



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

The News & Observer

Hurricanes add to injury list as Jankowski misses game, leaves road trip

By: Chip Alexander

The Carolina Hurricanes (Shopping Cart IconShop Canes Fan Gear) made it through their playoff run to the Stanley Cup relatively injury-free, but the follow-up season is quickly presenting challenges.

Captain Jordan Staal has been sidelined with a calf muscle tear and veteran forward Taylor Hall with an undisclosed upper body injury. Hall was placed on injured reserve Monday.

Center Mark Jankowski now has been added to the injury list, missing Sunday's game at Calgary with a lower-body issue.

Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said after the 3-2 loss to the Flames that Jankowski was returning to Raleigh for further medical evaluation.

Jankowski had scored a goal in six straight games and had moved up to take Staal's center spot between wingers Nikolaj Ehlers and Jordan Martinook. His injury had Martinook moving to center as Brind'Amour had to readjust his lines.

Forward Seth Jarvis has missed the first 10 games of the season as he finishes up his recovery from offseason shoulder surgery. Jarvis has practiced with the team and is on the five-game road trip but has not been medically cleared to play.

"We've got guys playing out of position and have lost three or four penalty killers," Brind'Amour said after the Flames

game. "But you've got to figure it out. This is a no-one-feels-sorry-for-you league. You just regroup."

The Canes' lineup in the first two games of the trip have had forwards Bradly Nadeau and Felix Unger Sorum – two callups from the AHL Chicago Wolves – in the lineup.

"Obviously it's been a lot with guys getting nicked up to start the year," Martinook said after the Calgary game. "Forever around here, it's been the next-man-up mentality and that's not going to change anytime soon."

Jankowski had a power-play goal in the Canes' 3-2 win Saturday at Winnipeg to start the trip, and was used on the penalty kill.

"He's just a guy that can do a little bit of everything and we need that right now.," Brind'Amour said after the Winnipeg game.

Jarvis is clearly anxious to play again, but said the urgency caused by the Canes' run of injuries would not hasten his return.

"For me, I always want to play and want to get back in the lineup," Jarvis said before leaving on the road trip. "But from a team point, we've done such a good job with guys coming up and in dealing with injuries. I don't think there's any urgency from the team to rush me back."

The Canes continue their trip Tuesday at Vancouver and play at Edmonton and St. Louis before returning to Raleigh for a home game Oct. 29 against the Boston Bruins.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026



Preview: October 20 at Vancouver

By: Walt Ruff & Peter Dewar

Canes aim to start new winning streak as they face the Canucks for the second time in 12 days

VANCOUVER, B.C. - The Carolina Hurricanes' State Fair road trip reaches its midpoint on Tuesday, when they take on the Vancouver Canucks.

When: Tuesday, Oct. 20

Where: Rogers Arena

Puck Drop: 10:00 p.m. ET

Watch on HHN: Prime Video, Spectrum, Fubo | Full Broadcast Info

Listen: 99.9 The Fan, Hurricanes App

Canes Record: 7-2-1 (15 Points - T-1st, Metropolitan Division)

Canes Last Game: 3-2 Loss to the Calgary Flames on Sunday, Oct. 18

Canucks Record: 2-7-1 (5 Points - 6th, Pacific Division)

Canucks Last Game: 4-2 Loss to the Tampa Bay Lightning on Saturday, Oct. 17

Last Time Out...

The Canes were "sloppy" on Sunday and came out on the wrong side of a 3-2 game against the Flames.

Without Taylor Hall, Mark Jankowski, Seth Jarvis, and Jordan Staal, the team had players playing out of position and several newly formed lines, and goals from Jesperi Kotkaniemi and Jalen Chatfield were not enough to overcome their defensive woes.

Although he recorded the team's first 30+ save performance of the season, Brandon Bussi suffered the loss in net.

Previous Meetings vs. VAN This Season...

Oct. 8: Logan Stankoven recorded a natural hat trick as the Canes cruised past the Canucks 7-2 at Lenovo Center.

Let's Start Another...

The Canes' seven-game win streak came to a close on Sunday.

Falling for the first time since Oct. 2, it was also the team's first road loss of the season after winning its first five games away from Raleigh to start the campaign.

Okay, KK...

Forward Jesperi Kotkaniemi has scored in back-to-back contests. It is his first time doing so since a three-game scoring streak from Jan. 20-23, 2025.

With centers Mark Jankowski and Jordan Staal on the shelf, the sixth-year Hurricane has received an elevated role, working on both the power play and penalty kill at five-on-five.

In Net...

It feels likely that the group will turn to the undefeated Pyotr Kochetkov this evening, after Brandon Bussi played in the team's most recent game and the team was off the ice on Monday.

Just the second goalie in team history to start a season with five straight wins, Kochetkov has also allowed two goals or fewer in all five.

On The Other Side...

Vancouver returns home following a six-game trip east that started in Raleigh.

Going 0-5-1, keeping the puck out of the net has been a challenge for the rebuilding squad. Only the Calgary Flames (4.63) give up more goals per game than the Canucks' average of 4.5. Part of that problem is that they allow an average of 32.7 shots per night, also second-most among all teams.

When it comes to their highlights, Elias Pettersson continues to drive the bus offensively, producing 10 points in 10 games.

Injury Updates

Forward Seth Jarvis is practicing following offseason shoulder surgery. He graduated from a yellow, no-contact sweater on Thursday, Oct. 8. He was initially scheduled to miss "probably four to six months" from the end of June. Last year's leading goal-scorer (32) is with the team on this road trip.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

Forward Jordan Staal is expected to miss "anywhere from a month or two" after suffering a tear in his calf on Sunday, Oct. 11. He was placed on injured reserve on Oct. 15.

Forward Taylor Hall is out "week-to-week" with an upper-body injury suffered on Oct. 13 vs. Washington, and was placed on injured reserve on Oct. 19.

Forward Mark Jankowski was sent back to Raleigh to have his lower-body injury checked out further on Oct. 18.

What Are We Wearing?

The Canes are scheduled to wear white uniforms.

What's Next After This Game?

The Canes will fly to Edmonton post-game. They're scheduled to practice on Wednesday and return to game action on Thursday against the Oilers.

Next Game: Thursday, Oct. 22 at Edmonton | 9:00 p.m. ET | Hurricanes Hockey Network

Next Home Game: Tuesday, Oct. 27 vs. Boston | 8:00 p.m. ET | ESPN | Tickets | Parking



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026



Canucks look to snap seven-game skid against Hurricanes

By: FLM

Vancouver begins a three-game homestand after gathering just one point on a six-game trip, while Carolina looks to rebound from Sunday's defeat in Calgary despite missing injured forward Taylor Hall.

The Carolina Hurricanes continue their five-game road trip, looking to pick up a second win over the Vancouver Canucks in as many weeks when the two teams hit the ice Tuesday night.

Carolina is looking to return to the win column after Sunday's 3-2 loss to the Calgary Flames, which snapped the Canes' seven-game winning streak.

"This is the no-one-feels-sorry-for-you league. We just regroup. We still created a ton of offense," said Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour. "(The Calgary) game could have looked different, but I still would have felt the same, because we're giving up way too much."

Jalen Chatfield and Jesperi Kotkaniemi scored while goaltender Brandon Bussi made 31 saves for the Canes, who are 5-1-0 on the road this season.

Sebastian Aho added an assist in the loss and has points (six goals, eight assists) in all but one game to start the season.

"We just probably gave up way too much," said forward Jordan Martinook. "It felt like, especially in the third, (Calgary) started putting it on us a lot and they were just playing simple, like how we usually play."

The Hurricanes will be without forward Taylor Hall, who was placed on injured reserve Monday with an upper-body injury. The 34-year-old has three goals and two assists in eight games this season. Hall is considered week-to-week.

Forward Mark Jankowski (lower body) was also sent home from the road trip for further observation.

With Hall and Jankowski on the shelf, the Canes have recalled forwards Bradley Nadeau and Felix Unger Sorum from the American Hockey League's Chicago Wolves.

Tuesday is the second and final meeting between Carolina and Vancouver this season. The Canes thumped the Canucks 7-2 in Raleigh on Oct. 8.

Logan Stankoven paced the Hurricanes offense with a hat trick, Andrei Svechnikov added a pair, while K'Andre Miller and Jankowski also scored. Sean Walker added four assists in the win.

Vancouver entertains Carolina following a six-game road trip, looking to snap a seven-game losing streak.

Forward Elias Pettersson and Linus Karlsson scored in Saturday's 4-2 loss to the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Goaltender Kevin Lankinen made 31 saves for the Canucks, who picked up just one of a possible 12 points on the road trip and haven't won since a 4-1 victory over the Calgary Flames on Oct. 3.

"The execution of details within our game, things that we've continuously talked about that are just non-negotiable," said Canucks coach Manny Malhotra. "We need to have them to be able to be successful. Getting in shot lanes, being tougher around our net, face-off details."

"We continue to learn the lesson the hard way that when you don't do those things, pucks end up in the back of your net."

Forward Marco Rossi, who missed Saturday's contest in Tampa Bay due to illness, missed Vancouver's practice on Monday.

Tuesday is the start of a three-game homestand for the Canucks, who are 1-2-0 on home ice this season.

Carolina won both meetings with Vancouver last season, outscoring the Canucks 10-7.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

yahoo!sports

Maple Leafs Trade Pitch Lands Stanley Cup Champion Defenseman For Easton Cowan

By: Jonathan Vankin

A Maple Leafs trade pitch would send Easton Cowan to Carolina for Stanley Cup champion Alexander Nikishin as Toronto seeks defensive help.

Alexander Nikishin of the Stanley Cup champion Carolina Hurricanes. Getty

The Toronto Maple Leafs may be in an unremarkable sixth place in the NHL's Atlantic Division, but goal scoring hasn't been the problem. Their 32 goals after a 3-1 defeat of the San Jose Sharks Monday ranks the Leafs 11th in the NHL with 3.2 goals per game.

Toronto's problem is an aging blue line with quickly declining effectiveness. But a new trade pitch published Monday attempts to address the issue by bringing in a top defenseman from the Stanley Cup champion Carolina Hurricanes. But at a heavy cost. Would the Maple Leafs make the sacrifice?

The proposed trade would send Toronto's 21-year-old forward Easton Cowan to Carolina for Hurricanes defenseman Alexander Nikishin, targeting Toronto's faltering defense whose 3.30 goals against average is 10th-worst in the league.

The one-for-one swap, posted on PuckPedia's PuckGM roster-builder, tests how much Toronto will pay for defensive help and whether Carolina has any reason to deal.

Cowan, 21, was born May 20, 2005, in Mount Brydges, Ontario. Toronto drafted him 28th overall in 2023 after he piled up 96 points in 54 games for the OHL's London Knights in 2023-24, according to PuckPedia's data. He scored 11 goals with 18 assists in 66 games as a rookie last season and has three goals and four assists through 10 games this year. His entry-level contract carries a \$900,000 cap hit through 2027-28, when he becomes a restricted free agent.

Nikishin, 25, is a native of Oryol, Russia, whom Carolina selected 69th overall in 2020. He totaled 54 goals and 177 points in 288 KHL games before joining the Hurricanes, according to a Daily Faceoff report. Last season he ranked second among rookie defensemen with 11 goals and 22 assists in 81 games, adding a plus-18 rating and 18:11 of nightly ice time, according to NHL.com. The 11 goals set a franchise record for a rookie defenseman and earned him a spot on the All-Rookie Team.

Toronto Maple Leafs' Defensive Need and the Easton Cowan Question

Alexander Nikishin #21 of the Carolina Hurricanes looks on during the first period

Including the injured Chris Tanev, Toronto's defensemen average 33 years old, the NHL's oldest group, with the Pittsburgh Penguins second at 32.5, Editor in Leaf's Marc Sautter reported Monday. The Leafs rank 11th in goals scored with 32 but have allowed 33.

"They don't seem interested in trading Cowan," Elliott Friedman said on the "32 Thoughts Podcast." Friedman first reported that Toronto would pay a premium for a difference-maker on defense, and the same report notes the Leafs explored Nikishin and Detroit Red Wings defenseman Simon Edvinsson without coming close to a deal.

