



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026



Preview: October 22 at Edmonton

By: Walt Ruff & Peter Dewar

Canes go for two in a row as they battle one of the best in the West

EDMONTON, Alta. - The Carolina Hurricanes are back in Alberta on Thursday, taking on the Edmonton Oilers.

When: Thursday, Oct. 22

Where: Rogers Place

Puck Drop: 9:00 p.m. ET

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

Listen: 99.9 The Fan, Hurricanes App

Canes Record: 8-2-1 (17 Points - T-1st, Metropolitan Division)

Canes Last Game: 6-3 Win over the Vancouver Canucks on Tuesday, Oct. 20

Oilers Record: 7-1-1 (15 Points - 2nd, Pacific Division)

Oilers Last Game: 4-3 Win (OT) over the Minnesota Wild on Tuesday, Oct. 20

Last Time Out...

A three-goal third period pushed the Canes past the Canucks, 6-3, on Tuesday.

Nic Deslauriers, Nikolaj Ehlers and Logan Stankoven all had two goals. Deslauriers got his first multi-goal game since 2022, and Stankoven raised his season total to five goals in two games against Vancouver.

In net, Pyotr Kochetkov improved to 6-0 on the season, making 14 saves.

Jarvis's Back...

Forward Seth Jarvis seems set to return to game action after being activated from injured/non-roster status yesterday.

Jarvis slotted in on a line with Jesperi Kotkaniemi and Jordan Martinook during yesterday's practice in Edmonton. The 24-year-old also worked with the team's second power-

play unit, a role he'd not yet occupied as he grew closer to his return.

Jarvis led the team in goals the past two seasons, scoring 32 both years.

In the same transaction, Bradley Nadeau was reassigned to Chicago (AHL) while Skyler Brind'Amour was recalled to shore up the team's center depth.

So Fly...

After being held without a goal in the first eight games of the season, Nikolaj Ehlers has been on fire during the team's five-game road trip.

With three goals in his last three games, he is up to eight points in 11 games.

In Net...

Should the Canes continue their rotation in net, Brandon Bussi would be in line to start this evening.

Bussi turned in the team's first 30+-save performance of the season on Sunday in Calgary, but came out on the wrong end of a 3-2 result. Prior to that, he had won back-to-back starts over Montreal and Chicago.

Should the Canes go back to Pyotr Kochetkov, he'll look to improve his undefeated start to the season to 7-0. His 1.98 GAA ranks T-6th among NHL backstops (min. 5 GP).

On The Other Side...

Off to a great start under new head coach Mike Babcock, the Oilers have lost in regulation just once thus far this season.

Unsurprisingly, led by Connor McDavid up front, the best player in the game leads the league with his 26 points in nine games. Recording a trio of helpers on Tuesday, he required the fewest games in NHL history to reach 20 assists in a single season.

Defenseman Evan Bouchard leads all NHL defensemen with his 18 points in the same number of contests.

Former Hurricane Frederik Andersen remains sidelined due to a lower-body injury suffered during the offseason and is not expected to make his team debut until December.

Injury Updates

Forward Seth Jarvis was activated from the team's injured/non-roster list on Oct. 21. Jarvis is with the team on the road trip and has been practicing with the team following



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

offseason shoulder surgery. He was initially scheduled to miss "probably four to six months" from the end of June.

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 St. Louis on Friday. They'll close out their five-game road trip against the Blues on Saturday.

Next Game: Saturday, Oct. 24 at St. Louis | 7:00 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 22, 2026

Canes Activate Seth Jarvis

By: Canes PR

Skyler Brind'Amour recalled, Bradly Nadeau reassigned to Wolves

October 21, 2026

RALEIGH, N.C. - Eric Tulsy, General Manager of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, today announced that the team has activated Seth Jarvis from the injured non-roster list. In addition, the team has recalled forward Skyler Brind'Amour from the Chicago Wolves of the American Hockey League (AHL) and reassigned forward Bradly Nadeau to the Wolves.

About Skyler Brind'Amour:

The 27-year-old has recorded three points (2g, 1a) in six games with Chicago in 2026-27, leading the team in goals and tied for team lead in points.

He appeared in six games with the Hurricanes from 2024-26, scoring one goal against Ottawa on April 17, 2025.

