defensemen who can address those weak points.

Utah Mammoth

The future is bright

A Round 1 series between the Mammoth and Vegas Golden Knights was always going to be a mismatch in experience. Unfortunately for Utah, it showed at times. The team didn't sustain momentum enough, even after resilient comebacks. The wear and tear of lengthy overtimes also hampered the Mammoth's skaters. So did Vegas' ability to lock things down with a strong forecheck.

But gaining some much-needed playoff seasoning isn't the only takeaway from this series. It's that Utah's core is the real deal and should have an incredibly bright future.

Clayton Keller's star power has been a difference-maker for this franchise for years, both in Arizona and Utah. But now he has a dynamic group of young forwards around him to level up the team's core.

Dylan Guenther and Logan Cooley both had breakthrough performances for the Mammoth. Neither one plays prototypical playoff hockey; they use their speed to their advantage to thrive off the rush and move the puck east-to-west to challenge defenders. Some teams try to move away from that style of play in the postseason, where tension amps up, and the game sometimes slows down as a result. But these two played to their strengths and made a real impact, even against Vegas' best. In almost 38 head-to-head minutes against Jack Eichel, Cooley and the Mammoth went up 47-29 in shot attempts, earned a 72 percent xG rate and outscored Vegas 3-2.

Ottawa Senators

You need your best players to step up

Hockey is a strong link game, even in the playoffs. That puts extra emphasis on star players on both sides of a matchup.

While Ottawa has star power on the back end with Jake Sanderson emerging as one of the best all-around defensemen in the league, Brady Tkachuk and Tim Stützle are flawed No. 1 and No. 2 forwards on a team with Stanley Cup aspirations.

It's even more challenging when those two leading forwards don't play their best. Neither player earned a single five-on-five point in four games.

Tkachuk was the offensive spark the Senators needed last spring and even upped his regular-season scoring rate this season. But this time around, his postseason started in the penalty box for five minutes, and it set the tone for the rest of the series. The shots and scoring chances weren't memorable; the physicality was. Stützle's series, on the other hand, will be remembered for missed chances and opportunities.

It's good to be lucky, but sometimes teams have to create their own luck. So the Senators need to consider if Tkachuk and Stützle have that next gear to take over games, or if it's time to rethink the depth chart as currently constructed.

The Athletic LOADED: 05.07.2026

1390540 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canadiens can't overcome slow start in Game 1 loss

Eric Engels

BUFFALO — This looked like it was going the wrong way for the Montreal Canadiens from the second their most surefooted defenceman tripped over himself and coughed up the puck for a three-on-one, and that happened before Game 1 of this second-round series against the Buffalo Sabres was even five minutes old.

Then, nine minutes after Lane Hutson's improbable bobble gave Josh Doan a tap-in goal, the Canadiens faced their first two-goal deficit of the playoffs when a puck they contained between their four penalty killers in the slot slipped free and got moved quickly to Ryan McLeod on the goal line.

Not ideal.

Coach Martin St. Louis spoke earlier in the day about how nice it would be not to be chasing the series right off the hop.

After the game, he couldn't help but lament the Canadiens losing 4-2 and never quite catching up to those speedy Sabres.

"It was hard to start off with some misfortune," St. Louis said.

A couple of good bounces in a third period would've erased that, but the Canadiens didn't get them.

They tilted the ice over the last 20 minutes, notched 11 shots and earned five high-danger chances, but couldn't find the back of Alex Lyon's net.

What happened over the middle 20 minutes proved just as costly as the start.

The Canadiens were so good at limiting the Tampa Bay Lightning's dangerous rush game in Round 1, but they fed the Sabres' lethal rush game to start Round 2 and found themselves down 4-1 less than halfway through the second period.

"That's a fast, skilled team that can hurt you off the rush," said Kirby Dach. "We found that out pretty early."

Nick Suzuki said the Canadiens knew "probably two days ago."

"You really have to manage the puck well through the neutral zone," said St. Louis. "I thought, for the most part, we did. But we had to manage the puck in the o-zone, too. (In a lot of) 50-50 battles, you gotta be on the right side of (the puck) because if you lose those, it's a three-on-two (or) four-on-three. Their Ds come, so we have to do better there."

By the time the Canadiens did, they had already given up eight rush chances (according to SportLogiq) and were down by three goals.

Dach got them back to within striking distance late in the second period, and Suzuki, who scored on a late first-period power play, said the third was there for the taking.

"I felt like we had the puck the whole time," the captain said.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

Suzuki had to have enjoyed that considering how little he, Cole Caufield and Juraj Slafkovsky had it in seven games against the Lightning.

It was fair to suggest that lack of time with the puck was a factor in the three of them not turning all that possession in Wednesday's third period into goals.

"They hadn't had this kind of space for two weeks," said St. Louis.

But the coach was happy his top players finally got it — and got enough puck touches to start building something that can pay off as early as Friday's Game 2 (7 p.m. ET on Sportsnet and Sportsnet+).

It was still a missed opportunity in Game 1.

Even Sabres coach Lindy Ruff felt it was, admitting his team was more generous than he hoped they'd be.

"I know we can be a lot better," Ruff said. "I thought a lot of our puck decisions weren't up to par. There's a couple situations in the game we gave them momentum..."

The Sabres offered a fair bit of it up right after McLeod scored to make it 2-0.

Before that, Hutson hit the post. After it, Jake Evans hit the post, too, and baited Rasmus Dahlin into a needless penalty that led to Suzuki's goal in the final minute of the first.

The Canadiens should've had more goals before the final minute of the third, especially from their top guns.

"Give them some credit," added Ruff. "They're a good team. They just beat a really good team. Slafkovsky's a hell of a player, and then they've got a 50-goal scorer (in Caufield)... Maybe they will generate a little bit."

The Canadiens need them to — and not just on the power play.

They also need more saves, even if Jakub Dobes, who was brilliant against the Lightning, wasn't particularly fallible against the Sabres.

He didn't have a chance on the first two goals, and Bowen Byram's power-play marker to make it 4-1 Buffalo was perfectly placed.

But the one from Jordan Greenway, which proved to be the winner, slipped right through Dobes' glove, and that was Buffalo's eighth shot of the game.

For the Canadiens to limit the Sabres to just 16 shots and still give up four goals was a disappointment.

Dobes needed to make at least one more save, the Canadiens needed to give up one less power-play goal and one less odd-man rush, and they needed to capitalize on their chances.

But this game looked like it was going to go that way as soon as Hutson uncharacteristically tripped over himself.

He'll regain his footing.

The Canadiens believe they will, too.

"I'm confident that we can play any style," said St. Louis. "I'm confident that we can play the game that's in front of us. And I'm confident that we can learn from this one and be better."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.07.2026

1390541 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / How drafting first overall changes the Maple Leafs' outlook

Justin Bourne

TORONTO — Up, up it all went.

The ping pong ball, the Toronto Maple Leafs future, and the spirit of Leafs Nation.

Up, up, up.

That silly, hollow little thing checks in at just 2.7 grams, but it pulled an enormous weight off the shoulders of a very uncomfortable fanbase.

The numbers 7-2-11-12 came up, one of Toronto's combinations, and with it they won the right to draft first overall. Now, that doesn't solve everything for the organization, but it does legitimately change things. They have clarity about their drafting situation (their 2027 and 2028 first-rounders are now gone and unprotected), and that informs where they need to go in the short term (hint: up, up, up).