"It has to be for a No. 1 player, and nothing less," Sautter wrote for Editor in Leaf. His example was Zach Werenski of the Columbus Blue Jackets, and he argued a major trade is unlikely to get done without Cowan. Nikishin has one NHL season behind him.

Red Wings Trade Pitch Lands Alexander Nikishin for 41-Goal Wing in Blockbuster

Carolina Hurricanes' Reasons to Move Alexander Nikishin

Nikishin remains an unsigned restricted free agent, sits on Carolina's non-roster injured list amid a contract dispute and has requested a trade, according to CBS Sports' RotoWire report. The report adds that Mike Reilly potentially sits ahead of him on the depth chart.

Nikishin and the New York Rangers were each near \$9 million annually before talks stalled, and he is rumored to want a five-year deal, according to Pro Hockey Rumors. Friedman has reported that Carolina wants two first-round picks or comparable players. Four Hurricanes defensemen reach unrestricted free agency after this season, and only Jaccob Slavin, K'Andre Miller and Sean Walker are signed beyond it.

The cost gap is stark. Cowan's \$900,000 cap hit against a Nikishin deal near \$9 million leaves Toronto roughly \$8.1 million short, and Zeev Buium signed with the Vancouver Canucks for \$9.38 million annually over eight years. Carolina would shed a negotiation and take on a forward under team control through 2027-28.

Toronto gains a left-shot defenseman at its position of need, and Carolina gains cost certainty. So, who says no?



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

LINKS

<https://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/article317683440.html>

<https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/preview-october-20-at-vancouver>

<https://www.cbssports.com/nhl/news/canucks-look-to-snap-seven-game-skid-against-hurricanes/>

<https://sports.yahoo.com/articles/maple-leafs-trade-pitch-lands-092039463.html>

SportScan

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

1225826 Carolina Hurricanes

Hurricanes add to injury list as Jankowski misses game, leaves road trip

Chip Alexander

The Carolina Hurricanes made it through their playoff run to the Stanley Cup relatively injury-free, but the follow-up season is quickly presenting challenges.

Captain Jordan Staal has been sidelined with a calf muscle tear and veteran forward Taylor Hall with an undisclosed upper body injury. Hall was placed on injured reserve Monday.

Center Mark Jankowski now has been added to the injury list, missing Sunday's game at Calgary with a lower-body issue.

Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said after the 3-2 loss to the Flames that Jankowski was returning to Raleigh for further medical evaluation.

Jankowski had scored a goal in six straight games and had moved up to take Staal's center spot between wingers Nikolaj Ehlers and Jordan Martinook. His injury had Martinook moving to center as Brind'Amour had to readjust his lines.

Forward Seth Jarvis has missed the first 10 games of the season as he finishes up his recovery from offseason shoulder surgery. Jarvis has practiced with the team and is on the five-game road trip but has not been medically cleared to play.

"We've got guys playing out of position and have lost three or four penalty killers," Brind'Amour said after the Flames game. "But you've got to figure it out. This is a no-one-feels-sorry-for-you league. You just regroup."

The Canes' lineup in the first two games of the trip have had forwards Bradly Nadeau and Felix Unger Sorum – two callups from the AHL Chicago Wolves – in the lineup.

"Obviously it's been a lot with guys getting nicked up to start the year," Martinook said after the Calgary game. "Forever around here, it's been the next-man-up mentality and that's not going to change anytime soon."

Jankowski had a power-play goal in the Canes' 3-2 win Saturday at Winnipeg to start the trip, and was used on the penalty kill.

"He's just a guy that can do a little bit of everything and we need that right now," Brind'Amour said after the Winnipeg game.

Jarvis is clearly anxious to play again, but said the urgency caused by the Canes' run of injuries would not hasten his return.

"For me, I always want to play and want to get back in the lineup," Jarvis said before leaving on the road trip. "But from a team point, we've done such a good job with guys coming up and in dealing with injuries. I don't think there's any urgency from the team to rush me back."

The Canes continue their trip Tuesday at Vancouver and play at Edmonton and St. Louis before returning to Raleigh for a home game Oct. 29 against the Boston Bruins.

News Observer LOADED: 10.20.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

1225936 Websites

The Athletic / What we're seeing in the NHL: 10 too-early takes on Rangers, Elias Pettersson, more

By Harman Dayal and Shayna Goldman

In the first couple weeks of NHL action, there is only so much to learn. Samples are small, with teams only approaching the 10-percent mark of an 84-game season. But where is the fun in that?

The first month of the season is the prime time to spot trends and spew half-baked takes. So, let's add to the drama of the early goings of the 2026-27 season and look at 10 way-too-early takes from around the league.

The Flyers are a complete disaster

GM Daniel Briere admitted before training camp that his team might "take a little bit of a step back," but nobody could have predicted the bottom falling out entirely.

Philadelphia is second-last in the Eastern Conference with an ugly 2-6-3 record, and the wild part is their process has looked so brutal that the club is almost fortunate to have forced some of those games beyond regulation and collected seven points.

The Flyers are getting annihilated territorially, controlling a league-worst 34 percent of expected goals at five-on-five. They've been held to fewer than 20 shots on goal in six of their 10 games, which is often an issue with Rick Tocchet-coached teams. They look like a dysfunctional, disconnected mess. They can't stop the cycle defensively because they're losing most 50/50 battles and loose puck races, their puck execution has been abysmal with bad first touches and very simple passes botched, and their forecheck has been largely ineffective.

Monday's win over the Colorado Avalanche was a step in the right direction, headlined by Matvei Michkov's two goals. But Michkov is the only forward scoring at a half-a-point-per-game pace or better, and he and Porter Martone rank seventh and 11th in average ice time among forwards, which is questionably low.

The Sharks' defense is in shambles

To the San Jose Sharks' credit, it's not like the team had a strong foundation to build from this summer. But the combination of Jacob Trouba, Darnell Nurse, and Dmitry Orlov on the same blue line has been a disaster so far. Defense is unquestionably the Sharks' Achilles' heel so far this season.

Ahead of Monday's matchup against the Toronto Maple Leafs, the Nurse-Michael Kesselring pair has been absolutely crushed in matchup minutes with a sub-33 percent xG rate. The Dmitry Orlov-Luca Cagnoni pair, which has been heavily sheltered in comparison, hasn't performed much better; they combine for a 35.5 percent xG rate and have been outscored 5-1 at five-on-five.

A lack of defensive strength up front only compounds the situation. It's less about the young guns, because the defensive side generally takes some time to develop for up-and-coming offensive threats. It's the veterans, like Barclay Goodrow, who aren't moving the needle enough.

Defense was always going to be a projected weak point for the Sharks. The roster strength just isn't there, and neither is the structure within the system. But as expected as that may be for a rebuilding club, defense this poor can weigh on a team. If the Sharks can't get out of their own zone, it could derail their offensive progress. It could over-tax young goalie Yaroslav Askarov, too.

The Bruins look playoff-caliber

Most doubted the Boston Bruins' ability to repeat last year's 100-point season. Dom Luszczyszyn's model pegged them at a 25 percent chance of making the playoffs heading into the season, and many oddsmakers also had them as a long shot as well.

It's early, and their schedule has been a bit soft — only one of their nine games so far has been against a team that reached 100 or more points

last season — but the Bruins are making a lot of people eat crow as they sit atop the Atlantic with a sparkling 7-2-0 record.

Jeremy Swayman is off to a sensational start, rocking a .934 save percentage, but the biggest surprise is how many offensive contributions the team has gotten up and down the lineup. In the past, Boston's been overreliant on David Pastrnak to drive offense, but so far, nine forwards have already hit the five-point mark. Fraser Minten has taken another step with eight points in nine games, Elias Lindholm is bouncing back, JJ Peterka has made an impact, Matthew Poitras has been a difference-maker since coming back from injury and James Hagens is chipping in with secondary offense, too.

All of that has made Boston the highest-scoring team in the East in the early going, and this isn't just a flimsy shooting percentage bender — they've generated 2.9 expected goals per 60, which ranks sixth-best in the NHL. Oh, and did we mention they've pulled this off despite Charlie McAvoy playing only three games?

The Canadiens have (another) early-season goalie controversy

Montreal has found itself in a familiar position to open the season.

After an excellent 2024-25, Sam Montembeault lost his game and eventually the starter's net. Jakub Dobeš, who experienced some high highs and low lows in the early goings of last season, found another level as the season rolled on. He was fantastic after the Olympic break and stood tall in the playoffs.

That earned Dobeš the starter's net this season. Except, similar to Montembeault last fall, he has had an extremely rocky start. Through four games, Dobeš has an .842 save percentage and allowed 5.4 goals above expected, which ranks fifth-to-last in the league on HockeyStats.com, heading into Monday night's matchups.

With Dobeš struggling and Montembeault sidelined with injury, Jacob Fowler has re-joined the fold. His numbers so far aren't flashy — a 1.6 GSx and .900 save percentage, to be exact — but it's been enough to give the Canadiens a chance to win on three of four nights.

Fowler's solid play has given Dobeš a much-needed chance to reset. But it doesn't necessarily settle who should start over this next stretch. As much as Dobeš has been fighting it over his first few games, his resilience last year and overall track record are still worth betting on. Plus, Montembeault should be back from injury soon.

It helps that the Canadiens have options and depth in net. But what this team really needs is to find some consistency, and a three-goalie system can complicate things.

Ullmark and Stützle are single-handedly carrying the Senators

Few teams have been hammered with key injuries as badly as the Ottawa Senators. Jake Sanderson exited very early in the Senators' season opener, Artem Zub has yet to play a game, and William Eklund was forced to undergo ankle surgery.

Despite all that adversity, the Senators have cobbled together a strong 6-3-0 record. It hasn't always looked convincing or pretty, but a couple of elite performers are almost single-handedly keeping Ottawa afloat.

Linus Ullmark is playing out of his mind, with an outrageous .945 save percentage and 6.8 goals saved above expected through seven games. The only potential worry is workload: Ullmark has never played 50 games in a season (he's on pace for 65 right now), and backup Sam Ersson has looked completely unreliable so far.

Ottawa ranks 25th in goals scored per game, 27th in manufacturing five-on-five expected goals offensively, and the power play is clicking at a woeful 12.8 percent. That should sink a team, but Tim Stützle has put the team on his back offensively.

Stützle has scored 12 points in nine games, double the next-highest-producing teammate. The Sens are up 8-3 in goals when Stützle is on the ice at five-on-five, and have been outscored 11-6 in all other five-on-five minutes.

The Oilers are glaringly top-heavy on defense

A top-heavy approach is nothing new for the Edmonton Oilers — especially as long as Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl are stacked together on the top line, generally deployed with Evan Bouchard. And



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

this year, the gap in play between the big guns and the rest of the team has been massive.

It's obviously tricky to isolate how well Evan Bouchard and Mattias Ekholm have played in their own right, because they've only played 19:32 five-on-five minutes without Draisaitl and McDavid. And it may not even be fair to compare them to the bottom four on defense, considering how much harder their minutes are thanks to a lack of forward depth up front.

But the fact that it has created such a growing gap on the back end is still noteworthy.

Because as eye-catching as Bouchard's numbers are — six goals and 16 points in all situations, a sparkling 72.5 percent xG rate, and a 19-2 scoring edge in his five-on-five minutes — the fact that he has cleaned up so many of his usual defensive lapses is a big part of it. So is Ekholm's resurgence, after his play ticked down over the last-year plus. And both of those elements have played an important part in Edmonton's success, because 1) it's helped support the Oilers' goalies, and 2) there have been so many bottom-four lapses so far.

Jake Walman has struggled again, but there's also Connor Murphy, whose foot speed is still an area of concern for a team that hasn't shed its run-and-gun style completely. So whether this pair can keep up the pace, as the bottom four tries to find more structure, could be a difference-maker moving forward.