The 6'2, 195-pound forward posted 34 points (16g, 18a) in 68 regular-season games for the Wolves in 2025-26.

He helped Chicago reach the 2026 Calder Cup Final with four points (2g, 2a) in 21 playoff appearances.

He has totaled 69 points (37g, 32a) in 196 career AHL games with Chicago.

Prior to turning professional, Brind'Amour skated in 145 career NCAA games with Quinnipiac University from 2019-23, totaling 76 points (23g, 53a) and helping the club win the NCAA Championship in 2022-23.

Brind'Amour was selected by the Edmonton Oilers in the sixth round, 177th overall, of the 2017 NHL Draft, and is the son of Hurricanes Head Coach Rod Brind'Amour.

About Bradly Nadeau:

The 20-year-old has appeared in three games for the Hurricanes in 2026-27, recording two assists.

Nadeau has recorded one goal in four games with Chicago in 2026-27.

He has totaled 115 points (60g, 55a) in 120 career AHL games with Chicago.

Nadeau was selected by the Hurricanes in the first round, 30th overall, of the 2023 NHL Draft and has recorded four points (3g, 1a) in 15 NHL games with Carolina.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026



Connor McDavid, Oilers host red-hot Hurricanes

By: FLM

Connor McDavid leads the league with 26 points as Edmonton welcomes Carolina, which has won eight of its last nine games despite a depleted forward group.

Two of the highest-scoring teams in the young season meet Thursday night in Edmonton.

The Carolina Hurricanes have excelled despite a rash of injuries among their forwards, while the Oilers could be getting even stronger a few weeks into the season.

Center Ryan Nugent-Hopkins is set to make his season debut against Carolina, which should help the Oilers further stabilize their line combinations.

"So, the minutes won't be out of whack," Edmonton coach Mike Babcock said. "We'll be able to just roll out the door and let everyone go, and suddenly we'll be in a way better situation center-wise. ... I'm excited to get some guys back and get up and running like we should be."

Zach Hyman was in the lineup as the Oilers won consecutive games against the Utah Mammoth and Minnesota Wild. But they aim to become even stronger with more top-level players available.

"I think we're way better than this," Babcock said.

Injuries have continued to mount for the Hurricanes, who have still won eight of their last nine games. Thursday's matchup is the fourth stop on their five-game road trip.

Carolina beat the Vancouver Canucks 6-3 on Tuesday, getting a boost from Nicolas Deslauriers, who scored his first two goals as a Hurricane. Carolina acquired him in March.

"I've said it often, I don't expect to score goals, but it's fun when it happens," Deslauriers said. "I know what my job is, and I'm not going to deviate from that and (think) I have to score goals now. It's not my job, but it's fun."

The Hurricanes have yet to have winger Seth Jarvis in action this season, while forwards Taylor Hall, Mark Jankowski and Jordan Staal are sidelined with injuries.

Jarvis was activated Wednesday and is expected to make his season debut Thursday, while Jankowski left the team during the road trip to return to Raleigh, N.C., for further evaluation.

Those injuries have led to unexpected line combinations for Carolina, which has won six of its seven road games.

Defenseman Juuso Valimaki made his Hurricanes debut Tuesday night, paired with Shayne Gostisbehere.

"He played really well for not having played since training camp," Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "There was a lot to worry about, but I thought he had his hands on the first goal with a nice little quick up pass. I thought he played well. Good on him to contribute."

The Oilers have demonstrated plenty of firepower but want to tighten up defensively.

"You can't give out gifts," Babcock said. "If they earn them, no problem."

Edmonton edged Minnesota 4-3 in overtime Tuesday.

Superstar forward Connor McDavid has recorded at least one point in all nine games. With 20 assists, he became the first player in NHL history to reach that mark in the first nine games of a season. He also has six goals for a league-leading 26 points.

McDavid logged more than 25 minutes Tuesday.

Edmonton has enough talent on its roster to generate scoring chances on any shift.

"These guys are going to make their own breaks," Babcock said.

Thursday marks the second game of Edmonton's five-game homestand.

--Field Level Media

Two of the highest-scoring teams in the young season meet Thursday night in Edmonton.

The Carolina Hurricanes have excelled despite a rash of injuries among their forwards, while the Edmonton Oilers could be getting even stronger a few weeks into the season.