As it has been for the past decade in Toronto, the goal is once again to win their next game rather than focus on games three years from now. And, boy, is that more fun to follow.

So let's talk about those things that've changed. Winning the right to draft first overall casts a new light on the state of things in Leafs Nation. Let's get into what it means.

Clarity of direction

I noted it above so I'll be real short here, but it's the most crucial piece. The higher they finish next year, the worse the pick is that they'll be giving away. Bottoming out helps nothing. There's just no incentive to do anything but win. That's not to say the Leafs should sell the future, as they need to build long-term stability, but with Auston Matthews, William Nylander, John Tavares, Matthew Knies, Easton Cowan, Chris Tanev, Jake McCabe, Oliver Ekman-Larsson, Joseph Woll, Anthony Stolarz and some other decent pieces, they're going to try and compete next year.

This should help their case with Matthews

There's concern in Leaf-land about their captain potentially asking out someday, but the general idea seems to be that they need to show him they can be competitive, and he'll stick around. He wants to win. That means adding meaningful pieces and getting younger, and boy, does getting the number one overall pick help on those two fronts. Next year's day one roster has been given its first boost, and if you're Matthews, that's a great place to start.

Getting elite talent makes any place more appealing to players around the league

I've always thought this was an undersold aspect of having great players: it makes other good players want to play there. During the Leafs most recent string of playoff appearances, a bunch of good players wanted to be a part of what they were doing. Guys like Joe Thornton and Patrick Marleau and Jason Spezza who wanted on the train. Others that were added via trade (like Jake Muzzin) signed contract extensions because they saw the potential to win. We see it in Edmonton with Connor McDavid too, where players are happy to go there simply to join him (and Leon Draisaitl).

As you try to get players to come to a woefully overblown "tough" market and stay, having elite talent on the roster only helps.

This gives you options if you want to trade back for a defenceman (plus additional assets)

Everyone knows the Leafs want to add a quality, top-pair, young defenceman, and while they aren't sitting there at the top of the draft a la Matthew Schaefer, they're just behind in the three to seven range. If Toronto wanted to get the type of guy everyone knows they've been after (say, Chase Reid or Keaton Verhoeff), they could slide back a few spots,



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

grab one of these blue liners, and add more assets to give someone else the top pick.

Or they could just draft one of the top wingers, duh

Yeah this is probably the answer. Go get one of the elite playmaking wingers – perhaps the Canadian one, in Gavin McKenna? – and don't overthink it. If you're really set on adding a defenceman, this would then give you the option to see if there's a top-end, NHL-ready blue liner who you could pry from another organization via trade with one of your current wingers. Would Knies or Cowan then be in play? I'm guessing no, but the point is the Leafs have at least got options today that they didn't have a week ago.

The "bare-cupboard Leafs" suddenly have a full complement of draft picks

The Leafs backed into trading Nicolas Roy for a huge return (Colorado knew what they wanted and paid for it), which added a first-rounder in the 2027 draft, and a fifth-rounder in 2026. With that, they've suddenly got back-to-back full draft years ahead.

The Leafs now have the first overall pick in 2026, followed by the second-rounder from the Scott Laughton trade (which is Buffalo's pick, actually), then five picks over the following five rounds.

In 2027, they have Colorado's first-rounder from the Roy deal, two second-round picks, and then five picks over the following five rounds, again.

Drafting is good, of course. But if great players become available due to general disgruntlement (is Adam Fox happy in New York?), which seems to be prevalent among elite players these days, at least they've finally got some assets with which to acquire talent.

This changes the tone to one of positivity (and offers a good start for Chayka/Sundin)

As I've written about in detail, the start of John Chayka's tenure morphed from one of surprise, to confusion, to an outright adversarial tone at the introductory press conference. But suddenly the memorable image of this week is Mats Sundin smiling an absolute 10,000-megawatt smile while being backlit by the words "Toronto Maple Leaf Hockey Club" as a stroke of good fortune went their way.

Luck is luck, and there's nothing more to it than that. But you gotta be good to be lucky, so if fans thought the Leafs drove their ball off the tee clean into the woods, it looks like it hit a tree and kicked back into the middle of the fairway.

There's suddenly more looking forward than looking back as fans start to pick through what this all means.

Does this influence the pending coaching decision?

Chayka and Sundin joined us on Real Kyper and Bourne Monday, and talked about their plans to meet with coach Craig Berube, then evaluate the past couple years, and make a decision on the head coach based on all that information. Kyper has speculated they'll give Berube another chance, but I do wonder if this changes that.

That "another chance" thing seemed rooted in the idea that they didn't know if they were going to be "re-tooling" or conducting a more thorough "rebuild." Kyper's contention was why hire a guy like Bruce Cassidy if you're a non-playoff team that's going to be selling players to acquire younger, more long-term assets?

But, as it's become clear the path forward is now to "win" it may make less sense to wait until they're a few games under .500 in November to then try to dig out of a hole. They've got to come out of the gates stronger than they did this past year, and it's not clear that this coach has the buy-in needed to make that happen.

Maybe he does, maybe he doesn't. But if Chayka and Sundin think they need to chart a new coaching direction to have success, they may now be less likely to wait and see how it plays out in September.

This starts the core succession plan while the current stars are still stars

There are countless examples of NHL teams that have had success with an older core that's supported by an influx of young talent. The Leafs suddenly have Cowan, Knies, and what could be McKenna all 23 years old and under.

If things do go poorly, they're at least not in a position where it looks like they'll have to be terrible for years to get back in the mix. The next wave is suddenly more clear, the future suddenly more bright.

Big picture

For a few years now a major problem for the Leafs has been that they had "no assets." They couldn't even participate in conversations about acquiring talented players who wanted out of their organizations, and it was tough to see other ways for them to improve.

Well, the cupboards didn't go from bare to stocked overnight with one player, but as they turn the page on a lost season, there's suddenly a lot more to work with -- draft picks, tons of salary cap space, and obviously the first overall pick.

New manager Chayka and Senior Advisor Sundin have a lot to get up to speed on, a lot of changes to make, and a roster to re-shape. But with the good news starting in May, it looks more "very hard" than "impossible."

Hockey's a game infused with luck and chances, and the Leafs finally got one hell of a good bounce.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.07.2026

1390542 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canucks president Jim Rutherford explains why he's stepping down now

Iain MacIntyre

Press briefings for a lot of Vancouver Canucks senior managers over the years have been must-see theatre.

Imposing and authoritative, Pat Quinn once flicked his stick to knock a microphone out of a reporter's hand, sending it skittering metalically across a concrete floor amid stunned silence. You didn't dare miss a Mike Keenan press conference lest, as in NASCAR, you miss a fiery pileup.

The Brian Burke Show was endlessly quotable and often funny, and Rick Tocchet was always refreshingly direct and honest, even if he sometimes lapsed into a Rocky Balboa-like delivery that a former player described as "Tocky."

But for sheer volume of news bombs dropped by simply telling us what he thought, president of hockey operations Jim Rutherford should be on the reporters' Wall of Honour — if we had one. (We'd settle for a working press room at Rogers Arena).