Utah is unstoppable offensively

The Mammoth's mediocre power-play (ranked 18th in the NHL last season) was one of the biggest reasons their offense failed to break through as an elite force. That's finally changed this season, as Utah's power play has erupted with a league-best 35.3 percent conversion rate, catapulting them to sixth-best in the NHL in goals scored per game.

Utah's power play has scored in a wide variety of ways, with the top unit of Clayton Keller (right half-wall), Dylan Guenther (left half-wall), Logan Cooley (bumper/down low), Nick Schmaltz (down low/bumper) and Mikhail Sergachev (point) all contributing. Puck movement has been extremely fluid, with the unit making very decisive plays and connecting on some nifty one-touch passes. They've exploited penalty kills that have tried to close them too aggressively. In the clip below, watch this highlight-reel tic-tac-toe goal against the Columbus Blue Jackets' high-pressure PK.

Utah PP goal

Cooley's playmaking has been a treat to watch, with some ridiculous east-west passes. Here's an example of a slick feed he makes down low to set up a tap-in.

Cooley assist 1

Here's another one where he snaps a seam pass across to Guenther for the one-timer.

Cooley assist 2

The Rangers are so back

Heading into the season, there were doubts about whether the New York Rangers could level back up into the playoff picture. And then Igor Shesterkin, after another excellent start, suffered a potential season-ending injury. That could have tanked the Rangers' progress right there, considering how pivotal elite goaltending is to this team's success. But against the odds, the Rangers are hanging in.

Alexis Lafrenière is building on his late-season turnaround last spring and has been this team's best scoring threat. Will Cuylle has bounced back from a rough 2025-26. Mika Zibanejad's resurgence from last season has continued. Gabe Perreault has shown signs of progress. Adam Fox and Vladislav Gavrikov have stabilized the team's play in their top-pair minutes. And Dylan Garand is rising to this new challenge of starting at the NHL level, with three quality starts in five games.

The Rangers' play has been far from perfect, though. The team's play tilts a lot when Fox and Gavrikov are both on the bench at five-on-five, to a 43 percent xG rate. The fourth line has been abysmal, too. Pavel Dorofeyev, despite driving to the net more this season, hasn't done a ton of damage yet. Plus, there is a lot of reliance on special teams reliance so far.

It's not enough to seriously boost their playoff odds, but it's a dramatically different start for a team coming off back-to-back miserable seasons.

Pettersson is on a revenge tour

Is Elias Pettersson back? It's important not to get carried away by a 10-game sample, and it's worth noting that he's cooled off a bit with two points in his last five games, but his start to the season has been extremely encouraging.

Pettersson has scored 10 points in 10 games, is driving the best xG share among Canucks forwards, and has a plus-one goal differential at five-on-five. He's been a physical force, ranking top-20 among all NHL forwards in hits.

Watching Pettersson play, his confidence, swagger and poise look renewed. He's pulling off ambitious, nifty offensive dekes rather than playing it safe, he's routinely making game-breaking seam passes and he's much more decisive with the puck overall.

His skating speed still hasn't fully returned to where it was during his peak, and his individual shot rate is still barely over half of what it was during his 102-point campaign in 2022-23, so it's hard to say he's fully back. But so far, Pettersson has looked like a completely different player than the one we've seen the last two years.

The Kings are cooked

Now that the Flyers have finally broken through, the Los Angeles Kings are the only team without a win this season. Amid a 0-4-2 start, L.A.'s struggles are raising serious red flags.

The Kings are suppressing chances well at five-on-five and in short-handed situations, but the goaltenders have still been extremely leaky with a combined .845 save percentage in all situations. Darcy Kuemper looks out of his depth in a starting role right now, and there isn't enough goal support to make up for that. The Kings also aren't generating enough to outpace their stingy defense at five-on-five, and are hovering just below break-even in xG. A lack of finish has been an absolute killer, with just 1.26 goals per 60 at five-on-five.

This sequence from last Tuesday encapsulates so much of what has gone wrong so far.

The Kings had pressure in the offensive zone, down 2-0, but weren't getting to the middle of the ice enough. A few missed chances and saves later, and Edmonton regained control. Ty Emberson flipped the puck up the ice to Connor McDavid, who slipped between two Kings defenders and beat Kuemper.

Connor McDavid scores versus the Kings

As losses (and loser points) pile up, it puts a spotlight on the mismanagement that got the Kings here. There were always going to be post-Anže Kopitar challenges, and the Kevin Fiala injury setback complicated things. But a lack of development from players the Kings need to be difference-makers, aging offseason additions and a roster mismatch for a coach who runs a taxing all-three-zone system have put this team at a real disadvantage to open the season.

The Athletic LOADED: 10.20.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

1225937 Websites

The Athletic / Sizing up the NHL: Analyzing 2026-27 teams by age, height, nationality, more

By James Mirtle

I've long been interested in NHL demographic trends. In some cases, that's about which countries players come from. In others, it's about trends such as goalies getting bigger or defensemen getting smaller.

This particular column is an annual one I've put together for years, and it aims to provide some overarching data that contextualizes how all 32 NHL teams fit into some of these buckets. Each category is calculated as an average for each club, based on players who played for these teams through Oct. 12, giving us a decent overview of how rosters stack up and how teams have shifted over time. (Last year's version of this story is available [here](#).)

If you have any suggestions for similar analysis you'd like to see in the future, feel free to drop them in the comments. Feel free to ask questions, too, and I'll answer what I can.

Age

Average age of forwards: 28.2 years old

Average age of defensemen: 28.7

Average age of goalies: 29.4

Average age, NHL-wide: 28.5

Analysis: Historically, older teams often skewed towards being more successful on the ice than younger ones. Some of that was simply because rebuilding teams went young on talent, and there's some of that here with San Jose, Calgary, Vancouver and Chicago. But sprinkled in are also some very competitive young teams, like Anaheim, Buffalo and Montreal, who were all in the second round in last year's Stanley Cup playoffs.

A lot of the NHL's top teams are older (Colorado, Carolina, Tampa, etc.) due to the nature of where they are in their contention windows. But you also see older clubs, such as the Kings, Islanders and even Maple Leafs, attempting to compete with aging rosters rather than youth movements as a result of where they are in their development cycles.

The team with the biggest change year over year, by far, was the Rangers, as New York dropped 2.4 years from their roster a year ago thanks to a retool-driven youth movement that includes roster spots for Alberts Šmits, Dylan Garand and Gabe Perreault, among others. (The Winnipeg Jets were the only other team to shave more than 1.1 years off their average age after they entered last year as the league's oldest team.)

The team whose average age increased the most, meanwhile, was the Avalanche, as they have only four players under 27 years old and have added greybeards like Nazem Kadri (36) and Jaden Schwartz (34) since we last did this exercise. The Kings, Panthers and Wild each also increased their average age by roughly 1.5 years, partly due to their core players getting older.

There are some interesting things in the age data if you look at it positionally, too. The Leafs, for example, have the NHL's oldest blue line (32.7), and Colorado, Florida and L.A. aren't far behind. Anaheim, meanwhile, has by far the youngest D group (24) and one of the youngest we've seen on the back end in the cap era.

Toronto also has the oldest goalie tandem (35.4) followed by the Kings and Islanders, while Montreal and Pittsburgh are more than a full decade younger in net. The oldest forward groups in the league belong to Carolina and Florida (30.6), and the youngest are in San Jose and on the Rangers (26 and 26.2, respectively).

Oldest players

1. Brent Burns, Colorado, 41.6 years old

2. Corey Perry, Los Angeles, 41.4

3. Alex Ovechkin, Washington, 41.1

4. Evgeni Malkin, Pittsburgh, 40.2

5. Kris Letang, Pittsburgh, 39.5

6. Cam Talbot, Columbus, 39.3

7. Sidney Crosby, Pittsburgh, 39.2

8. Mats Zuccarello, Los Angeles, 39.1

9. Nick Foligno, Minnesota, 39.0

10. Claude Giroux, Ottawa, 38.8

Youngest players

1. Nikita Klepov, Anaheim, 18.3 years old

2. Viggo Björck, Winnipeg, 18.6

3. Gavin McKenna, Toronto, 18.8

4. Alberts Šmits, N.Y. Rangers, 18.9

5. Ivar Stenberg, San Jose, 19.0

6. Matthew Schaefer, N.Y. Islanders, 19.1

7. Anton Frondell, Chicago, 19.4

8. Ben Kindel, Pittsburgh, 19.5

9. Michael Misa, San Jose, 19.7

10. James Hagens, Boston, 19.9

Height

Average height of forwards: 73.1 inches

Average height of defensemen: 74.1 inches

Average height of goalies: 74.9 inches

NHL-wide average: 73.6 inches

Analysis: The average height of goaltenders is just shy of 6-foot-3 tall, a barrier cracked by the position for the first time last season and one where we might be seeing a plateau at this point. (There's not a single goalie listed over 6-6 this year so far, as based on his statistical listing, Dennis Hildeby seems to have shrunk during the move from Toronto to Tampa.)

The overall height of NHL players, meanwhile, has remained stable at around 6-1 now for quite a while, and there have been a number of high-profile success stories for smaller players that should keep it that way. The end of the enforcer as a role likely helps keep the average down, too, as more teams are deploying skill and speed across the lineup.

The team with the biggest change here is, impressively, the Capitals, who were already one of the NHL's tallest teams. They leapt up 0.7 of an inch thanks to the arrival of Alex Tuch and Ilya Protas as part of a forward group that is one of the tallest in league history. The Leafs, meanwhile, lost the most, dropping about a half inch with a new organizational philosophy focused less on brawn on the back end.

The Oilers and Mammoth both sprouted up more than a half an inch from last season, and the Blackhawks and Kings shrunk about that much.

Tallest players

T-1. Curtis Douglas, Seattle, 6-9

T-1. Matt Rempe, N.Y. Rangers, 6-9

T-3. Tyler Myers, Dallas, 6-8

T-3. Adam Klapka, Calgary, 6-8

T-3. Louis Crevier, Buffalo, 6-8

T-3. Elmer Söderblom, Pittsburgh, 6-8

T-7. Victor Hedman, Tampa Bay, 6-7



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

T-7. Jamie Oleksiak, Vancouver, 6-7

T-7. Nikita Zadorov, Boston, 6-7

T-7. Vincent Desharnais, Washington, 6-7

T-7. Logan Stanley, N.Y. Islanders, 6-7

T-7. Adam Edström, Nashville, 6-7

T-7. Lian Bichsel, Dallas, 6-7

Shortest players

Eight listed at 5-8:

Jack Ahcan, Nashville

Colin Blackwell, Dallas

Bobby Brink, Minnesota

Cole Caufield, Montreal

Justin Danforth, Buffalo

Alex DeBrincat, Detroit

Logan Stankoven, Carolina

Mats Zuccarello, Los Angeles

PLUS: 19 players listed at 5-9, including Lane Hutson.

Weight

Average weight of forwards: 199.3 pounds

Average weight of defensemen: 205.1 pounds

Average weight of goalies: 201.9 pounds

NHL-wide average: 201.3 pounds

Analysis: The average NHL player's weight has remained very stable over the past 13 seasons, after peaking during hockey's dead puck era at around 206 pounds in 2003-04.

Often you see younger, inexperienced and rebuilding teams on the low end here (e.g. Calgary and Vancouver), although the Avalanche and Wild are contenders while playing at 10 pounds (or more) lighter than some of the big boys in Washington, Boston and Dallas.

The biggest shift here, by far, has been the Leafs, who dropped an average of 6.4 pounds from early last season, when they were the heaviest team in the league. Some of that is having Gavin McKenna, the second-lightest player in the league, in addition to smaller blueliners like Nick Blankenburg and Troy Stecher. They also subtracted Matthew Knies in the trade with Columbus the day before the season opener.

Washington, Nashville and Florida are the biggest gainers overall, increasing by about five pounds each after adding big boys such as Desharnais, Edström and Brady Tkachuk, respectively.