Center Ryan Nugent-Hopkins is set to make his season debut against Carolina, which should help the Oilers further stabilize their line combinations.

"So, the minutes won't be out of whack," Edmonton coach Mike Babcock said. "We'll be able to just roll out the door and let everyone go, and suddenly we'll be in a way better situation center-wise. ... I'm excited to get some guys back and get up and running like we should be."

Zach Hyman was in the lineup as the Oilers won consecutive games against the Utah Mammoth and Minnesota Wild. But they aim to become even stronger with more top-level players available.

"I think we're way better than this," Babcock said.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

Injuries have continued to mount for the Hurricanes, who have still won eight of their last nine games. Thursday's matchup is the fourth stop on their five-game road trip.

Carolina beat the Vancouver Canucks 6-3 on Tuesday, getting a boost from Nicolas Deslauriers, who scored his first two goals as a Hurricane. Carolina acquired him in March.

"I've said it often, I don't expect to score goals, but it's fun when it happens," Deslauriers said. "I know what my job is, and I'm not going to deviate from that and (think) I have to score goals now. It's not my job, but it's fun."

The Hurricanes have yet to have winger Seth Jarvis in action this season, while forwards Taylor Hall, Mark Jankowski and Jordan Staal are sidelined with injuries. Jarvis was activated Wednesday and is expected to make his season debut Thursday, while Jankowski left the team during the road trip to return to Raleigh, N.C., for further evaluation.

Those injuries have led to unexpected line combinations for Carolina, which has won six of its seven road games.

Defenseman Juuso Valimaki made his Hurricanes debut Tuesday night, paired with Shayne Gostisbehere.

"He played really well for not having played since training camp," Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "There was a

lot to worry about, but I thought he had his hands on the first goal with a nice little quick up pass. I thought he played well. Good on him to contribute."

The Oilers have demonstrated plenty of firepower but want to tighten up defensively.

"You can't give out gifts," Babcock said. "If they earn them, no problem."

Edmonton edged Minnesota 4-3 in overtime Tuesday.

Superstar forward Connor McDavid has recorded at least one point in all nine games. With 20 assists, he became the first player in NHL history to reach that mark in the first nine games of a season. He also has six goals for a league-leading 26 points.

McDavid logged more than 25 minutes Tuesday.

Edmonton has enough talent on its roster to generate scoring chances on any shift.

"These guys are going to make their own breaks," Babcock said.

Thursday marks the second game of Edmonton's five-game homestand.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

The Hockey News

Nicolas Deslauriers Scores First (And Second) Goal With Carolina Hurricanes

By: Ryan Henkel

Carolina's veteran enforcer showcased unexpected offensive touch in Vancouver, burying two crucial goals to prove he can offer far more than just locker room vibes and heavy hitting.

Nicolas Deslauriers' job isn't to score goals.

The 6-foot-1, 218 pound pugilist is with the Carolina Hurricanes 1) for his physical prowess and 2) because he's become a sort of vibes commander in the locker room.

"D-Lo" quickly became a beloved teammate and that swift bond is a big reason too why he was re-signed to a two-year deal over the summer.

However, Tuesday night in Vancouver, Deslauriers proved he's not just some vanity addition.

Not only did Deslauriers score his first goal as a Hurricane (and first goal since April 13, 2025), but he actually scored twice, including the eventual game winner (his first one of those since March 21, 2022).

"I don't expect to score goals," Deslauriers said postgame. "It's fun when it happens, but I know what my job is. I'm not going to deviate with me scoring two goals and thinking I have to score goals now. That's not my job, but it's fun."

Deslauriers first goal too was a very nice display of his hands, picking up a loose puck in front and outwaiting

Canucks goalie Leevi Merilainen and sniping one over the shortside shoulder.

"He's just a character player," said Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour. "Not really known for pucks in the net, but a couple nice ones. The first one especially. You root for guys like that to get a little recognition on the other end of things because they do a lot of the heavy lifting. Nice to see that happen tonight."

Deslauriers hasn't had many multigoal games in his career either, but funny enough, of the five he's had, three have come in Vancouver.

"I should play them more often, I should play here more often," Deslauriers said with a laugh.

The 35-year-old forward has been thrust into the everyday lineup due to Carolina's growing injury list and he's continuing to make the most of his opportunity.

Deslauriers has three points in the last two games now and, on the year, he has 19 hits and has already gotten into a fight.