His casual declaration at the end of Tuesday's post-draft-lottery press conference that he'd be retreating to an advisory role after the entry draft in June — and after he hires a new general manager — was an explosion instantly heard around the National Hockey League.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

"It's time," Rutherford told us Wednesday before resuming the final phase of his GM search. "I have taken some time with this (decision), probably at least a year, not knowing exactly when I was going to make it. But you know, once you start thinking about it, then it's time."

In an interview with Sportsnet, Rutherford said he knew this would be his final season involved in key hockey operations decisions. He has a grown daughter in Raleigh, N.C., which has long been Rutherford's home, and a son going into his senior year of high school at Shattuck-St. Mary's Academy in Minnesota.

Rutherford wants to be nearer to them, which is why he will be based in North Carolina while he counsels Canucks owner Francesco Aquilini and the soon-to-be-named general manager. He will also be involved with the NHL as the Canucks' alternate governor

"It has nothing to do with my age because, quite frankly, I feel better, now that I've lost a lot of weight, than I did 20 or 25 years ago," the 77-year-old said. "I still have a lot of gas in the tank if I want to work. But it's time."

"It was time for me before the season even started; I was trending in that direction. But I think we can put something together here in our hockey department that I can feel good about when I step down."

Rutherford declined to reveal anything about the final stage of his GM search, which he said Tuesday was down to five candidates, or whether there will be one new hire or two — another president to oversee the new manager.

Known GM candidates include Canucks assistant manager Ryan Johnson, and his counterparts Evan Gold (Boston Bruins) and Ryan Bowness (New York Islanders), as well as former Ottawa Senators GM Pierre Dorion.

But given the volcanic reaction in the fan base Tuesday to news of Dorion's candidacy — apart from the meltdown on social media, the Canucks were flooded with complaints — it's impossible to see Aquilini hiring him.

There is, of course, an obvious question about why Rutherford is even involved in a hiring critical to a rebuild if he is soon leaving.

"Well, ownership wanted me to stay, and I'm still part of the organization," he said. "I think if I was totally leaving the organization, that would be a fair point. But I'm an advisor to ownership and to hockey ops. I think when it all plays out, people will understand."

Despite the Canucks' last-place finish and worst season this century, there doesn't seem to be the same level of vitriol in the fan base towards Rutherford that there was towards Jim Benning and even Mike Gillis at the end of those preceding managerial regimes in Vancouver.

Still, Rutherford is stepping down from a 32nd-place team after inheriting one in December, 2021 that included a young core of centres J.T. Miller, Elias Pettersson and Bo Horvat, defenceman Quinn Hughes and goalie Thatcher Demko.

His greatest failing was probably underestimating and mishandling the Canucks' internal dysfunction, friction between Miller and Pettersson and others, which became worse after Horvat was traded and the other two were re-signed. The dressing-room culture turned out to be toxic.

"As I've said before, personally, I wish I'd have done a better job," Rutherford said. "But with that being said, we were trending in the right direction two years ago and then we had to deal with these circumstances that we weren't expecting."

"Once J.T. was moved, we knew the team was going to take a step back. And I had known for quite some time that Quinn probably wasn't coming back, so that was the next thing to deal with (when he was traded in December). And then once those two guys were gone, it was an easy decision to go to a rebuild."

"You always have challenges, but these challenges have been extra tough to deal with. I mean, in a four-year period, I've never seen the kind of challenges in my career like I've had here in Vancouver."

What would he do over?

"You know, hindsight is a great thing," he said. "It's very easy (to second-guess). But J.T. Miller was the driving force for this team as the forward, Quinn was on defence and we had Thatcher Demko in goal. I would make the same decisions that were made at the time."

"It didn't work out, although we were a game away from going to the conference finals (two years ago). If the glue had stayed on here and it all didn't fall apart that following year... that team could have even been better. And so, like I said, it's easy in hindsight."

As he said at the end of the season, and again on Tuesday, Rutherford is optimistic about the Canucks' future because of the team's young players (and others who will be added at the draft) and a dressing-room culture he believes has been fixed.

"I know a lot of people will think that this sounds stupid," he said, "and I know it doesn't feel this way coming off such a disappointing season, but from the time I got here to where we are today, I think this is the best position the team could be in to build a winner. Because now it can be built with the foundation of these young guys. We have good veterans now that have accepted the young guys and the rebuild. They can mentor and play the game. But we have a very good group of young players and this draft can be a game-changer for the Canucks."

"There's going to be some bumpy roads here for the next year, maybe two. But I do think that the team hit rock bottom this year, and it will be a team that will be more competitive (next season) and people can be excited about watching the young players grow. It will be fun to watch."

But Rutherford will be doing that from home in Raleigh rather than the management suite at Rogers Arena.

"I made a commitment to the Canucks team here, and I will continue that commitment," he said. "And even if there's not a lot of calls from hockey ops, having somebody like me as an advisor to the owner makes sense. I still have things to offer, and if people want to use that, that's fine. And if they don't want to use it, that's fine, too."

"I know things didn't go as well on the ice as we all would have hoped, but our hockey operations group was aligned, worked hard and (former GM) Patrik Allvin did a lot of good things. I'm thankful to all those people for the working relationship. I'm thankful to the players that we have. And I'm really thankful to the fan base. Despite the fact it didn't go as well as I would have liked, I'm glad that I've experienced this... being in a great Canadian market with such a passionate fan base."

"I hope the rebuild moves along quicker than some might think. You can't put a timeline on it. But it's got a good foundation and is going in the right direction."

Boom.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.07.2026

1390543 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Takeaways: Dostal wins goalie battle as Ducks even series vs. Golden Knights

Emily Sadler



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

Anaheim Ducks goaltender Lukas Dostal was a mere six seconds away from earning his first shutout of the playoffs — and of the entire season — when Mark Stone got a stick on Jack Eichel's shot from the point to get the Vegas Golden Knights on the board Wednesday night.

The garbage-time power-play goal didn't keep the Anaheim Ducks from claiming a series-tying victory on the road, their 3-1 win evening the second-round bout 1-1, but it did keep the club from breaking a streak that dates back to Day 1 of the 2024-25 campaign:

But wins are what matter, and Dostal certainly earned this one. A goalie battle from the start, he and Vegas netminder Carter Hart took turns stumping opposing forwards in what was a strong showing from both sides. Hart shone early, stopping all 13 of Anaheim's first-period shots, and was the busier goalie Wednesday night — he faced 27 shots, and stopped 25. The Golden Knights' offence was slow to warm up, which meant Dostal was, too — he faced just three shots in the first frame. His night got busier as the game went on, stopping all 11 pucks fired his way in the second and seven of eight in the third. He was perfect at even-strength.

Dostal's Game 2 performance feels like a win within the win for Anaheim. The 25-year-old had a shaky start to his first career post-season stint — he allowed four goals in each of his first three games of Round 1 against Edmonton, his series save percentage coming in at .874. He bounced back from a dismal Game 5 showing to put away the Oilers with a 25-save performance in Game 6, and has been excellent since. He registered a .905 save percentage on 21 shots in Game 1 against Vegas, and on Wednesday night raised the bar to .955 to win the showdown against Hart. He's allowed just three goals through two games, and while he didn't quite achieve perfection, Wednesday's showing seems like a sign of more great showdowns to come.

### Ducks' power play falls short again versus Vegas's stifling PK

Through two games of this second-round series so far, Vegas has made Anaheim's elite power play look lifeless. That's a huge storyline early in this series, considering just how heavily the Ducks relied on their PP production against Edmonton — and just how steep a drop the unit has experienced since.