Heaviest players

1. Matt Rempe, N.Y. Rangers, 268 pounds

2. Elmer Söderblom, Pittsburgh, 254

3. Jamie Oleksiak, Vancouver, 252

4. Aliaksei Protas, Washington, 250

5. Anthony Stolarz, Toronto, 248

6. Dylan McIlrath, Washington, 245

7. Nicolas Hague, Nashville, 245

8. Nikita Zadorov, Boston, 244

9. Curtis Douglas, Seattle, 242

10. Arber Xhekaj, Montreal, 240

Lightest players

1. Lane Hutson, Montreal, 162

2. Gavin McKenna, Toronto, 164

3. Logan Stankoven, Carolina, 165

T-4. Jared Spurgeon, Minnesota, 166

T-4. Dustin Wolf, Calgary, 166

6. Maxim Shabanov, Minnesota, 167

7. Nikolaj Ehlers, Carolina, 168

8. Bobby Brink, Minnesota, 169

9. Denver Barkey, Philadelphia, 171

T-10. Matvei Michkov, Philadelphia, 172

T-10. Nikita Kucherov, Tampa Bay, 172

T-10. Jonathan Lekkerimäki, Vancouver, 172

T-10. Jordan Binnington, St. Louis, 172

Nationality

Forwards: Canada 43.5 percent, U.S. 25.5 percent, Europe 31 percent

Defensemen: Canada 44.8 percent, U.S. 28.7 percent, Europe 26.5 percent

Goalies: Canada 33.3 percent, U.S. 22.2 percent, Europe 44.4 percent

NHL-wide averages: Canada 43 percent, U.S. 26.2 percent, Europe 30.8 percent

Analysis: What stands out right away is that after years of slow decline, the number of Canadian players in the NHL is up 2 percent over last year and by more than 10 percent in goal. Some of that is a small sample size — with 21 of 63 goalies in our data set being Canadians — but backups Michael DiPietro, Clay Stevenson, Garand and Matt Murray (the other one) are examples of newcomers shifting the trend a little.

The number of American netminders, meanwhile, is down to 14 from 23 who appeared in games last year, although 1) it's pretty early in the season and 2) one of those missing is Connor Hellebuyck, who presumably returns at some point.

I'm not sure how much we should read into the makeup of various teams nationality-wise, as there doesn't appear to be any correlation with team quality here. Given what's happening around the league these days, however, it's at least somewhat interesting that Canadian-based NHL teams are more Canadian and less American (47 versus 22 percent) than American-based ones (42 and 27 percent). I suspect those will be numbers worth keeping an eye on in the years to come, too.

Stick handedness

I don't believe we have done this analysis before, but it's interesting to see it broken down by position. If you don't include goalies, who are primarily righties, more than 63 percent of NHLers are lefties, including a very high percentage of centers. Even on right wing (based on how they're listed on NHL.com) close to 40 percent of players are shooting left.

At a team level, the Blackhawks are the most extreme example of the lefty-heavy trend, with 18 of 22 skaters shooting left. Just three teams — Detroit, Ottawa and Washington — have more righties than lefties, and even then they're all around a 55-45 split. Hockey players are big fans of The Leftorium, in other words.

Note: Goalies are listed by which hand they hold their stick, meaning only six catch with their right hand this season.

Draft round

The first round of the draft obviously carries outsized importance. That skews heavily towards the top of it, too, to the point that 11 percent of NHL players were picked in the top five and 19 percent were picked in the top 10.

Picks in the fifth, sixth and seventh rounds, meanwhile, are basically shots in the dark, in part because teams are selecting 18 year olds. And a very high percentage of players aren't even drafted at all, especially



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

when it comes to goaltenders, as a lot of development happens after their draft year.

The Athletic LOADED: 10.20.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

1225938 Websites

The Athletic / World Juniors stock WATCH: Risers to make Canada, USA and Sweden rosters

By Corey Pronman

We're a few weeks into the hockey season in most leagues, and while the samples are still relatively small, they are growing to the point where we can start making meaningful evaluations. With World Junior camps approaching in early December, national team decisions will start to have to be made quickly. Meanwhile, several prospects have used hot starts to elevate their stock. This won't be the last time we look at the roster decisions coming up, but here are a few players who have stood out to me early this season.

Canada

Beckett Hamilton, C, Red Deer (Colorado Avalanche)

Hamilton has been a top player in the WHL to start the year. In his draft season, his skating and compete intrigued, but his offensive touch seemed a bit vanilla for a 5-foot-11 player. He's making more plays to begin this season, which, when combined with his great motor and feet, makes him a more interesting player. The bottom six will be crowded, and he may be a next-year guy for Canada, but he's put himself in the conversation when I didn't think he was close to it a few months ago.

Chase Harrington, C, Spokane (Calgary Flames)

Harrington has also been a top player in the WHL this season. When I watched him two years ago, he looked like a pure skill type who had legit offense in his game. In his draft season, the offense dried up a bit, but he endeared himself to scouts as a secondary skill type with a lot of bite in his game. This season, he's shown both elements. He looked like a bubble guy in the summer, but I have to imagine he's making a strong case to be a bottom-six forward.

Tyler Hopkins, C, Guelph (Toronto Maple Leafs)

Hopkins was drafted in the third round in 2025 because he's a fast, hard-working center with good two-way ability and secondary offense. I wouldn't call his skill level anything special, but he's off to a strong start offensively in the OHL and is an important part of arguably the best team in the CHL in Guelph. He's put himself in position to be in the mix for a bottom-six spot.

Jack Nesbitt, C, Michigan (Philadelphia Flyers)

Nesbitt has been third among forwards in ice time for Michigan behind offensive leaders Michael Hage and Jayden Perron. He won't produce points as those guys have, but he's been a versatile player for the No. 1-ranked Wolverines. He's first over the boards to kill a penalty, while also generating a fair amount of offense and being dangerous around the net. He could be a fourth-line center type who is used in defensive situations.

Has Gavin McKenna arrived?

Carter Sanderson, LW, Calgary (Pittsburgh Penguins)

Sanderson positioned himself well to make Team USA following a strong World Junior Summer Showcase, but now the question is how high in the lineup he will play. He's been over a goal per game in the WHL, while being highly physical and playing with pace. He looks like a nice find by the Penguins in the sixth round given how many pro traits he is now displaying.

Drew Schock, D, Michigan (Anaheim Ducks)

Schock has been a top-scoring defenseman in college to start the season despite getting no power-play time for Michigan. He's done this by tilting the ice at even strength with his great skating and hockey IQ. He's excellent on retrievals and getting the play up the ice while being a quality defender who can break up a lot of plays. He should be an important part of the blue line.

Ethan Wyttenbach, RW, Quinnipiac (Calgary Flames)

Wyttenbach was one of the top scorers in college hockey last season, but his torrid start to this fall, backing up how he played last year, is worth a mention. He's a high-end skill and brain type who has continued to add speed and pace to his game and has positioned himself as a critical piece at the World Juniors after being a fifth-round pick in 2025.

Sweden

Bosse Meijer, C, Frölunda (2027 draft eligible)

Meijer wasn't on the initial U20 group Sweden brought over in the summer for the World Junior Summer Showcase, but he's the leading U20 Swedish scorer in the SHL, so he's a strong bet to make the World Junior team in December. He's a worker bee with a high skill level who has very good pace to his game. His size isn't ideal for his NHL projection, but he's playing center already at the SHL level and showing a detailed all-around game. I'm not fully sold on the offensive upside, but there are scouts who feel he could be a lottery-range pick in the summer.

The Athletic LOADED: 10.20.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

1225939 Websites

The Athletic / NHL weekend rankings: A record-setting week in Florida, and a look back one year

By Sean McIndoe

One of the most annoying things you can say to a sportswriter is "it's too early."

You see it in every comment section, social media reply thread and reader email. We hear it from friends, family and random guys in sports bars. It's the caveat that hangs over everything. "It's too early," everyone shrieks, "and you can't draw any conclusions yet!"

It's annoying. But not because it isn't true.

No, it's annoying because we know it's true. Everyone does. But that doesn't change the fact that if you want to talk about hockey in October, it's going to be too early. Sure, maybe we'd all be smarter if we checked out and then circled back in February. But some of us like hockey, and want to talk about it. Also, some of us need to eat.

But yes, it's too early. And while we'd love to handwave that fact away, it's actually important to remember. So today, let's look back at what the standings were telling us at this time last season, and consider it a reminder of what "too early" can really look like.

As of last night, the NHL has played 136 games. Last season, Game number 136 was played on Oct. 25. Here's what the standings looked like that day.

The Moment: 4 hat tricks on the same night...how rare is that?

Bonus five: Things that were true this time last year

5. The New Jersey Devils were the league's best team – At 7-1-0, the Devils led the league in points, points percentage and goals differential. It wasn't a question of whether they'd make the playoffs, but how high in the Metro they'd finish.

4. Lots of teams were looking up at the Canucks – Vancouver ended up finishing dead last by 14 points, which is to say that they were the worst team by a mile. But you wouldn't have known it from a look at the standings at this time last year. The Canucks were two points out of a playoff spot, with plenty of teams behind them. Among those stragglers: the Boston Bruins (27th), Minnesota Wild (29) and Tampa Bay Lightning (30), all of whom ended up making the playoffs with 100 points or more.

3. The also-rans were finally ready to compete – There were a dozen teams in the league playing at a .625 or better pace, and that list featured several who desperately needed to take a step forward. That included the Chicago Blackhawks, who were finally ready to win with a healthy Connor Bedard. The Seattle Kraken were looking good. And the Detroit Red Wings had figured it out, sitting at 6-3-0 and finally looking like a playoff team. The one exception: the San Jose Sharks, who'd won just one of their first eight games and looked awful. (That Celebrini kid was off to a solid start, though.)

2. There was a Big Three in the Central – Just not the one we ended up getting used to. The Central had three teams playing .750 or better, but it was the Colorado Avalanche, Utah Mammoth and Winnipeg Jets. Meanwhile, the Dallas Stars were one point out of a playoff spot, and the Wild were scuffling along at 3-5-1. They should probably make a big trade or something.

1. Not everything was a lie – We'll end on this one, because it's important to remember. While we can certainly cherry-pick some early-season oddities that didn't age well, there was also some signal in the noise. The Pittsburgh Penguins looked like a playoff team, even though nobody believed them. The Florida Panthers were wobbling, as were the Toronto Maple Leafs, while the Anaheim Ducks and Philadelphia Flyers looked feisty. And among the five teams that started at .750 or better, two were eventual finalists: the Carolina Hurricanes and Vegas Golden Knights, who just so happened to be my top two teams in that week's top five.

So yeah, it's too early ... for some of this. But some of it's real. We've just got to try to figure out what goes in which category. Let's see if this week's rankings can help us do that.

Road to the Cup

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

I feel like we really nailed some of the important issues in this week's return of Rules Court. Namely, the one about how to handle officials who break up goalie fights feels like something the league could really run with. Give me a call, Gary; we'll figure something out.

5. Tampa Bay Lightning (6-2-0, +4 true goals differential*) – The Lightning move into our top five for the first time, although I'm sure there are fans in Boston and Ottawa wondering if they should get the spot instead. The Senators are good, but you can't lose to the Philadelphia Flyers and move up into the top five. The Bruins have a stronger case, but for now I'm going with a more proven Lightning squad. This week should tell us a lot more about this team as they head on the road to face Vegas, Colorado, and Utah.

4. Colorado Avalanche (5-2-1, +13) – I think the Friday boys are right to be concerned with the goaltending, even as taking three out of four points against the Dallas Stars was a nice flex. Next up, they've got the red-hot Flyers.

3. Edmonton Oilers (6-1-1, +13) – On the one hand, Dom's right about their depth still being a major problem. But on the other, Connor McDavid is currently gusting into levels of terrifyingly unstoppable that I haven't seen since prime Mario Lemieux. Watching him roll over a pretty good Utah team makes you wonder if he's just decided to do this himself if he needs to.

2. Vegas Golden Knights (8-2-0, +18) – Thought this was a great piece by Jesse Granger on one of the season's biggest early mysteries: One year after yet another trip to the Stanley Cup Final, why is attendance plunging in Vegas?