"Seeing a guy like [Deslauriers], who's always in a great mood, works hard, score is incredible," said Nikolaj Ehlers, who also scored twice in the win.

The best part of Nicolas Deslauriers scoring last night was all the reactions from his teammates



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

Juuso Valimaki Puts On Strong Performance In First NHL Game After Nearly Two Year Absence

By: Ryan Henkel

After 632 days since his last taste of NHL action, the Finnish defenseman put on a strong showing in his Carolina Hurricanes debut.

Juuso Valimaki hadn't played in an NHL game in nearly two years.

The Finnish defenseman last suited up at the top level of professional hockey on Jan. 26, 2025, then a member of the Utah Mammoth, and over the next 632 days, he had to battle through an ACL tear, a trade and had to fight his way up a brand new depth chart to get back to the NHL.

But all the work paid off for him Tuesday night as Valimaki made his Carolina Hurricanes debut, suiting up on the third pair alongside Shayne Gostisbehere.

"Just happy to be out there playing the game again," Valimaki told Hurricanes Hockey Network during the first intermission. "My mindset was just to be grateful for the opportunity. Happy to be here, so I'm just trying to have a positive mindset. It's been a long road, but I'm just happy to be here."

Valimaki had a rather strong showing too, even picking up an assist in less than five minutes of ice time, moving the puck up for Jackson Blake and Logan Stankoven to work some magic.

"Pretty simple play [by me]," Valimaki said. "Obviously Stanks and Blaker did all the work, so thanks to them. Nice play by those two."

Playing in front of over 400 (!!!) family and friends, Logan Stankoven lights the lamp!

For the game, Valimaki also had a shot on goal, a hit, two blocks, a 13-9 edge in 5v5 chance share and a 73.22 expected goals for percentage.

"He played really well for not having played since training camp," said Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour. "That was a worry with throwing him into the lineup, but I thought he had his hands on the first goal, a quick-up pass. Then I thought he played well. Good on him to step in and contribute."

The 28-year-old blueliner really put his head down and worked hard to get to this point.

Despite being a first-round pick (2017) and veteran of 271 NHL games, Valimaki had to do his time in the AHL coming off of the ACL tear and especially so after getting traded to a team as deep as Carolina.

Valimaki never complained once though, and had a really strong showing with the Chicago Wolves last year after coming in midseason, producing 11 goals and 34 points in 45 games between both the regular season and playoffs.

"Can't explain how happy I am and proud of Juice for making his Canes debut tonight!," wrote Chicago Wolves coach Spiros Anastas. "A Chicago Wolves favourite, ultimate pro, and terrific leader and person. The resilience and perseverance he's shown to make his return to the NHL is inspiring!"

Valimaki may not be a lineup regular moving forward, but it's a testament to the work he's put in that he was able to make it back to this level regardless.

"There's been a lot of ups and downs in my career with injuries and kind of a lot of other things going on, but I think last year was finally where I felt like myself again and I was in a really good head space," Valimaki said back during training camp. "Just trying to play hockey, enjoy it. There's been times where you kind of forget the fun part and for me, at least, when you're having fun and enjoying what you're doing, I think that's when you play your best."



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

Seth Jarvis Added To Roster; Could Play Tomorrow In Edmonton

By: Ryan Henkel

After beating his recovery timeline following shoulder surgery, the star forward reunited with teammates at practice and aims to bring his high-energy game back into the Hurricanes' lineup.

Is Seth Jarvis ready to make his season debut?

The Carolina Hurricanes gave their fans some good news on Wednesday, activating star forward Seth Jarvis off of the injured non-roster list.

"I've learned a lot about myself and what I'm able to mentally withstand," Jarvis said about the recovery process. "It's been tough. Obviously you end the year on such a high note and then you go right into a long, slow process of just kind of sitting around, not being able to do anything. Just slowly been working my way back and now that I'm close, I just couldn't be more excited."

Jarvis, 24, underwent shoulder surgery in the offseason and was given a 4-6 month timeline.

Today marks just under four months, so he appears to be well ahead of schedule, although he and the team have been adamant that they're not rushing his return (and why would they need to given that the Hurricanes have won eight of their last nine games).

"I'm not nervous about anything," Jarvis said in terms of closing in on his return. "I think I've done enough. I know

how much work I've put into my shoulder, how much work I put in just in general getting ready to play, that it's all excitement."