After going zero-for-four in Game 1 Monday night, Anaheim had ample opportunity to turn things around in the first period of Wednesday's contest, which saw Vegas collect eight penalty minutes (including a four-minute, high-sticking double-minor charged to Eichel) in the first five minutes of the opening frame.

Even with more than 90 seconds of five-on-three play, the Ducks couldn't capitalize. Much like we saw from Utah in Round 1, the Ducks spent nearly every second with the man advantage patrolling the perimeter in search of the perfect shot. They couldn't find it.

Anaheim closed out Wednesday's win without a PP goal, going zero-for-five on the night to bring their total to none-for-nine on the series so far. But their fifth opportunity did show some signs of life — Anaheim clearly got the memo to get pucks on net, and looked a lot more like the squad we saw last series. Something to build on, perhaps.

### Youth and depth step up for Ducks

Two nights after falling to Vegas in Game 1, the Ducks got off to a blazing start in Game 2, with Troy Terry launching the club into a scoring chance just six seconds into the matchup in an attempt to catch Hart on his heels. Hart's early heroics kept Vegas in the game despite the Ducks' barrage of shots, but Anaheim was clearly intent on setting the tone in this one.

It worked. Anaheim managed to harness its own speed-forward game while also matching Vegas's hard-hitting, physical approach. Ducks head coach Joel Quenneville rolled out his big lines early and often, resulting in a pretty sizeable gap between his most- and least-used forwards, but

that didn't stop Beckett Sennecke (11:03 minutes of ice time) and Jansen Harkins (9:44) from making big impacts. Sennecke was the first to light the lamp Wednesday night, when he took advantage of Vegas's defensive misplay that saw him in all alone after Jeffrey Viel served him up the puck from behind the net. Harkins scored an empty-net insurance goal late in the third in his 2026 playoff debut.

Those goals sandwiched Leo Carlsson's third-period marker that gave Anaheim some breathing room early in the third.

### Are Vegas's stars going quiet again?

It was a storyline in Round 1 against Utah, and while this second-round series is still very young, it's hard not to wonder if it's happening again... Because through two games, we have yet to see much of an offensive impact from some of Vegas's biggest names. Pavel Dorofeyev has just two shots to his name through two games so far. He and Eichel have two assists between them. Mitch Marner sealed Monday's series-opening win with an empty-netter, but was held without a point Wednesday on just two shots. If not for Eichel and Stone collaborating on Vegas' power-play marker at the end of regulation, the Golden Knights would've been shut out entirely in this one.

Depth has been a major asset for the experienced club, but they need their stars to step up if they're to match the firepower of Anaheim. Might that garbage-time goal have woken them up?

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.07.2026

1390544 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Scout's Analysis: Gavin McKenna vs. Ivar Stenberg for first overall

### Jason Bukala

On Monday afternoon, the Toronto Maple Leafs introduced their new front office leadership group to the media and fans. General Manager John Chayka and Senior Executive Advisor, Hockey Operations Mats Sundin faced a barrage of questions alongside MLSE President and CEO Keith Pelley.

There was a lot of ground to cover and, in hindsight, it occurred to me that nobody really asked what the Leafs' strategy could be if they won Tuesday's draft lottery.

The very next day, the Leafs got lucky and landed the first overall draft pick at the lottery, leaving Leafs Nation buzzing over the incredible result. Toronto now has an opportunity to draft a top-tier prospect who could have a significant impact on the trajectory of the franchise for years to come.

But this is not a year where there is a single, clear-cut prospect at the top of the draft like it was when Toronto last picked first overall in 2016 and came away with Auston Matthews. The Leafs will have options to consider. So in today's piece, I'll present what those options are -- Gavin McKenna or Ivar Stenberg -- as well as include insight into the process of possibly trading down from the top slot to acquire more assets.

The Leafs will select who they believe to be the best player in the draft class. They won't approach the draft looking to simply fill a positional need. Toronto could use a top pairing, transitional defenceman, but the fact of the matter is the top three available prospects are all forwards.

### The case for drafting Ivar Stenberg first overall

Stenberg, a 5-foot-11, 183-pound left-shot winger, produced 11G-22A playing in Sweden's top pro league this year. His offensive output was



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

good enough to make him the third-highest scoring draft eligible player in the history of the SHL. Only Daniel and Henrik Sedin produced more offence than Stenberg did at the pro level in their draft year. Stenberg averaged 16 minutes per game in ice time with Frolunda, with all of his shifts coming at even strength and on the power play.

What makes Stenberg special is the fact he can be trusted in a variety of roles. He has an 'A' and 'B' game. Coaches can count on Stenberg to buckle down defensively. He didn't kill penalties at the pro level this year, but he definitely has the awareness to be thrust into the role if required. He's elite offensively -- it's his primary element -- but his hockey sense and overall accountability in all three zones is what stands out in addition to his top-line offensive upside.

Here are some examples of what I have seen from Stenberg over the course of his pre-draft development.

The first clip is from the 2023 U18 World Championship that I attended in Germany. Stenberg was only 15 years old at the time. Notice how he exits the offensive zone with speed on the left side and then attacks his opponent through the middle of the ice. He protects the puck and fires a shot against the grain, through traffic, for the goal.

The second clip displays how Stenberg protects the puck along the boards in the defensive zone before exiting on his own and transitioning the play up ice with speed and skill. By the end of the sequence, he has eluded five Finnish players in total, and the puck ends up in a high danger scoring area out front of Finland's crease:

The last clip provides a glimpse into how Stenberg reads the ice. He works through the neutral zone, finds open ice below the goal line and walks to the crease after the puck is bumped to him along the boards.

The case for drafting Gavin McKenna first overall

McKenna, a 6-foot, 170-pound left-shot winger, is the most dynamic forward in the draft class. He craves having the puck on his stick and has the skill and vision to escape checks in small areas and make plays in the offensive zone. He's elusive and hard to check.

McKenna's second half of the season at the NCAA level produced fantastic results offensively. He ended his freshman season at Penn State with 15G-36A in 35 games, but he contributed 11G-22A over his final 18 games. McKenna averaged over 22 minutes per game of ice time, with the bulk of his shifts coming at even strength and the power play. His defensive detail improved over the course of the season, but he still has work to do off the puck. His minus-7 rating, in relation to his offence and number of games played, is something that stands out for me compared to Stenberg.

Although I have concerns about McKenna's commitment defensively, I'm fully aware that defending is a choice. It's impossible to teach a player to produce offence like McKenna does, but defending is a part of the game that can absolutely be coached into a prospect. If McKenna's off-puck commitment improves to consistently average, or slightly above average, I'm definitely open-minded to the conversation that he deserves to be the top-rated prospect over Stenberg.

Here are some examples of what I've seen from McKenna in his pre-draft development:

The first clip displays the small area escapability that McKenna possesses. Three Arizona State players had an opportunity to check McKenna off the puck, but he escaped to direct it on net. He made something out of nothing in this sequence:

There's always some risk/reward included in elite offensive players. I understand turnovers will happen when the player is attempting to make plays. Having said that, turning the puck over in neutral ice at the NHL level quickly turns into goals against.