1. Carolina Hurricanes (7-2-1, +12) – I can already tell that the champs are going to be an issue for this year's rankings, just putting up workmanlike win after win against good opponents and bad. Finding something new to talk about each week for them might be a challenge. On that note: Boy, they sure do have a lot of red arrows, don't they?

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

WHAT YOU SHOULD READ NEXT

How many long-term NHL contracts are too many? Revisiting the 'Red Arrow Index'

Which team has the most players signed to a deal with six years or more remaining, including this year? Let's break it down.

Not ranked: Florida Panthers – Hey, remember last week when I poked some gentle fun at Brady Tkachuk over having no points? Which one of you tattletales went and read it to him?

Tkachuk made some history this week by recording a natural hat trick in back-to-back games. Apparently it looked like fun to his teammates, with Carter Verhaeghe getting a natural trick of his own on Saturday while Sam Bennett settled for the basic version.

All of this taught us three things. First, apparently an official natural hat trick doesn't need to happen in the same period, which is how you sometimes hear it described. Second, it's a rough week to be a balding Panthers fan, because your supply of hats has hit zero. And finally, the Panthers might be scary again.

That last point might not be much of a surprise, given how high expectations were after last year's misery. The Aleksander Barkov injury threatened to derail that optimism, but his better-than-expected prognosis, along with the Panthers potting 21 goals in a 3-1-0 week, has to have Panthers fans feeling good.

Those good vibes might not last, though. The Panthers' next game is the big one: Brady Tkachuk's return to Ottawa on Wednesday night. It's fair to say the reaction won't be a warm one, as an Ottawa fan base that feels like their captain bailed on them gets a chance to make their feelings known.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

We know the familiar beats of this sort of game by now. Tkachuk will be booed in warmup, on his first shift and each time he touches the puck. There will still be a "thanks for everything" video, because those are apparently mandatory in a league where everyone loves to be called classy, and he'll get cheered for that. He'll get emotional at the reaction, or at least sell that he is. And then ... well, either he'll have a big night or he won't, at which point we can all declare winners and losers on the trade based on that one game.

A win would be a nice boost for the Panthers, who are still looking up at the Senators in the Atlantic. At least for now — after Ottawa, the Panthers are in Pittsburgh, and then have six straight against teams that missed the playoffs last year. With the big question in Florida being how many points they can bank before Barkov returns, it's starting to look like they're ready to return to contention.

As for that other return, we'll find out on Wednesday.

The bottom five

The five teams headed towards dead last, the best lottery odds for the top pick in this year's draft and a shot at Landon DuPont.

I was going to write something about Gavin McKenna here, but I guess I just forgot.

5. Chicago Blackhawks (3-6-0, -15) — Connor Bedard's early return, and the two wins that followed, had the Hawks on the verge of leaving our section for the first time since early last season before the Stars poured some cold water on that idea.

Also, I love the idea of Artyom Levshunov's teammates having to make strategic decisions about how to deal with his goal celebrations.

4. Detroit Red Wings (3-3-2, -4) — If you missed it, our Max Bultman got to hear directly from Chris Ilitch on this early mess of a season.

3. Philadelphia Flyers (1-6-3, -19) — They finally won a game. That's the headline.

Does it fix anything? Not really, but it's a first step, and it's one they desperately needed. As Kevin Kurz notes, this mess isn't Rick Tocchet's fault, but it's been starting to feel like he'll pay the price anyway.

2. Calgary Flames (2-6-0, -20) — We don't overreact to individual games around these parts. But a regulation win over our top-ranked team feels like it should earn them a reprieve from the one-spot they've held all season.

1. Vancouver Canucks (2-7-1, -15) — They've been holding their own against some good opponents, but losses are losses, and that 2-1-0 start feels like it was a long time ago.

Not ranked: Los Angeles Kings — Only one team in the league is still looking for their first win, now that the Flyers are on the board. The Kings, you may have guessed, are that team. But I don't have them in the bottom five ... yet.

We'll see how long that patient approach can last. But for now, we can tentatively offer a few reasons why the Kings' cup might still be half-full, even if it's leaking badly.

For one, even in a month where we typically have to navigate the danger of small sample sizes, the Kings are smaller than most. They've played just six games, the lowest number in the league. Three of those have been one-goal losses, including two in OT. Change a play here or there and the record could look better. Not good, mind you, but better.

It's also worth noting that the early schedule has been tough, featuring four teams that made the playoffs last year, plus the up-and-coming Sharks and the tried-and-true Panthers. That's the sort of early slate that you might just aim to get through in one piece, then regroup and reassess.

The problem, of course, is that the Kings really didn't get through that tough stretch at all, and any reassessment now won't be positive. It's not just the record. They're not scoring, with just 12 goals through six games. Other than Artemi Panarin and Brandt Clarke, nobody's really looked good. Quinton Byfield hasn't popped yet, and at this point it's getting fair to wonder if he ever will. And Darcy Kuemper, still just one full season removed from being a Vezina finalist, has looked awful.

Oh, and now they head out on a five-game road trip.

It all adds up to a team that seems adrift. They're not good enough to compete for a Cup, and might not be good enough to get out of the first round, even as a best-case scenario. But they're also not some young team in the middle of a rebuild. Five of their seven leaders in ice time are in their 30s, including Panarin (who turns 35 next week), Mats Zuccarello (who's 39) and captain Drew Doughty (who's 36). It's not that they don't have youth, although we can argue over some of the ceilings. It's that they don't seem to have much in the way of a realistic plan.

And maybe that's all to be expected in the first season of the post-Anže Kopitar era. But you wonder where this goes next, especially if the rest of the season plays out the way the first month did. Is it time to tear it down and start over? Do you keep pushing forward as long as Doughty is around, similar to how the Penguins have handled Sidney Crosby? And is Ken Holland really the guy to make the call?

Kings fans, I'd love to hear where you're at with this team. Head down to the comments and let me know.

The Athletic LOADED: 10.20.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

1225940 Websites

ESPN / Rangers Dylan Garand is living an NHL goalie's dream - ESPN

Greg Wyshynski

TARRYTOWN, NY -- Dylan Garand is living every goalie's NHL dream. Except he loathes how it started, and he can't help but wonder how quickly it might end.

Garand, 24, spent his past four professional seasons as a goalie for the Hartford Wolf Pack, the AHL affiliate of the New York Rangers. That appeared to be his lot in life again for 2026-27, despite a promising training camp: The Rangers had star goalie Igor Shesterkin ready to play at least 65% of their games and veteran backup Joonas Korpisalo to fill in the blanks.

Before the season, the Rangers put Garand on waivers to be sent down to Hartford. While some expected he might be claimed by another team, Garand passed through and was demoted to the AHL. He got an apartment in the Hartford area and slept in a hotel for three nights while it remained unfurnished.

He never did get quality time in that new apartment. Korpisalo sustained a lower-body injury and was week-to-week. Garand was suddenly Shesterkin's backup for the Rangers' second game.

The Rangers' vibes early in the season were immaculate. After an opening-night stumble against the Bruins, they won four straight games, looking like a team with playoff potential just nine months after general manager Chris Drury sent a letter to fans preparing them for a roster "retool."

Garand contributed to that early bliss with a 22-save shutout of Detroit in his first NHL start on Oct. 2 -- one night after Shesterkin became the talk of the sports world after scoring his first career goal in a win over Tampa Bay.

"On the ice, he's unreal to watch. He's my favorite goalie, honestly," Garand said of Shesterkin. "He was on another planet, playing so well. It really sucks what happened. I feel so bad for him."

The Rangers' season irrevocably changed on Oct. 9 when Shesterkin injured his right knee in the second period during a loss to the Washington Capitals. The next day, it was announced that the Vezina-winning goalie would miss the rest of the season.

"It's awful. He's a pillar of this team. It stinks," captain J.T. Miller said at the time.

"It's obviously devastating. He's the best goalie in the world," forward Matt Rempe said.

Garand didn't initially know the severity of Shesterkin's injury. He saw him helped off the ice, but Garand's focus was on entering the game for the Rangers, stopping 10 of 11 shots he faced. "I did media the next day after practice and they were like, 'Oh, did you hear the news?' After we were done, I went and saw it was on TV," he recalled.

In an ideal world, Garand would have earned an NHL starting job through years of toiling in the AHL and patiently waiting for his chance. Instead, like so many backup goalies, his big break came at the expense of another goalie's broken body, getting unexpectedly thrust into the starter's crease.

"It's an unfortunate circumstance with Shesty, but now I'm just trying to help the team any way I can," Garand said.

In six appearances, Garand is 5-3-1 with a .927 save percentage and an impressive 1.82 goals-against average. His only previous NHL experience came last season, when he started three games and went 2-0-1, posting a fantastic .948 save percentage and a 1.62 goals-against average.

It's been a lightning-speed journey from apartment hunting in Hartford to starting goalie for the New York Rangers, under the glaring spotlights of Madison Square Garden.

"Yeah, it's obviously been crazy. But it's been a lot of fun," he said.

GARAND IS FROM Victoria, British Columbia, and was drafted 103rd overall in 2020 by the Rangers from the Western Hockey League's Kamloops Blazers. His idol growing up was another British Columbia native: Carey Price, who starred for 15 seasons with the Montreal Canadiens. Garand had Price's poster on his bedroom wall, but he didn't pattern his style after Price.

"As you get older, I think you just figure out what works for you. There are 64 goalies in the NHL, and I don't think you can pinpoint two that play exactly alike," he said. "There are so many different ways to make saves. I just kind of stick to what works for me."

Kevin Woodley, a goaltending analyst for InGoal Magazine and NHL.com, said that Garand reminds him of Calgary Flames netminder Dustin Wolf.

"Exceptional edges and patience. He rarely gets too wide and low too soon, all of which fuels excellent movement and positioning," Woodley said.

If there's one aspect to Garand's game that has already caught coach Mike Sullivan's attention, it's his self-assurance.

"He's got a lot of confidence in his game. He knows how important he is to helping this team win," Sullivan said. "He's trying to take advantage of the opportunity that he has."

Garand said he's just trying to live in the moment.

"Any opportunity that I get, I'm just trying to make the most of it and battle in there for the guys," he said. "I'm just trying to right now be present. It's really fun to play in the NHL. I definitely don't take it for granted."

Less fun for Garand: The speculation about how long his opportunity will actually last.

His locker room stall might as well be filled with ticking clocks:

Korpisalo will eventually return from injury -- he has been week-to-week -- and has 11 seasons and 334 NHL games to his credit. Tick, tick ...

ESPN's Emily Kaplan reported that recently retired goalie Jonathan Quick, 40, could be a possibility if the Rangers asked him to return. Quick was Shesterkin's backup for the last three seasons. Tick, tick ...

Sportsnet's Elliott Friedman reported on "32 Thoughts" that Rangers goalie scout Scott Clemmensen recently took in a Buffalo Sabres game, reportedly to get a look at goalie Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen as a possible trade target. Tick, tick ...

Friedman's podcast dropped on Oct. 15. Perhaps coincidentally, or perhaps not, Garand had his worst NHL performance that night in a 7-1 loss at the rival New Jersey Devils. He gave up four goals on 13 shots and was pulled for the first time in his NHL career.

"Sometimes that happens. You don't really feel good about yourself," Garand said. "[But] the best goalies in the world -- Carey Price, Henrik Lundqvist, Igor -- everyone's been pulled. I wasn't happy. I didn't do a good enough job of being present. I let the self-doubt creep into my game too much."

On one day, Garand looked like the potential goaltending savior for the Rangers in what might have been a lost season without Shesterkin. On the next, he was chased from the crease, while his team's front office was checking on other options.

Because of that, Garand's next start, for many reasons, would be the most scrutinized of his short NHL career.

Garand returned to the crease on Saturday night against the Columbus Blue Jackets. The Rangers lost the game, 1-0 in overtime, but Garand made his statement: stopping 28 of 29 shots, with a handful of highlight-reel saves.

"I thought that was a huge response from him. He's a high-character kid. The more you get to know him as a person, you knew he was going to bounce back," Sullivan said.