While Jarvis has been practicing with the team since the start of training camp, Wednesday also marked the first practice in which he actually lined up as part of a potential game-day roster, per team reporter Walt Ruff.

Jarvis skated alongside Jesperi Kotkaniemi and Jordan Martinook, two players he's familiar with, and also took reps on the second power play unit.

Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour wouldn't confirm whether or not Jarvis would be in the lineup tomorrow in Edmonton, but he did sound hopeful on the potential.

"We know it's getting closer, so we're trying to get him every little thing like power play time," Brind'Amour said. "It's just stuff that he hasn't really been doing in hopes that we get told he's good to go."

If Jarvis is indeed in the lineup though, don't expect a slow, feeling out process for the Winnipeg kid.

"I'm going to go 100% first shift," Jarvis said. "I don't think I know any other way. The quicker I get into it, the more comfortable I'll be. Whether that's getting hit, throwing a hit, I'm fully confident I'll be good to go."



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

Carolina Hurricanes @ Edmonton Oilers: Lineups, Game Preview and How to Watch

By: Ryan Henkel

What - Game 12 (8-2-1)

When - 9 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 22

Where - Rogers Place; Edmonton, AB

How to Watch - Hurricanes Hockey Network, Sportsnet West, TVAS

The Carolina Hurricanes continue their road trip with Thursday's stop being in Edmonton to take on the Oilers.

Carolina is coming off a 6-3 win over the Vancouver Canucks on Tuesday, getting back into the win column after they saw their seven-game winning streak snapped the game before.

The Hurricanes also look to be due some good news as Seth Jarvis was activated off of the injured non-roster list on Wednesday, seemingly signaling that he could be good to go tonight.

Skyler Brind'Amour was also recalled on Wednesday, with Bradley Nadeau being reassigned to the Chicago Wolves, and so he could be an option to make his season debut as well.

Edmonton is coming in off of a two-game winning streak, most recently defeating the Minnesota Wild 4-3 in overtime on Tuesday.

Connor McDavid has taken his game to another level, with 26 points so far on the season in just nine games, so it's going to be a Herculean task to slow him down, especially with the team missing two of their top defensive centerman.

Jesper Kotkaniemi (2g, 1a) has points in three straight games.

Nicolas Deslauriers (2g, 1a) has points in back-to-back games.

Nikolaj Ehlers is one point away from 600 career points.

Jackson Blake is two points away from 100 career points.

Carolina is 34-40-12-4 all-time against the Oilers and last season went 1-0-1.

Carolina is 10-4-2 in their last 16 meetings with Edmonton.

Hurricanes forward Taylor Hall was drafted first overall by the Oilers in 2010 and played in 381 games with the franchise between 2010-16.

Oilers goalie Frederik Andersen played in 159 games with the Hurricanes from 2021-26.

Sebastian Aho (11g, 27pts in 18gp), Andrei Svechnikov (7g, 15pts in 14gp) and Jaccob Slavin (1g, 19pts in 19gp) are all point-per-game players against the Oilers.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

LINKS

<https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/preview-october-22-at-edmonton-102226>

<https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/canes-activate-seth-jarvis-102126>

<https://www.cbssports.com/nhl/news/connor-mcdavid-oilers-host-red-hot-hurricanes/>

<https://thehockeynews.com/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/latest-news/nicolas-deslauriers-scores-first-and-second-goal-with-carolina-hurricanes>

<https://thehockeynews.com/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/latest-news/juuso-valimaki-puts-on-strong-performance-in-first-nhl-game-after-nearly-two-year-absence>

<https://thehockeynews.com/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/latest-news/seth-jarvis-added-to-roster-could-play-tomorrow-in-edmonton>

<https://thehockeynews.com/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/game-day/carolina-hurricanes-edmonton-oilers-lineups-game-preview-and-how-to-watch-2>

SportScan

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

1403206 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Senators fans steal the show in Brady Tkachuk's emotionally charged return

Ryan Dixon

KANATA, Ont. — For years, Ottawa Senators fans watched Brady Tkachuk bring the fight to opponents. When he returned to Ottawa as a despised member of the Florida Panthers, they unleashed their own combative spirit, bringing a level of sustained savagery that would make even the most vindictive fanbases proud.