In the next clip, McKenna shoulder-checks in the neutral zone to identify who might be pressing up ice from Michigan State. He ends up with the puck on his stick and exits the Penn State zone before saucing a back-hand pass to nobody in neutral ice. Notice how he is straight-legged, regrouping into his zone. The turnover didn't end up costing Penn State a goal against, but it's an area of McKenna's game that continues to require attention to more detail:

When I identify defensive awareness as being a choice, the last clip displays how McKenna is evolving.

He ends up above the play after Penn State loses possession in Wisconsin's zone. He's in perfect position to knock down a puck and attack off the regroup. It's one of the most positive sequences I noticed from McKenna at the college level this year and provides me lots to think about when comparing him to Stenberg on projection:

Should the Leafs consider trading back?

If I'm running the Leafs draft table, I would absolutely gather all the available information in regards to trading back from the top draft position. However, the only player I would consider doing it for is Brantford Bulldogs centre Caleb Malhotra.

I have Malhotra rated as the top available centre in the class. Teams that strategize building through the draft will generally mention they prefer to add centres and right-shot defencemen and Malhotra fits that thought process. The right-shot defencemen available in this draft (Keaton Verhoeff, Chase Reid) fall below Malhotra in my rankings, which is why I land on Malhotra as the only strategic discussion I would engage in.

The Vancouver Canucks currently own the third slot in the draft. Would it make sense for the Leafs to move back to draft Malhotra and pick up an extra second-round pick as part of the return?

I would have to attempt to find out who San Jose covets at second overall. At the end of the day, even if San Jose were to draft Malhotra -- and assuming Vancouver selects either McKenna or Stenberg -- I would still end up with a valuable commodity in the process.

As much as I value Malhotra, I have to be realistic about the potential historical output of the first-overall draft slot compared to the third-overall.

If, for example, Vancouver were to trade Toronto the third overall pick and include the 33rd overall selection as part of the return to move up to the top spot, the Leafs would end up on the short-end of the deal.

Since the year 2000, the first overall draft slot has contributed an average of 514 games played and produced 464 points.

Over that same span, the third and 33rd overall slots have combined to contribute an average of 580 games played and 341 points. Breaking down the value of the "trade back" strategy introduces what the Leafs were looking for from an analytics perspective but it's not something that I would look to implement despite listening to and considering the strategy.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.07.2026

1390545 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / NHL Top 16 Mock Draft: Who will Maple Leafs pick No. 1 overall?

Sam Cosentino

The 2026 NHL Draft is starting to come into focus.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

With some teams eliminated from the playoffs, and the Draft Lottery now complete with a shocking result, there is some definition beginning to take shape in the order of selection.

The fascinating part about this draft class is that both Gavin McKenna and Ivar Stenberg are wingers. They are both expected to go off the board within the first three picks, but this makes defenceman Chase Reid and centre Caleb Malhotra all the more intriguing. Reid is the projected first defenceman off the board, while Malhotra looks to be the best available centre.

Teams typically place more value on the centre and defence positions over wingers. While the high-end defence market is plentiful in this draft, the next two centres after Malhotra are projected a little further down the draft board, and both come with some level of concern. Viggo Bjorck is just five-foot-nine, while Boston University's Tynan Lawrence has had a bit of a roller-coaster season.

After Tuesday's draft lottery results, we now have a shake-up at the top of the order. The Toronto Maple Leafs will be over the moon excited to be able to pick first, while the San Jose Sharks jumped the line and will have a chance to add another stud to an already stacked prospect pipeline.

We know the order of the top 16 picks now, so I present to you my post-lottery mock draft:

No. 1: Toronto Maple Leafs - Gavin McKenna, LW, 5-foot-11, 170 pounds, Penn St. (NCAA)

The Leafs get a chance to replace Mitch Marner's high-end skill and vision, without the same defensive-mindedness. A great player to start rebuilding back with again.

No. 2: San Jose Sharks - Chase Reid, RD, 6-foot-2, 195 pounds, Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds (OHL)

The Sharks are rich in both forwards and defencemen in their system and GM Mike Grier said he will go after the best available player here. Right-shot defencemen who can skate as well as Reid can are too tough to pass up.

No. 3: Vancouver Canucks - Caleb Malhotra, C, 6-foot-2, 182 pounds, Brantford Bulldogs (OHL)

You can't have enough centres in your system, and when it comes to Malhotra there's familiarity with the family and ties to the area. Father Manny is the AHL team's head coach. Seems like a perfect fit.

No. 4: Chicago Blackhawks - Ivar Stenberg, LW, 5-foot-11, 183 pounds, Frolunda (SHL)

There will be some familiarity there with Anton Frondell and the Hawks continue to add to their prospect pool at the forward position. Stenberg put up historic numbers in the SHL and was the best player at the 2026 world juniors, helping Sweden win just their second gold medal since 1981.

No. 5: New York Rangers - Keaton Verhoeff, RD, 6-foot-4, 208 pounds, North Dakota (NCAA)

The Rangers' system is devoid of dynamic, two-way defencemen. Verhoeff fills that need with the ability to defend, but he also has some untapped offensive potential.

No. 6: Calgary Flames - Tynan Lawrence, C, 6-foot-1, 185 pounds, Boston University (NCAA)

With this pick the Flames are getting a worker bee, two-way centre who's had a roller-coaster season, but has enough of a track record dating back to last year to believe he can blossom. They continue to fill their prospect base with skill at a coveted position.

No. 7: Seattle Kraken - Nikita Klepov, RW, 6-foot, 180 pounds, Saginaw Spirit (OHL)

In desperate need of goal scoring, the Kraken go slightly off the board here to address that shortfall. A magician with the puck, Klepov is a dual-threat offensive juggernaut who led the OHL in scoring and should provide production down the road.

No. 8: Winnipeg Jets - Carson Carels, LD, 6-foot-2, 198 pounds, Prince George Cougars (WHL)

The Jets have an aging defensive group with the exception of Elias Salomonsson, who looks to be a legit NHLer. Carels not only has an excellent two-way game, but being a farmer from Manitoba, the Jets would hit a home run with this selection.

No. 9: Florida Panthers - Viggo Bjorck, C, 5-foot-9, 177 pounds, Djurgardens (SHL)

There's enough size signed to long-term contracts in Florida that the Panthers will be able to insulate Bjorck upon arrival. He is a skilled player who knows what to do with the puck, and how to get it back. He fits the hockey IQ profile of Aleksander Barkov and Anton Lundell.

No. 10: Nashville Predators - Daxon Rudolph, RD, 6-foot-2, 206 pounds, Prince Albert Raiders (WHL)

With uncertainty in the GM's chair the default is to go back to drafting at a position where the organization has traditionally had success. Rudolph is a productive, high-energy defenceman who brings plenty of swagger.

No. 11: St. Louis Blues - Alberts Smits, LD, 6-foot-3, 205 pounds, Munchen (DEL)

With some of their aging defensive defenceman, Smits fills a need on the back-end with his size and physicality. As a late birthday with plenty of pro and international experience already, it won't be long before he arrives.

No. 12: New Jersey Devils - Oscar Hemming, LW, 6-foot-4, 193 pounds, Boston College (NCAA)

The Devils need some size up front, and Hemming provides that. He missed half a season, but then made a positive impression as a freshman, and there's still some offence to be uncovered in his game.