"I'm happy for him. He's a competitor, and he wanted to be better," Miller said.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

The Rangers captain said his team is prepared to support whoever is tending goal for the team -- but that Garand has impressed him.

"It doesn't matter who's in net for us. We have a job to do up front. We've talked about the void with Shesty out of the lineup, but Dylan's been unreal every time he's had a chance," he said.

Despite all those ticking clocks, Garand doesn't believe he has a limited amount of time to earn the Rangers' starting job this season.

"It's pro hockey. Anything can happen. All those decisions are out of my control. I just show up every day, focused on stopping pucks. And if they tell me to play, I'll play. If not, then I'm not. So that's just kind of my approach to it," he said. "I want to help this team win in any way I can."

And if he wins enough, Garand might even see about that breaking that apartment lease in Hartford.

"If I'm here for the whole year, then yeah, I'll try," he said. "But until I get permission to do that, I won't."

ESPN LOADED: 10.20.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

1225941 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / 'Everybody's waiting': Jets in spotlight with Hellebuyck suspension nearing end

Jeff Hamilton

WINNIPEG — The Winnipeg Jets are officially on the clock for a deadline they would much rather ignore.

"We're not sure what the next play is going to be," head coach Scott Arniel said Monday, as the Jets returned to practice following Saturday's 3-2 loss to the Carolina Hurricanes. "Things will play themselves out, and we'll have a lot more answers for you... when that time arrives. I'm not running away from anything. Until he shows up here, or whatever may happen, or a trade happens, or whatever that is, it's hard to talk about."

For the better part of three weeks, Jets management quietly kept Connor Hellebuyck under a team-imposed suspension as both sides navigated the franchise goaltender's months-long trade demand.

Hellebuyck reportedly notified the club on Oct. 2 that he planned to end his holdout, only for the Jets to leverage the league's collective bargaining agreement and issue him a three-week suspension.

The clock runs out this Friday.

When Sportsnet's Elliotte Friedman broke the news minutes before Saturday's puck drop, the ripple effect through the organization was swift. Players were caught off-guard by the internal timeline going public, with the post-game availabilities reflecting the shock of the moment.

Hellebuyck's close friend and fellow U.S. Olympian, Kyle Connor, preferred not to touch it. Captain Adam Lowry was a bit more forthcoming, noting that if Hellebuyck does return — if, being the big word here — some hard conversations would need to take place before anything was water under the bridge.

"Obviously, we're disappointed; he's one of the best goalies in the world," Lowry said Saturday. "But at the same time, it's news, but it's unfair to speculate on what's going to happen between now and Friday."

Arniel was the most visibly animated after the loss, though his frustration seemed fuelled as much by giving up a pair of leads to Carolina as it was by taking questions about his absent goaltender. At the time, he said it was a problem for general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff.

By Monday afternoon, the post-game frustration was gone, but the fog around Hellebuyck's potential return remained.

"Players are waiting to see; everybody's waiting. I'm waiting," Arniel added. "We're all trying to wait and see how this plays itself out. It's an unknown for us. We don't know if it's Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday."

The most pressing question remains: will Hellebuyck actually report? The Jets claim they have no idea, and we're well past the point of taking Hellebuyck at his word.

But assuming Hellebuyck does report on Friday, what would the reception be?

An overwhelming outside narrative strongly suggests Hellebuyck wouldn't be welcomed back. But that feels more like a public assumption than what's actually playing out in the locker room. Or at least what's being said.

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

While there are likely some unhappy teammates, Arniel denied any mutiny brewing.

"I don't think our whole group is saying 'Oh, we don't want you.' There's some things that have happened on the outside that have probably built that narrative," Arniel said. "There's none of us saying that right now. It's not us saying we don't want anything to do with him anymore. We're really just trying to see how this plays out."

Of course, there's a difference between not being hostile and rolling out the red carpet. If Hellebuyck steps back into the locker room, there will likely be some pointed guidelines for a smooth return.

Forward Cole Perfetti addressed that on Monday, doing his best to draw a line in the sand, speaking almost verbatim to Kyle Connor's comments at the start of training camp.

"We're all kind of in the same boat. You hear the news, and all I'm going to say is we want guys that want to be here," Perfetti said. "We're a family in here. We have big goals and aspirations for this season. We know what we want to do, and all we want are guys that want to be committed to that goal with us. So, if he comes back and shows that he wants to be a part of this and recommit to this group, then that's obviously good news."

Despite Hellebuyck not believing in management or the team's direction — opinions he has shared in recent months — the Jets appear to be doing just fine without him.

Backed by the tandem of Stuart Skinner and Clay Stevenson, the Jets boast a 4-2-2 record. While that has Winnipeg sitting fourth in the Central Division, the Jets are just three points shy of first-place Minnesota, with a game in hand. As long as the Jets keep winning, Cheveldayoff can remain patient for a trade return that helps his club compete now.

Even if Hellebuyck reports to Winnipeg on Friday, ultimately fulfilling his contractual duties to get paid again, it's highly unlikely he would hit the ice with his teammates right away. More likely, he would take part in individual conditioning skates while Cheveldayoff continues to work the phones for a trade. Hellebuyck would have to accept any conditioning stint with the AHL's Manitoba Moose.

Only adding to the pressure cooker here is the timing of it all. Just two days later, the Jets will host the Montreal Canadiens in the annual Heritage Classic outdoor game at Princess Auto Stadium. As one of the NHL's marquee events, a horde of national and international media will be coming to Winnipeg.

Protecting the team's culture under this kind of spotlight will be a full-time job. And with a two-game road trip through the Central Division leading up to the weekend, the Jets will need to do their best not to add to the looming distraction.

"It's getting asked, for sure. It's definitely in the air; people are talking about it," Perfetti admitted. "But we've done a pretty good job of blocking out all noise."

Arniel credited the leadership group for keeping the team focused on the goal at hand. As hard as that's proven to be, given what's unfolded over the last few days.

"We got away to do the team building because we had a lot of new guys here," Arniel said. "Those guys have done a really good job of staying within the room, staying focused on what our goal is, what our assignments are, what our job is. Really trying not to let the outside noise get in. And it's a big outside noise."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.20.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

1225942 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Scout's Analysis: How Ivar Stenberg has started with the Sharks

Jason Bukala

In the build up to the NHL Draft last June, it became pretty obvious who the top two prospects were. Although several high-end defencemen were available, forwards Gavin McKenna and Ivar Stenberg had separated themselves from the pack as the top two players in the class. The Toronto Maple Leafs, via Justin Bieber, stepped to the podium to select McKenna first overall and the San Jose Sharks followed by snagging Stenberg with the second pick.

McKenna now has nine eventful games under his belt at the NHL level. He's been under the microscope in Toronto and there have been several layers of discussion about how he is being deployed so far. In my opinion, he is already showcasing his elite playmaking ability and an identity as a threat to produce offence at even strength and on the power play. McKenna has 2G-3A so far, which isn't bad considering he has mostly been deployed as a middle-six forward and on the second power play unit. He has been bumped up to the first PP unit as John Tavares is out with a lower-body injury, and I fully expect he will contribute in that role.

There has been no shortage of coverage on McKenna's NHL start in these parts. It's been analyzed and picked apart. But what about Stenberg?

Monday night provides an excellent opportunity for East Coast hockey fans. Stenberg's San Jose Sharks are in Toronto to play the Leafs and the game presents a chance for all of us to compare the top two picks from the draft in a head-to-head matchup (on Sportsnet+ at 7:30 p.m. ET / 4:30 p.m. PT).

With that in mind here's a look at the role, and impact, Stenberg has had in the first eight games of his NHL career:

How is Stenberg being deployed?

All of Stenberg's ice time comes at even strength and on the first power play unit. His season low in ice time came in his very first game, San Jose's home opener versus Florida, where he played 13:35. Since then his role has steadily increased and his ice time reflects this. Stenberg clocked in for 17:30 on Saturday in their shootout win over Detroit and his overall average ice time is up to 15:51 through his first eight games played.

McKenna, for comparison, is averaging 14:23 per game. That, of course, includes the benching last week, but McKenna also earned a season-high 17:56 this past Saturday.

Who is Stenberg playing with?

Stenberg, like McKenna, has been skating on the wing in a middle-six role. Some nights he has been slotted alongside Alexander Wennberg and Tyler Toffoli, while other linemates have included Michael Misa and Kiefer Sherwood.

One thing that has stood out for me is the fact Sharks head coach Ryan Warsofsky doesn't shy away from Stenberg's group matching up against opposing team's top lines. For example, when the Edmonton Oilers recently visited San Jose, Stenberg was slotted on left wing alongside centre Wennberg and right-winger Sherwood. The group was tasked with containing Connor McDavid, Leon Draisaitl and Vasily Podkolzin at even strength. Stenberg was deployed a total of 18:09 in that game, with all but one of his even strength shifts coming against Edmonton's top line. Impressively, especially considering the torrid start McDavid has been on, Stenberg's line didn't allow a goal against the Oilers' top line.

What has his involvement on the power play been?

The Sharks' top power play unit deploys four forwards. Stenberg generally works off his strong side and slides into the bumper/net-front position as required. His vision and execution with the puck have been

on full display early in the season. Stenberg has contributed 2G-4A overall, with 2G-3A coming on the power play.

Here's an example of how dangerous Stenberg and the Sharks can be on the power play. As soon as San Jose gains full control of the puck, they move the play to Stenberg on the strong-side flank. In this clip, the Boston Bruins defenders get caught between their checks as Stenberg slings a quick and accurate seam pass to Macklin Celebrini for the tuck.

What's been his all-around impact?

Stenberg, like McKenna and every other rookie in the NHL, is learning how to take proper routes to kill plays defensively and how to anticipate how a play is developing on and off the puck in all three zones. Stenberg's defensive metrics haven't been outstanding -- he is minus-6 through eight games -- but it's not for lack of effort.

Here's an example of what I've seen from Stenberg off the puck. When Misa enters the offensive zone and pulls up along the half wall, Stenberg heads to the front of the Bruins net while Misa attempts to move the puck down the boards. Unfortunately, the Bruins intercept the play and head back up ice towards the Sharks net. Notice Stenberg's effort to back check. He was a shade late initially but could have, with a different route, positioned himself to block the shot/pass beside his crease.

Stenberg has seen some play in OT -- what's been his impact there?

Extra points won in overtime can be the difference between a team making the playoffs and just missing out. The Sharks aren't shy about deploying their young guns in the extra session and Stenberg has contributed in this role, too.

Here's a highlight that has circulated from San Jose's game versus the St. Louis Blues. At the outset Stenberg is well positioned defensively. He protects his crease and keeps his opponent in front of him. When the puck eventually ends up on his stick he's calculating with his approach. Stenberg takes his time while the Blues back off their blue line, pulls up, and rips a pass to Darnell Nurse who had burst up ice after a line change.

Can the Sharks make the playoffs with this group?

Upon being hired in 2022 Sharks GM Mike Grier, with full support of ownership, made the decision to rebuild San Jose's entire organization. They have drafted and developed talents like Celebrini, Misa, Sam Dickinson, Igor Chernyshov and now Stenberg.

Grier has also used his available cap space to sign college free agents like Colin Graf and added goaltender Yaroslav Askarov, defencemen Jacob Trouba and Darnell Nurse, and winger Sherwood in other transactions. The Sharks are a team on the rise and positioned well to be a playoff team for years to come. Stenberg will be a central part of that and his career is off to a promising start -- one worthy of a second overall pick.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.20.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

1225943 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Connor McDavid enters rarified air with early-season points pace

Ryan Dixon

At this point, we must carve out a minute simply to appreciate Connor McDavid's magic.

McDavid recorded his second five-point game of the fledgling season on Saturday during Edmonton's 6-2 smashing of a good Mammoth club in Utah. McDavid is up to 23 points through eight contests, and the only player in the history of the league to better that pace is Mario Lemieux.

If you can believe it, No. 66 put up 27 points in eight games in both 1995-96 and 1992-93, while — wait for it — producing 31 points in eight games to begin the 1988-89 campaign.

During that latter season, Lemieux nearly became the second player in NHL history to record a 200-point season when he finished with 199 in 76 games.