Perhaps even blush.

Sens supporters were merciless on their former captain on Wednesday night, as Tkachuk — who was traded to the Florida Panthers in June after informing Ottawa he would not sign another contract with the team — returned for the first time to the city he called home for eight seasons. The Canadian Tire Centre in Kanata throbbed with an energy worthy of a Game 7, as emotions pent up for months — maybe even longer — spilled onto the ice like blood after a brawl.

While the start of the game was marked by rigorous boos, the end featured what remained of an announced sellout crowd gleefully cheering as the final seconds ticked away in a thunderous 5-1 Ottawa win.

A couple events — Tkachuk himself scoring on Florida's first shot of the contest and Sens goalie Linus Ullmark being forced out of the game with a lower-body strain in the third — threatened to sap the masses of their zealous desire to deride. But the home team more than did its part, giving credence to one of the night's more common chants — We don't need you! — by scoring five unanswered goals to record about the most emotionally charged victory you could ever hope to witness in October.

"I didn't expect it to be that much," said Senators defenceman Jake Sanderson after the win. "Little crazy, but you know what, we have great fans, they're passionate, they want to see our team do good and win. They brought the energy tonight and it's awesome to see everyone on their feet at the end of the game."

Sanderson, slowed by a lower-body injury, was playing his first game since seeing just a handful of minutes in the season-opener on Oct. 3 in Toronto. On a night the fans absolutely torched a bridge to the past with their treatment of Tkachuk, the best part may have been Sanderson — who finished with two assists and a team-high 22:36 of ice time — illuminating the path forward by reminding everyone how important he is to this squad.

"Every time he has the puck, every time he makes a play, it's so effortless," said Ottawa forward Tim Stutzle, who continued his own fantastic start to the campaign with a 1-1-2 showing.

Of course, anytime a Tkachuk is involved — be it Brady or big brother Matthew, his linemate with the Panthers — you know things are going to get physical. Right after Brady opened the scoring with a power-play goal 10 minutes into the game, Ottawa's Hayden Hodgson and Florida's Bokondji Imama dropped the gloves following the centre-ice face-off.

Early in the third, it was Sens forward Ridly Greig and Florida's Sam Bennett throwing knuckles in the evening's second tilt. Beyond that, the numerous scrums and chirps underscored the fact that this was no standard hockey game, and Stutzle was proud of the way his teammates stood tall.

"You see guys stepping up for each other," he said. "We had a lot of nail guns out there tonight."

It's easy to assume the added chippiness was a bit of message-sending to their old pal, but Stutzle denied that was the case.

"We're playing our game," he said. "There's no message. We just play our game. It doesn't matter who we play. He's a really good player, we had to be really detailed against (the Panthers), they have a great team. I think it was just a whole team effort, that's the way we want to play. We're hard to play against and there doesn't need to be any messages. I think everybody respects each other and we just found a way to win tonight."

There might remain a shared respect on the ice, but it sure seemed to evaporate by the time you got to the stands. Granted, nobody expected anything warm and fuzzy around this reunion. Tkachuk's relationship to the team's supporters had clearly become strained by the time the situation resolved with his move south. Maybe the former teammates who dined with Tkachuk Tuesday night still cherish the good times they



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

had, but in the with-us-or-against world of fandom, there's no room for nuance.

Tkachuk stiff-armed the city, in the eyes of its sporting citizens, and on Wednesday night they wound up and slapped back.

The booing began the moment the Panthers came out and knocked over a pile of pucks at the start of warm-ups and picked up any time Tkachuk was involved in, well, anything.

The chants were varied, incessant and ranged from R-rated to childish to downright creative. Every one of them — Matthew's bet-ter!; You can't read!; You eat crayons! — was imbued with a spiteful spirit Ottawa backers clearly believed appropriate for the occasion.

"I heard a few of them," Sanderson acknowledged after the game. "I don't really have a comment about it, but yeah, I did hear them."

No video tribute highlighting Tkachuk's humanitarian work in the community was going to divert fans from what they came to do, which was extract a pound of flesh — verbally, anyway — from a player they felt betrayed them. There even seemed to be an element of taunting when, in the second period, Sens fans heartily cheered another returning player, fourth-liner Lars Eller. Did the veteran Dane really make that big of an impression on Sens fans during his one season in Ottawa or was the crowd's loud response proof they would take any opportunity presented to let Tkachuk know they liked every person in the building more than him?