No. 13: New York Islanders - Ethan Belchetz, LW, 6-foot-5, 228 pounds, Windsor Spitfires (OHL)

He missed the latter part of the season and the playoffs, but Belchetz has the size and skill combination every team dreams of. He will need to find some consistency in his game and understand the concept that size before skill will help hasten his path to the NHL.

No. 14: Columbus Blue Jackets - Ryan Lin, RD, 5-foot-11, 178 pounds, Vancouver Giants (WHL)

The Blue Jackets love what they're getting from Denton Mateychuk at the NHL level and Lin has a similar profile as a slightly smallish, great-skating, puck-moving defenceman. He may not be as hard of a defender, but he puts plenty of effort into that side of the game.

No. 15: St. Louis Blues (via Detroit) - J.P. Hurlbert, LW, 5-foot-11, 176 pounds, Kamloops Blazers (WHL)

The Blues have already locked up a defenceman earlier in our mock draft, so now it's time to address some scoring up front. Hurlbert's move from the USNTDP to Kamloops led to a 42-goal, 97-point season as a WHL rookie.

No. 16: Washington Capitals - Ilya Morozov, C, 6-foot-3, 200 pounds, Miami (NCAA)

A team that always seems to make picks in this area of the first round work, the Capitals add to their size and skill up front with Morozov, who was one of the youngest players in college hockey this season.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.07.2026



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

1390546 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Prospects Report: What to watch for in WHL, OHL, QMJHL finals

Mike Koreen

The final field for the 2026 Memorial Cup will be determined over the next two weeks as the WHL, OHL and QMJHL finals play out.

The winners of the best-of-seven series will join the host Kelowna Rockets in the four-team tournament, May 22-31.

Here's a look at the three league finals:

OHL

Kitchener Rangers (No. 1 seed in Western Conference) vs. Barrie Colts (No. 2 seed in Eastern Conference)

Rest could be a weapon

The Rangers finished off a five-game win over the Windsor Spitfires last Friday, while the Colts rallied from a 3-1 series deficit with two overtime victories and then a 5-0 Game 7 triumph on Monday in Brantford, Ont., against the heavily favoured Bulldogs.

Now, they have to go to the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium, one of the great venues in junior hockey, for two more road games to start this series Wednesday and Friday.

The Colts played most of the last three games without injured co-captain and Utah Mammoth first-round pick Cole Mammoth. They also created some off-ice drama with their bizarre post-game press conference on Monday in which first-year coach Dylan Smoskowitz and star defenceman Kashawn Aitcheson answered every question with what is apparently a team slogan: "No one cares, work harder."

Smoskowitz, 33, has apologized (the Colts reportedly wanted more players in the press conference), and now hopes his team can focus on the task at hand.

The O'Reilly factor

Rangers star forward Sam O'Reilly won the Red Tilson Trophy on Tuesday as the most outstanding player in the OHL.

It's been a busy year for O'Reilly, whose NHL rights were traded to the Tampa Bay Lightning from the Edmonton Oilers in the Isaac Howard deal last summer before he switched OHL addresses at the January trade deadline when the Rangers acquired him from the arch-rival London Knights.

The strong two-way forward leads the OHL with 14 goals in 14 playoff games. He also has plenty of experience in the spotlight, having won a pair of OHL titles and one Memorial Cup with the Knights the past two years.

Big Ben delivers

Colts goalie Ben Hrebik, who went undrafted last year in the NHL, has to be putting himself into consideration for this year's draft with his recent play.

The six-foot-three Hrebik had a 40-save shutout in Game 7 against the Bulldogs and stopped 54 shots in a 4-3 overtime win in Game 6.

His playoff save percentage of .925 is well above Kitchener counterpart Christian Kirsch's .894 clip. Kirsch, a native of Switzerland, is a fourth-round San Jose Sharks pick.

Fresh feel

After the Knights and Oshawa Generals played in the past two OHL finals, we have a different look for this year's championship.

While a perennial power, the Rangers haven't advanced to the league final since their last title in 2008.

The Colts, also a consistent contender in the Eastern Conference, haven't played for an OHL crown since 2013 and won their only league title in 2000.

WHL

Everett Silvertips (No. 1 seed in Western Conference and league) vs. Prince Albert Raiders (No. 1 seed in Eastern Conference)

Blueline battle

The marquee matchup in this series, which starts Friday in Everett, Wash., features two dynamic defencemen.

Everett's Landon DuPont, allowed in the league a year early last season after getting exceptional status, has been outstanding. A front-runner to go first overall in the 2027 NHL Draft, DuPont has four goals and 13 assists in 13 playoff games. It will be interesting to see if DuPont returns to the WHL or heads to the NCAA next season.

Meanwhile, Prince Albert's Daxon Rudolph should be a top-10 pick in this year's NHL Draft. He leads WHL post-season scoring with nine goals and 14 assists in 15 games. Like DuPont, he could be very intriguing for NCAA teams next season.

NHL to Memorial Cup?

Braeden Cootes started his season playing three regular-season games for the Vancouver Canucks.

He could end it at the Memorial Cup.

Acquired by Prince Albert this season in a deal with the Seattle Thunderbirds, Cootes has given a big boost to the Raiders in their quest to capture their first WHL title since 2019. The Canucks first-round pick has six goals and 12 assists in 15 playoff games, helping the Raiders overcome the reigning champion Medicine Hat Tigers in a six-game Eastern Conference final.

Fabulous Finns

The Silvertips have nailed a pair of picks in the CHL Import Draft.

Finnish forwards Matias Vanhanen (31st overall this year) and Julius Miettinen (30th overall in 2023) lead the team in playoff scoring.

Miettinen is a second-round Seattle Kraken pick, while Vanhanen is sure to be drafted this year after being passed up last year.

Chasing an elusive title

The Silvertips have fallen short in their two appearances in the league final — in their expansion 2003-04 season and 2017-18.

They'll try to become the second American team in three years to win the Memorial Cup after the Saginaw Spirit won on home ice in 2024.

Interestingly, that Spirit team also featured a player granted exceptional status — current San Jose Sharks forward Michael Misa.

QMJHL

Moncton Wildcats (No. 1 seed in league) vs. Chicoutimi Saguenéens (No. 2 seed in league)

Heavyweight clash

These two teams battled for top spot all season.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

It wasn't decided until the final weekend of the season, with the Wildcats (50-10-2-2) finishing one point ahead of the Saguenéens (49-10-3-2).

Moncton won its final nine games to eke out top spot.

It could be critical. The Wildcats took advantage of home ice to beat the Blainville-Boisbriand Armada 6-2 in Game 7 of the semifinals on Tuesday.

The series starts Friday in Moncton, N.B.

Experienced coaches

Two coaches with excellent resumes square off.

Chicoutimi's Yanick Jean is the winningest coach in QMJHL history, though he is still looking for his first league crown.

Moncton's Gardiner MacDougall guided the Wildcats to the title in his first year in the QMJHL last year after winning nine U Sports crowns at the University of New Brunswick.

The Wildcats are trying to become the first team to go back-to-back in the Q since Saint John in 2011 and '12.

Chicoutimi is making its first appearance in a Q final since 1997 and hasn't won it since 1994.

MVP vs. MVP

The series pits last year's playoff MVP (Moncton's Caleb Desnoyers) against this year's regular-season MVP (Chicoutimi's Maxim Masse).

Desnoyers is a Utah Mammoth first-round pick, while Masse is a third-round Anaheim Ducks selection.