Just over 35 years later, we can officially sit here and wonder if McDavid can join Wayne Gretzky as the second member of the 200-point club. (Gretzky did it four times, all in five seasons from 1981-82 through 1985-86.)

McDavid has a little extra grace as the NHL features an 84-game schedule this season, four more than the 80-game slate Gretzky was playing in the early 1980s.

Sure, the double-century club feels unattainable, but McDavid could be held off the scoresheet in his next game and still be on pace for 215 points. And if he happens to pick up a couple points in each of his next two outings, he'll be tracking better than a 225-point showing.

Listen, everyone should probably be taking the under on 199.5 points for No. 97, but the fact we're even having this conversation is a reminder not to — with his 30th birthday about three months away — take one second of McDavid's play for granted.

If he wins his seventh Art Ross Trophy this spring, McDavid will be all by himself in second place on the all-time list with seven scoring titles. Gretzky finished with 10, a number it certainly seems like McD could match — even exceed — when it's all said and done.

Of course, when he's playing like this — levitating above everybody in a talent-rich league — it only reinforces the happy notion that McDavid's final chapter should still be miles away.

Weekend takeaways

- Looking at the Atlantic Division standings from top to bottom, you could make a case that — right here, right now — the only truly surprising slot for a team is the Boston Bruins sitting atop the penthouse. The B's, of course, were a playoff squad last season and certainly entered this year with reason to believe they could repeat that showing. That said, they also started the year knowing they'd be without stud defenceman Charlie McAvoy for six games thanks a suspension stemming from last spring's first-round loss to the Buffalo Sabres.

On Saturday, Boston completed a three-game sweep of the California clubs with a 4-1 win over L.A. The victory was the fifth consecutive W for the Bruins, who are tied with Edmonton for the third-best five-on-five goal differential (plus-11) in the NHL.

Jeremy Swayman is playing like a true Vezina contender; new captain David Pastrnak is driving the offence; Fraser Minten looks more and more like a two-way, top-six centre by the game; rookie James Hagens has six points in nine outings; and McAvoy has returned to play 25 minutes per game and put up three points in his first three outings.

It may be tough for Boston to maintain a hold on first in the Atlantic, but this fantastic start means a return trip to the playoffs — possibly with home-ice advantage — just got a lot more achievable.

- The hats are absolutely flying in South Florida, as a trio of players have stepped up to drive the offence in the absence of Aleksander Barkov. On Saturday, Carter Verhaeghe made league history by scoring the Cats' third natural hat trick in as many games, following the scoring exploits of Brady Tkachuk earlier in the week. Verhaeghe's hatty came in an 8-3 beat down of Seattle, a game that also featured a three-goal performance by Sam Bennett. In all, four players — Brady Tkachuk, Verhaeghe, Bennett and Sam Reinhart — have scored 17 of Florida's past 18 goals.

Red and white power rankings

1. Edmonton Oilers (6-1-1) If you wipe the first two games of the year off the board, the Oilers rank second in the NHL in goals allowed per game (1.83). They'll get a couple good challenges at home this week with Minnesota on Tuesday, followed by the Stanley Cup-champion Hurricanes on Thursday as Edmonton begins a stretch of five straight games at Rogers Place.

2. Montreal Canadiens (4-3-1) Zach Bolduc has come out of the gate very strong in his second season with the Habs. The 23-year-old potted his fourth goal of the year during Saturday's 4-3 overtime win versus the Sabres and he's been doing great work on the "French Connection Line" of Phillip Danault between Bolduc and Alexandre Texier.

3. Winnipeg Jets (4-2-2) Tuesday in St. Louis marks the start of a stretch where the Jets will play six of eight away from home. The next two weeks could be very interesting for this club, as the rubber hits the road with Connor Hellebuyck and the team gets a big test on the schedule.

4. Ottawa Senators (6-3-0) All the talk this week will focus on Brady Tkachuk's return to Ottawa on Wednesday, but the bigger issue for the Sens is this injury bug that won't stop biting. With Jake Sanderson yet to return, new captain Thomas Chabot left Saturday's loss to Philly with an upper-body injury.

5. Toronto Maple Leafs (3-4-2) On Tuesday, the Leafs will travel to Columbus to visit the Blue Jackets and old friend Matthew Knies. You know Knies would love to make the cannon fire against his old mates, while former Jacket Kirill Marchenko will be looking to do damage against in the city he didn't want to call home.

6. Calgary Flames (2-6-0) Calgary began a four-game homestand with its first domestic victory of the season on Sunday, downing the Hurricanes 3-2. Can the Flames string together a couple more wins when in Southern Alberta for the next little while?

7. Vancouver Canucks (2-7-1) Quinn Hughes will play his first NHL game as the visitor in Vancouver on Sunday, when the Wild visit B.C. Perhaps Canucks fans would feel a little better about welcoming back their former captain if Zeev Buium — the young D-man who came to Vancouver in the trade the shipped Hughes to Minny — could more consistently show the attributes that made him an appealing get.

The week ahead

- The top two picks in the 2026 NHL Draft will square off on Monday night, when Ivar Stenberg's San Jose Sharks visit Gavin McKenna and the Maple Leafs. While we had talk in Toronto about McKenna being stapled to the bench last week, Stenberg has gone 1-1-2 in two of his past three outings, including in Detroit on Saturday.

- You can bet on Cutter Gauthier hearing it from the Philly fans when the Ducks visit the Flyers on Saturday afternoon, but what about Leo Carlsson? At one point last summer, Flyers backers could dream about what their team would look like with Carlsson at the top of the lineup. Of course, Anaheim matched Philadelphia's big offer sheet and now Flyers fans are left watching their team's miserable start with no 1C in sight. Will Carlsson bear the brunt of their frustrations?

- Twenty-three years after the first Heritage Classic featured the Habs and Oilers at frigid Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton, the Canadiens and Jets will take it outside on Sunday afternoon at Winnipeg's Princess Auto Stadium. The contest will mark the 46th outdoor clash in NHL history, with two more slated for later this season.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.20.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

1225944 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Travis Green rewarded as Senators' contention window opens

Adam Stanley

OTTAWA – With a laugh, Travis Green said there are times as a head coach in the NHL where you're forced to get a lot of takeout because going out for dinner would mean staring an angry fan base in the face.

Such is the fine-line nature of the job. But winning usually helps.

Green has done a lot of that over the past three seasons as the bench boss of the Ottawa Senators – and, with that, has enjoyed plenty of coffee shop runs and restaurant meals – and was rewarded Monday with a multi-year contract extension.

Green's new deal will run through the end of the 2030-31 season. He is the 14th head coach in franchise history and earned his 95th win with the team last Thursday, placing him fifth all time among Senators head coaches. Green's assistants, Nolan Baumgartner, Ben Sexton, Mike Yeo, and goaltending coach Justin Peters, also received multi-year extensions.

The Senators have made the playoffs the past two seasons, and Steve Staios, the president of hockey operations and general manager of the team, was chuffed to say how much Green has delivered on all of the character traits he saw during their interview process.

"It's a proud day for me. It's a proud day for the organization. We have a lot of work ahead of us," Staios said, "but this is another foundational step for us and the Ottawa Senators moving forward."

Green began his NHL head coaching career with the Vancouver Canucks, where he was fired in his fifth season. He coached 21 games for the New Jersey Devils before coming to Ottawa.

Green has long preached a hearty defensive structure, and the team has firmly bought into it.

"We're not going to score the most goals, but we're going to win hockey games playing this way," Dylan Cozens said Monday. "And that's a goal in this room."

When training camp got underway, these Senators were eager to take the next step and come closer together as a group after their captain from the last half-decade, Brady Tkachuk, requested a trade that ended with him joining brother Matthew in Florida. Green's steady hand has helped the team get off to a 6-3-0 start in which they're hanging with the best teams in their division.

Ottawa remains firmly in the mix early in this new season even as they have had to deal with key injuries to their defence corps and rank 25th in goals per game.

"We want to win," veteran Claude Giroux said. "I'm a strong believer in whatever the system is; if everyone is on the same page, it makes your job a lot easier. I think guys are buying in. We saw it last year at the end of the year when we were playing well and playing to our identity and winning a lot of hockey games."

Giroux is of course alluding to the post-Olympics, post-Linus Ullmark mental health leave-of-absence when the Senators sprinted into the playoffs with a 16-5-4 run after players returned from Milan. That stretch came after a now iconic Green speech in the locker room where he preached ignoring outside noise and urged his players to go on a run. The coach is quiet on the surface, but isn't afraid to make his voice heard when it's needed. He's honest and open, as a former player, and the players respect that.

After Green's effort last season, he received four first-place votes for the Jack Adams Award.

"For me, playing against Ottawa (was) always one of the hardest teams to play against," said the recently acquired Andre Burakovsky, who is in his first season in a Senators uniform. "He's been doing a terrific job. It's a well-deserved extension. Just how hard he wants us to play. He wants

us to be dedicated to work ethic and grind other teams down and play with the puck and win puck battles. It's been fun working with him so far."

Ottawa was solid in plenty of key defensive metrics last year, including shot suppression, where they sat second in the league. The team kept learning and growing as they moved through the injury adversity last year and into this year, too – the Sens have already used 10 defencemen in their first 10 games, and it was announced Monday that captain Thomas Chabot would be out for 1-2 weeks with an upper-body injury, just as Jake Sanderson is set to return for his first game since being injured in the season-opener. He'll likely be in the lineup Wednesday against Tkachuk's Florida Panthers.

Green was quick to heap praise on Sanderson when asked about his star blueliner earlier this year, and Sanderson was even quicker to return the favour after his coach's extension on Monday.

"Obviously you want to play hard for the guys, but when your coach is an awesome dude (and) everyone gets along in the dressing room you want to play hard for them too," Sanderson said. "The year is so hard. You have to bring it every night. For me, (Green) talks about 'Being excited to play.' That's one of his mottos. I love that."

"You should be excited to show up and work for each other."

With the security of an extension in place, there is a lot more work ahead of Green on Ottawa's bench, and he couldn't be more excited about the opportunity.

"As coaches, you're always looking for something that works for you. Words like stability, commitment, collaboration ... We hit all the boxes. Checks all the marks. But you also have to believe you can win," Green said. "Every coach wants to win. I truly believe our team can succeed and win and win long term. You've got to enjoy coaching the players."

"We have a group that wants to be coached, and we enjoy coaching them. I love living here, I love the city, and I want to win. For me, it was an easy decision."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.20.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

1225945 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canadiens notebook: Lefty-righty defence balance boosted by Reinbacher

Eric Engels

BROSSARD, Que.— Saturday's game against the Buffalo Sabres presented an opportunity to not only see David Reinbacher in action, but also to see what the Montreal Canadiens look like with three perfectly balanced defence pairings all featuring legitimate NHL talent.

We hadn't seen enough of either since Martin St. Louis stepped behind the bench in February of 2022. Not of Reinbacher, who's been plagued by injuries since being taken fifth overall by the Canadiens in June of 2023, and certainly not of three lefty-righty combos giving St. Louis all the optionality he looks for in different situations.

And even though St. Louis may have had that balance through a handful of games over his first three seasons as Canadiens coach, it's not as if he was able to depend on six players that could truly execute every option he'd have wanted to have exercised.

Hey, we're not knocking righty Gustav Lindstrom, who filled in quite admirably on the third defence pair during the 2023-24 season. But his 14-game espresso with the Canadiens was indicative of who they were then—a young, inexperienced, shallow team learning how to play before it could be taught how to win—versus who they are now.

Now that the Canadiens are considerably deeper on the blue line, and now that they know how to win, they're focused on the finer details that will enable them to beat the best with regularity and eventually overtake them. And a team in that position only benefits from the optionality that lefty-righty balance on the back end gives you.

"I feel it helps," said St. Louis before he played Reinbacher to the right of lefty Arber Xhekaj beneath lefty Lane Hutson and righty Noah Dobson and lefty Kaiden Guhle and righty Alexandre Carrier.