Earlier in the day, Tkachuk said nothing he experienced from the fans would change the positive memories he has of the city but, goodness gracious, they sure did try.

"Were they ruthless?" a seemingly unfazed Tkachuk asked with a certain coyness after the game. "No, it was good. Shows the passion they have."

Tkachuk finished the night with six penalty minutes — the same number as Matthew — as both brothers departed the ice early thanks to roughing calls from one final dust-up.

Brady's exit from the ice gave the fans one more chance to pop, putting an exclamation mark on a night like few others in the history of the franchise.

"Any time you have a crowd like that, it's so much fun playing in front of them," Stutzle said. "They helped us a lot tonight."

And they sure had fun doing it.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.22.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

1403207 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / NHL's Top 12 UFAs of 2027: Latest rumours, reports

Luke Fox

Recent trends suggest that several of the most intriguing members of 2027's UFA class may reup before the calendar strikes July 1. But, boy, are there some game-changers playing out their walk years right now.

While a slew of cornerstones already put pen to paper — Cale Makar, Alex DeBrincat, Drake Batherson, Mark Stone, Jordan Staal, William Karlsson, and John Marino among them — a bunch of established and emerging talent is still trending toward joblessness on Canada Day.

Future first-ballot Hall of Famers, Stanley Cup champions, team captains, top-four blue-liners, and game-breaking wingers may all be available to eager GMs.

And with the salary cap projected to rise by another \$9.5 million — to \$113.5 million in 2027-28 — those general managers should have even more budget to splash the pot on the next all-star who makes himself available on the open market.

Here's a rundown and ranking of hockey's best impending unrestricted free agents, plus the latest buzz circulating about their future.

Happy contract year, gentlemen. Get that bag.

Age on July 1: 27

Position: Defence

2026-27 salary cap hit: \$7.85 million

The latest: Far and away the most compelling unsettled UFA file belongs to the Norris-winning Olympic gold medalist, who has positioned himself to make Makar-like money if he chooses to sign long-term with the Minnesota Wild — or any team of his choosing for that matter.

No doubt, Wild owner Craig Leipold would open the coffers to retain Hughes, as he did for Kirill Kaprizov. Heck, Minnesota already traded four pieces to Vancouver for one and a half seasons of the defenceman's services and no guarantee of more.

The confident Hughes holds all the cards here, and he knows it.

"I just feel at peace. I feel like there's a lot to look forward to this year. And as far as the noise, if someone wants to ask me a question, I'm not basing decisions because I don't want to answer questions. But I'm gonna take my time, and Billy's gonna take his time, and I'm sure it'll work out," Hughes told 32 Thoughts in September.

"At the end of the day, I got to do what's best for myself. I think I've earned that right. You play seven, eight years to get to UFA and decide what you want to do. And I do love it in Minnesota."

Communication between GM Bill Guerin and Hughes's agent, Pat Brisson, remains open. Looming over Hughes's decision are his twin desires to play for a Stanley Cup and to one day play on the same team as his younger brothers, both New Jersey Devils.

"These things take time," Guerin said, "and different things are important to different players."

Age on July 1: 34

Position: Right wing

2026-27 salary cap hit: \$9.5 million

The latest: Knowing the Tampa Bay Lightning's pattern of locking up core talent before those players start to play out their walk years, the Kucherov stalemate begs attention.

"Both parties, I know, would have preferred to have the deal done today to be able to put that behind us. We haven't been able to do that. I'm still in touch with his agent (Dan Milstein). We're going to keep the lines of communication open with the goal remaining to be to get Nikita assigned

to a contract that's going to keep him in Tampa for many years to come," GM Julien BriseBois said at the outset of training camp.

The belief is that the two-time and reigning Hart Trophy champ would prefer to stay with the club that he helped hoist two Stanley Cups. But as recently as 2024, BriseBois drew a hard financial line with another all-time Bolt (Steven Stamkos) and refused to budge.

The going rate for impact forwards, even those in their mid-30s, has essentially doubled since Kucherov signed his current contract eight years ago.

"What's in my mind? My mind is trying to help the team this year," the winger said.

"I control what I can control, and I'll do my best with what I can on the ice, and that's what I'm focusing on right now and not much more I can say."