However, neither player is in the top five in playoff scoring this season. Moncton's Gabe Smith, also a Utah prospect, leads the way with 24 points in 15 games.

Net gains

The top two goalies in the QMJHL playoffs go head-to-head.

Chicoutimi's Lucas Beckman, an Ottawa Senators prospect, has a 1.43 goals-against average, while Rudy Guimond is at 1.98 for Moncton.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.07.2026

1390547 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Despite Canucks' appalling luck, highest pick since Sedins still promising

Iain MacIntyre

There really is no limit to the hockey gods' cruelty when it comes to the Vancouver Canucks.

Not only did the National Hockey League's worst team lose the draft lottery parlour game yet again Tuesday, the rusty knife plunged into the guts of Canucks Nation was twisted sickeningly when the Toronto Maple Leafs snatched the first pick and the chance in June to select Gavin McKenna.

The Maple Leafs moved to first from fifth in the draft order, while the Canucks dropped to third. The San Jose Sharks leapt to second from ninth by winning the second lottery draw, the California team's second victory by chance in three years.

When the NHL carnival wheel spun against the Canucks in 1970, it was supposed to decide the first pick of that year's draft. But on days like Tuesday, it sure feels like it set the tone for the fate of the franchise.

Since picking second behind their expansion cousins — the Buffalo Sabres grabbed Hall of Famer Gilbert Perreault, the Canucks took Dale Tallon — that first season, Vancouver remains without a Stanley Cup and is the only team currently 0-3 in Cup Finals.

At 25-49-8 — with just nine home wins all season — the Canucks last month finished last in the NHL by three time zones, 20 points behind the Leafs and 28 adrift of the emerging Sharks.

But finishing last in the NHL earns the league's most needy team only a 25.5 per cent chance of drafting first and the Canucks, as usual, watched others beat the odds.

Statistically, Vancouver picking third overall in June was the most likely outcome, the way the lottery has been designed. But it still hurts.

Except for a surprise league ruling in 1990 that allowed the team to keep a contentious draft pick named Pavel Bure, cunningly claimed in the sixth round the previous year (the gods must have gone golfing that day), the Canucks just aren't allowed to have nice things.

They remain 0-for-ever in the draft lottery, one of only six teams unlucky enough never to have moved up in the order since the NHL began randomly juggling picks in 1995 to prevent tanking. The measure, you may gather, has reached absurd levels over the last decade, when the league turned a safeguard mechanism into a fan spectacle involving as many teams as possible.

Besides choosing third, Vancouver has three other selections among the top 41 picks in this year's draft.

"Despite the fact that the Canucks aren't going to pick No. 1, it doesn't mean that we have to be all upset about this," Canucks president Jim Rutherford said in a press conference that followed the NHL's lottery show. "This is a really strong draft. With the disappointment and all the excitement that goes with picking No. 1, No. 3 is still going to be a great building block for the Vancouver Canucks."

"What I've been told by our amateur (scouting) staff is they're very confident that we're getting a number of good players in this draft. Picking at the top of the second (round), and even in the middle of the second, our staff feels very confident they like players that are going to fall in there. This could be a game changer for the Canucks if, in fact, the staff hits on three or four of these players."

Despite their appalling luck, the Canucks' draft position at No. 3 is still the franchise's highest since Brian Burke conjured Daniel and Henrik Sedin second and third overall in 1999. The twins watched grim-faced as the organization's representatives while the draft show was broadcast from NHL Network headquarters in New Jersey.

With its top pick, Vancouver is still going to get an outstanding prospect, someone who should be a key part of its rebuild and may even play in the NHL next season. But the Canucks almost certainly will not be getting McKenna.

The offensive playmaker could have been a game-changer for Vancouver, not only on the ice for his dynamic skills, but for re-energizing a fanbase that just endured one of the bleakest, most disappointing seasons ever inflicted upon them.

Whatever McKenna's shortcomings, the 18-year-old winger from the Yukon, who is training in Kelowna, is the most offensively talented player available in June and the one most likely to excite fans.

The Canucks, like many NHL teams, have wrestled with the choice of McKenna over buzzsaw Swedish winger Ivar Stenberg as the top forward (and player) available in this draft class.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

But now they may not get either.

32 Thoughts: The Podcast

32 Thoughts: The Podcast

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

Latest episode

The organization is extremely high on offensive defenceman Chase Reid, an American who played junior hockey in Sault St. Marie, and has liked Brantford junior centre Caleb Malhotra, minor-league coach Manny Malhotra's son, long before the two-way pivot soared up draft rankings.

Reid also headlines a talented tier of defencemen that includes Keaton Verhoeff and Carson Carels.

Over time, any of these players could become stars. But none of them has the immediate star power of McKenna.

From the Quinn Hughes trade, the Canucks acquired the Minnesota Wild's first-round pick, currently 24th but subject to a slight downgrade if the Wild make the Stanley Cup Playoffs' final four. Kiefer Sherwood's trade to San Jose gave Vancouver an extra second-round pick, 41st overall. As the worst team in the regular season, the Canucks' own second pick will be the first of the second round, 33rd overall.

A good portion of the team's rebuild can be constructed in June with sharp drafting. All they need is a little luck.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.07.2026

1390548 Websites

TSN.CA / Rudolph stepping up in WHL playoffs and rising up NHL draft lists

Mark Masters

The Prince Albert Raiders are in the Western Hockey League final and Daxon Rudolph is a big reason why. The right-shot defenceman leads the playoffs in scoring with 23 points in 15 games.

"A lot of it comes from team success," said Rudolph, who is also tied for third overall with nine goals in the playoffs. "But, for myself, I'm just playing with confidence, playing with swagger and that's the biggest thing."

Rudolph has hit the scoresheet in 13 of 15 playoff games and has landed a shot on net in each outing. He leads the WHL playoffs with 73 shots on net, which is nine more than anyone else.

Rudolph will look to stay hot on Friday night when the Raiders open the WHL championship series against the top-seeded Everett Silvertips. You can watch the entire series on TSN.

"He's such a skilled player," said Silvertips defenceman Landon DuPont, who has recorded 17 points in 13 playoff games. "He just sees the game so well and you can tell the game slows down for him. He can see things that almost no one on the ice can see. It's going to be fun playing against him."

DuPont breaks into a big smile.

"Hopefully we can limit him to, you know, maybe a goal or two instead of three," the 16-year-old added.

DuPont is not eligible for the NHL draft until next year, but Rudolph will hear his name called next month in Buffalo. The 18-year-old from Lacombe, Alta. is surging up draft lists thanks to his playoff performance, which came on the heels of an impressive 28-goal, 50-assist regular season.

NHL Central Scouting placed Rudolph fifth on its final list of North American skaters. TSN director of scouting Craig Button has the 6-foot-3, 206-pound blueliner going seventh overall to the Seattle Kraken in his post-lottery mock draft.

"I'm definitely a super competitive kid and want to go as high as I possibly can and continue to work towards that," Rudolph said. "But, that being said, I try not to focus on the rankings and things like that too, too much."

During a conversation with TSN, Rudolph revealed what led to his goal-scoring spike this season and shared why Drew Doughty is a big role model. The following is an edited transcript of the interview.

TSN: When you're playing with swagger, what does it look like?