"I know there's guys who can play on their off-sides," St. Louis continued. "But just to give you an example, just off face-offs in our own zone, if you have two lefties, you're going to be handcuffed in what you can do. Strategically, it takes some of the plays out of the equation if you have two lefties. If you've got a lefty-righty, we have different things we can do, and we can do them all. When you have two lefties or two righties together, you can't do them all, so you become a little more predictable for the other team because there's a few things that you can't do. So, that's one element that helps you to have lefty-righty (combos)."

Another is in the offensive zone, where you can choose between shifting each defenceman to their off-side to position them for one-timers off face-offs or leave them on their strong sides to keep them on their respective forehands moving down the wall.

Keeping them on their forehands in all three zones, but particularly in the defensive zone, is optimal, which is undoubtedly why St. Louis said he thinks every team would opt to have three lefty-righty combos if they could.

"I'm pretty sure they'd take that," he said, knowing it's a luxury in short supply.

Exactly half the teams in the league are currently icing a lineup that features three lefty-righty combos, though that number would shrink to 15 if Simon Edvinsson had a contract in Detroit.

And it could go down to 14 as soon as Mike Matheson returns from the lower-body injury he's currently nursing if Reinbacher can't supplant either Xhekaj or Adam Engstrom on the Canadiens' third pair.

There's no telling if the young Austrian will be able to, but his third NHL game was still one to build on, even if he was at the root of an early goal against and used sparingly due to the Canadiens being shorthanded four times through the first 60 minutes.

"I thought he did great," said St. Louis of Reinbacher's 9:09 spread over 13 shifts. "You know, the first goal, sometimes things like that—especially

early on—can affect the rest of the game, (but) I didn't feel it did. I thought he just really tried to have good intentions; play the game that's in front of him. Overall, I was pleased, especially after being on the ice for the first goal."

St. Louis had reason to be pleased, because Reinbacher was on the ice for a lot more good than bad, with the Canadiens controlling shot attempts 14-4 and 53 per cent of the expected goals over that time.

But because that time was so limited, we didn't get enough of a glimpse of what the Canadiens would look like with the optimal lefty-righty balance they could deploy in a given game. And we still might not have full perspective on it until Matheson is back in a game where Reinbacher is also deployed.

But in Matheson continued absence, it's worth extending Reinbacher's runway. First, to reinforce his confidence, see what he can do, and give him valuable repetitions at this level. And second, to see what that balance does for the Canadiens.

Penalty kill has come to life

After allowing five goals on the first 21 power plays given to their opposition, the Canadiens have only allowed one goal on their last 17 penalty kills.

It's a stretch that's allowed the Canadiens to climb from 24th in the category to 12th—an unlikely jump considering Matheson wasn't available to play the last three games.

He not only led the Canadiens in time on ice on the penalty kill last season; he led the league in the category.

Kaiden Guhle's return to play is a big factor in the turnaround, with the 24-year-old currently averaging 3:43 per game on the penalty kill. Arber Xhekaj, who's averaging 2:08 per game in his new penalty killing role, is also fairing quite well.

But what it really comes down to, according to penalty killing forward Alex Newhook, is the unit finding the cohesion they were missing in employing a new, more aggressive structure assistant coach Derek Lalonde put in place.

"We're coming together, and we're like one bounce away from being very, very good," said Newhook before the Canadiens killed all four Sabres power plays on Saturday. "We're realizing when to apply pressure, making teams uncomfortable in some instances. Trusting it is probably the biggest thing for us, even though we had a tough start and a lot of goals against. We just kept trusting it, and now it's starting to click."

St. Louis could see it, too.

He just wants it to be maintained now.

"When we're applying our rules, we can kill penalties," he said. "I feel like when they're trying to find their best options, I feel like they don't get it easily, so I'm encouraged by that. I feel like when we're on, we're not giving Grade-A looks. It's a work in progress. It's a cat-and-mouse game; the more you're going to go through the season, they Watch video, they're going to try to break you every which way, and we've just got to stay composed and detailed and inside our rules."

Mr. Saturday Night living up to his name

Cole Caufield came into this season with 34 goals on Saturday nights since the start of 2024-25, and through three Saturday nights has continued to be as productive as ever.

Caufield now has four goals, including the overtime winner he scored against the Sabres this past Saturday night.

It was the 66th goal in the 106th Saturday night game of Caufield's career, placing him sixth—behind Mike Bossy, Wayne Gretzky, Cam Neely, Brett Hull and Pavel Bure—in goals per game on Saturdays.

It's an absolutely inexplicable phenomenon, even if Caufield tried to offer a reason for his Saturday night success.

"I think less traffic," the 25-year-old said. "That might be it."

Considering he lives less than five minutes away from the Bell Centre, that can't be it.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

Also, it doesn't seem to matter whether the Canadiens are on the road or at home, even if Caufield said, "Saturdays are great here. I think the crowd, the building, the city, you can just feel it, so very special."

There's no rhyme or reason to it; Saturday is just Caufield's night.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.20.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

1225946 Websites

TSN.CA / Matthews aims for emotion as Leafs look to snap skid against 'machine' Celebrini, Sharks

Mark Masters

The Maple Leafs and San Jose Sharks skated at Scotiabank Arena on Monday.

Auston Matthews is planning to bring emotion into Monday's game as the Leafs look to snap a three-game skid (0-2-1) against the San Jose Sharks.

"We just want to make sure that we come out and we're skating, we're moving, we're playing physical and doing the right things," the Leafs captain said. "Playing with better structure, I think, can help minimize some of the mistakes that we've had. But, for the most part, it's just got to be some emotion and making sure that we come out ready to play and go from there."

Matthews will likely see a lot of captain counterpart Macklin Celebrini, who is fresh off a three-point night in a shootout loss Saturday in Detroit.

"Just gets better and better every year," Matthews observed of Celebrini. "But, I mean, his IQ stands out. The pace of play that he plays with and very competitive on pucks. He's strong in battles. He comes out of those 50/50 battles with the puck most of the time, and I mean that's kind of just stuff you can't really teach. I think it's like a mindset, and he's definitely got it."

It's a mindset 2026 first-overall pick Gavin McKenna saw up close during the summer when he got the chance to train alongside the 2024 first-overall pick.

"I would, personally, call him just a machine," McKenna marvelled. "Like the way he's skating every day, working out every day. He's taking care of his body, fuelling his body. It's just so pro and at such a young age, it's really impressive to see."

And, like Matthews, Celebrini is a little extra fired up right now. The Sharks are one of two teams without a regulation win this season and they've been struggling to hold leads. A two-goal edge evaporated in the final frame on Saturday. It was the fourth time this season that the Sharks blew a two-goal lead in the third period.

"There's no hiding it," the 20-year-old centre stressed. "We need to learn a lot. We need to learn how to close these games. I mean, we're leaving points on the table at some point."

Celebrini has never lost to the Leafs with San Jose sweeping all four games since he entered the league. He always gets up for these matchups against Matthews.

"They're super fun," Celebrini said. "He's someone that growing up I watched a lot and I think everyone did just with how much of a prolific goal scorer he was and his touch around the net. And his complete game as well is something I've watched and tried to learn from."

Monday marks exactly 10 years since Matthews, the first-overall pick in the 2016 draft, played Patrik Laine, the second-overall pick in 2016, for the first time in the NHL. Laine scored a hat trick, including the overtime winner, as Winnipeg fans serenaded Matthews with chants of 'Laine's better!'

"It's always an exciting moment," Matthews recalled. "I think it's a good measuring stick for sure. I mean, I remember my first game against Patty, it didn't go my way for sure."

Matthews finished with one assist and was stopped on a breakaway before Laine scored in overtime.

"I think you kind of use it as a bit of a measuring stick, but at the same time, you go out there and focus on yourself, focus on the team, and play a game and play to win," Matthews said.

That's the mindset McKenna is adopting as he prepares to take on Sharks winger Ivar Stenberg, the second-overall pick in June, for the first time.

"I'm excited," the 18-year-old from Whitehorse said. "He's having a good start to the year but, at the end of the day, I don't really go out there thinking it's McKenna versus Stenberg. It's Leafs versus the Sharks. So, it's a team game. Just looking forward to playing against them."

The last time McKenna and Stenberg faced off was in December in a pre-tournament game between Canada and Sweden ahead of the 2026 World Juniors. It didn't go well for McKenna who accidentally put the puck in his own net on a delayed penalty before watching Stenberg score the game-winning goal in the third period.

Stenberg has an early edge in points so far this season. The softspoken Swede has recorded two goals and four assists through eight games while McKenna is at two goals and three assists in nine outings.

Is Stenberg motivated to show the Leafs what they passed on?

"I don't know, to be honest," he said. "Yeah, I'm happy to be a Shark and super happy to be here."

"I think every game is important to him," said Sharks coach Ryan Warsofsky. "He's got a great head on his shoulders. You know, he's a real savant on how he wants to play the game and understand it, and he's picking up things quickly."

Stenberg is looking forward to sharing the ice with William Nylander on Monday.

"So skilled and one of the best Swedes, so fun to see him," Stenberg said.

Although, Nylander missed the Leafs morning skate and is listed as a game-time decision due to an illness.

"I think he's gonna be great tonight," Matthews said with a grin. "It's usually how it goes with him. So, I don't think any of us are too worried."

The Leafs called up Vinni Lettieri from the American Hockey League and the 31-year-old will make his debut with the team on the third line beside McKenna and Colton Sissons.

"It's obviously an honour no matter when you get called up," said Lettieri, who was a big part of the Marlies' Calder Cup championship run last spring. "To do it with this group and to play for the Maple Leafs, it's a special thing. So there's a lot of history behind it. Just can't thank my teammates and coaching staff and management, obviously, for giving me the opportunity because I wouldn't be here without them. So just excited."

Lettieri hasn't played in the NHL since a 26-game stint with the Boston Bruins in the 2024-25 season.

Jim Hiller was impressed by Lettieri during the team's training camp, which was shortened to just two weeks and two pre-season games.

"It was a funny training camp this year," the Leafs coach said. "We kind of split the groups really early. I remember being on the ice with the second group, and he was just working. It really caught my eye right away. I'm sure he wanted to be with the big group and feel like he had a fairer chance of making the team. Terrific attitude. Skilled, but just his work ethic and his passion really caught me. He's done a great job for the Marlies, going back to last year's playoffs."

The Leafs also called up Artur Akhtyamov, who will dress as the back-up goalie on Monday when Sergei Bobrovsky starts against the Sharks and then again on Tuesday when Anthony Stolarz is slated to start against the Blue Jackets in Columbus.

Hiller noted this will allow Bobrovsky and Stolarz to get some extra rest.

It's also a big night for 2025 second-overall pick and Oakville, Ont., native Michael Misa, who is playing his first NHL game in Toronto.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 20, 2026

"It's pretty surreal just going on the ice for morning skate and looking around," the 19-year-old Sharks centre said with a smile. "Cool to be back and looking at the seats I used to sit in when I'd come to watch the games. It's a pretty surreal feeling."

Misa's guest list stretches to around 20 names.

"I'm paying," he confirmed. "But I only see them one time a year, so thought it was the right thing to do."

Misa's family celebrated Canadian Thanksgiving one week late with a big dinner featuring turkey, mashed potatoes and pumpkin pie on Sunday night. The Sharks are hoping the home cooking will help get Misa going. He's stuck on three assists through eight games.

Lines at Leafs skate:

Groulx* - Matthews - Roslovic

Cowan - Paul - Marchenko

McKenna - Sissons - Lettieri

Duhaime - Blueger - MacEwen

McCabe - Raddysh

Rielly - Stecher

Ekman-Larsson - Blankenburg

Rifai

Bobrovsky starts

Stolarz

Akhtyamov

*Nylander absent (illness)

Lines at Sharks skate:

Chernyshov - Celebrini - Smith

Marchment - Wennberg - Toffoli

Stenberg - Misa - Sherwood

Goodrow - Ostapchuk - Graf

Nurse - Kesselring

Dickinson - Trouba

Orlov - Cagnoni

Askarov starts

TSN.CA LOADED: 10.20.2026