Rudolph: Confidence with the puck. You're just kind of playing rather than thinking about the game. You're just playing the game and making reads like you would.

TSN: What do you like about big games and big moments?

Rudolph: That's the best part of hockey. That's why you play the game. We're in the playoffs, heading to the WHL finals this weekend, so very exciting moments. It's definitely a lot of pressure, but I think the best players step up in those moments and really separate themselves from others.

TSN: How do you deal with pressure?

Rudolph: Try not to think about it too much and just play the game. Obviously, there's a lot of nerves leading up to the game and puck drop and the crowd's roaring and things like that. But once that first puck hits the ice, it's just a game of hockey that you've loved since you were a young kid. At the end of the day, it's just playing and not really thinking about it.

TSN: During the Eastern Conference final against Medicine Hat, you guys trailed 2-1. In Game 4 on the road, you scored twice and added two assists in a big win. What allowed you and the team to turn the tide?

Rudolph: That's definitely a massive game. I thought we deserved to win Game 3, actually, outshot them, outplayed them, and they ended up winning it in overtime. So, that was a tough one for our group. But right after that game, our leadership group [Rudolph serves as an alternate captain] got everyone in and said, 'Hey, we have to do it tomorrow. Like, we can't go back 3-1.' Just stepping up for that game was massive and that was our mindset for the 24 hours leading up to it. So, definitely a big game for us and that changed the series.

TSN: Medicine Hat knocked you out last year, how much did that motivate you this year?

Rudolph: Yeah, 100 per cent, definitely motivated us a lot. We've had some good battles with them over the past couple of years. They did sweep us in the second round of last year's playoffs before they ended up winning it all. I definitely still remembered that feeling after and a little bit of revenge.

TSN: What will the series with Everett be like?

Rudolph: Tons of elite players on that team. They're just a really good, hardworking team. They've been doing it all year long and obviously finished first in the league. We got the chance to play them only one time this year and we ended up winning. It'll be a really good matchup. Both teams really like to play with pace and play a hard, detailed game.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • May 7, 2026

TSN: What stands out to you about DuPont?

Rudolph: I've been lucky enough to know him for a while now. He's actually one of my good buddies in the summer. It'll be cool playing against him. What he does on the ice is so incredible. I think the biggest thing with him is he's such a good skater. He moves up and down the ice so well and makes so many good decisions. He's definitely a player we'll have to key in on and someone I'm looking forward to going up against.

TSN: What would a WHL title mean to you?

Rudolph: It'd mean everything. It's been a goal of mine ever since I stepped into this league and to know that it's a possibility and really close to getting there this year, it's super exciting. Ever since training camp this year, we knew we had a chance, and as we get closer and closer, it's just getting more exciting. To bring a championship back to the city and this community that supports us so well, it'd mean everything to me.

TSN: How would you describe your game?

Rudolph: I'm a 200-foot, two-way D-man. I like contributing offensively and have a skill set to make plays, but really take pride in my D-zone and defending hard as well.

TSN: Who did you cheer for growing up?

Rudolph: I cheered for Pittsburgh because of Sidney Crosby. He was always my idol. He's just such a great role model. He has leadership skills. Everything he does is very classy and kind of like no other. You hear lots of stories about his leadership and just the kind of person he is. So, definitely a good role model for me and someone I've just always looked up to.

TSN: Who's your NHL role model in terms of play style?

Rudolph: Guys that I see myself in are Drew Doughty, Charlie McAvoy, and Brock Faber a little bit as well. Those are guys that do it all at both ends of the ice and are big, right-shot D-men as well.

TSN: What do you appreciate the most when you watch Doughty?

Rudolph: Just the completeness to his game. He does it all. He's won Cups. He defends hard. He contributes offensively and can play on the power play. He just plays in every situation and at a really high level and that's what I like most about him.

TSN: Where do you feel like you've improved the most this season?

Rudolph: My shot is probably a big area. Yeah, that's something I've really focused on is just getting into better scoring areas to put the puck in the net more often, and I think it's really paid off. And then my foot speed. I know as you go up in levels, the game gets faster and players are more skilled so just being able to get better at skating and kind of close area and close time and space for those offensive forwards.

Everyone knows that Daxon Rudolph can rip the pill, but his true superpower is getting his shot off before the goalie is ready.

Not every shot needs a full windup or high velo. Sometimes quick and early beats hard and late. #2026NHLDraft pic.twitter.com/1CoDsVHku5

— Kareem Ramadan (@HockeyTakes15) April 29, 2026

TSN: What are the areas of the ice that you've been trying to get to more?

Rudolph: Rather than staying at the blueline, I'm just trying to get downhill to the slot area, attacking on different routes and patterns so the goalie isn't set as much. I think that's the biggest piece. So, yeah, just trying to get into that slot, the mid-range area is what we call it, rather than just shooting from the blueline all the time.

Daxon Rudolph is rolling into the playoffs.

Last 10 games:

- 4 goals

- 14 points

- 4 shots

Tied Josh Morrissey's Prince Albert record (28 goals by a defenceman)

Led all WHL draft-eligible D with 28G, 78PTS  
pic.twitter.com/wvYkhK9GjK

— Cam Robinson (@Hockey\_Robinson) March 26, 2026

TSN: It's certainly working as you increased your goal total from seven to 28. What's your favorite goal of the season?

Rudolph: Hmm, I would say maybe one in the playoffs. Probably one of the two goals against Medicine Hat in Game 4. I think just the moment was so big and such an important game for us, so to be able to contribute and score in the first period and get the guys on the board was huge. That's probably my favourite as of right now.

TSN: I asked you about goals, but I'm curious about your first WHL fight against Saskatoon's Cooper Williams. What happened there?

Rudolph: Yeah, I did get into one this year (smile). I was already getting a penalty, which I wasn't happy about. I cross-checked him and saw the refs' arm go up so I was pretty frustrated. I was like, 'May as well take him with me,' kind of thing. I challenged him and he dropped them with me. It wasn't really much of a fight. It was the first for both of us. Yeah, it was good and glad it happened.

TSN: Did you prepare in any way for the potential of fighting?

Rudolph: Ah, no, not really. We talk about it in the room and stuff and mess with each other sometimes with the guys, but no real coaching or anything like that.

TSN: What is the biggest challenge you've faced in your career?

Rudolph: The biggest setback so far for myself was probably a little injury my first year of u15, which had me out for four weeks. My shoulder, I hurt my AC joint, and that's really the only time I've ever had to be away from the game of hockey. Just watching my team play was super tough, more mentally than physically, honestly. I just learned to just stick with it and try to stay positive. I mean, it's not the end of the world if you have a minor setback like that.

TSN: How do you deal with the mental side of things in general?

Rudolph: When I'm at the rink, I'm super focused on hockey. I do a bunch of video away from the rink as well, but just getting away from it and spending time with your teammates and friends is really beneficial as well. Just kind of to maybe turn that switch off a little bit and be a guy and be with your buddies.

TSN: How have you handled this being your draft year?

Rudolph: It's definitely been a busy year with lots of stuff going on for myself, obviously. But it's been a lot of fun. I'm very lucky to be in the situation I am in and I just enjoy all the experiences I've gotten to be a part of. I just take it one day at a time. During the season, I try not to worry about the draft too much and just focus on getting better every day and focus on what's important here in PA with the Raiders.

TSN.CA LOADED: 05.07.2026