BriseBois is willing to negotiate in-season and is not putting a deadline on negotiations with Milstein.

"I say the sooner the better, obviously," BriseBois said. "There's no timeline. If you want to get technical, he won't be a free agent until July 1 of next year. Hopefully it won't get to that point."

Age on July 1: 27

Position: Left wing

2026-27 salary cap hit: \$12 million

The latest: Testy RFA contract negotiations, the threat of arbitration, and botched sign-and-trade attempts to Seattle and St. Louis led Robertson and the Dallas Stars to settle last summer on a one-year, \$12-million contract that potentially walks him out of Texas.

On one hand, you could easily see the relationship between player and team being extended long term once Dallas gains more cap flexibility in the 2027-28 season.

On the other, Dallas GM Jim Nill publicly acknowledged the Stars had a deal in place with the Seattle Kraken to acquire the seventh-overall pick in the 2026 draft in exchange for Robertson. What sewered the transaction was Robertson's refusal to sign a big extension in Seattle.

Twentysomethings with 100-point campaigns on their résumés seldom hit the open market, which explains Nill's urgency to extend his all-star as early as Jan. 1, when he's eligible to put pen to paper.

"I'm going to wait until probably around the first of December," Nill said on Oct. 17, regarding his next round of negotiations with Robertson's new agent, Andy Scott.

"I don't want any distraction. Just get off to a good start, and I'll sit down with his representatives around the first of December, see if we can get something done."

Robertson says he wants to focus on playing well through the first 20 games of the season before spending time on his future.

The winger has already tied teammate Mikko Rantanen for highest salary on the Stars. With the cap spiking, Robertson's next deal — if he stays with the Stars — would blow Nill's internal cap out of the water.

"Dallas, obviously, it's where I started," Robertson said in July. "I've built a great career out here and obviously throughout the summer you see where the league is going, see what happens and everything. Obviously, if anything was going to work for me, just to keep reevaluating because things were happening so quickly and things are changing that going this route and seeing what happens, see what's going to happen and reevaluate and have the time and everything, it helps along the way."

Age on July 1: 30

Position: Centre / Left wing

2026-27 salary cap hit: \$4.75 million

The latest: With Fraser Minten joining Elias Lindholm as Boston centres making \$7.2 million plus next season, we wonder what this means for Zacha.

The Bruins' top pivot is hot off his first 30-goal, 65-point campaign and is far and away the best centreman under 30 on pace for UFA status this



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

summer. In other words, Zacha has serious leverage. He could double his AAV.

"It's the era, right? We say we should have come into the league 10 years later," Zacha said, smiling as he spoke with The Athletic in late September. "There was so much escrow when I came into the league. It was always bridge deals, two or three years. You get two or three years, prove it, then you're 25 and then you sign your contracts. It's crazy to see sometimes, guys after their first year, second year. But on the other hand, it's good. We had the same cap for so long."

GM Don Sweeney says ongoing communication with Zacha's agent, Paul Capizzano, has been positive — but a gap remains.

"We know the importance of what Pav is to our hockey club, and we would like to be able to have him come back. We'll continue to talk," Sweeney said. "Pav is a big part of what we're trying to accomplish as an organization and commitment to winning."

"Hopefully we get to a landing spot."

We don't see an imminent extension here. Where the Bruins sit in the standings at the trade deadline could play a major factor in Zacha's future. The forward can only block a trade to eight teams, and top-six rental forwards fetch juicy returns.

Heck, according to The Athletic's Pierre LeBrun, Zacha's name popped up in trade conversations with the Blue Jackets about Kirill Marchenko before the Maple Leafs stepped to the plate.

Age on July 1: 39

Position: Centre

2026-27 salary cap hit: \$8.7 million

The latest: Unlike Alex Ovechkin, Crosby fully expects to be reporting to training camp in 2027. At age 40.

The NHL's seventh all-time scorer has already begun contract extension talks with Pittsburgh Penguins GM Kyle Dubas via longtime agent Pat Brisson. And he's fine with Brisson and Dubas working on his file in-season.

With NHL superstars jacking up the prices, will Crosby re-sign again for his lucky \$8.7 million, the team-friendly AAV the future Hall of Famer has maintained since wrapping his entry-level contract way back in 2008?

"I have no idea. But if history is any proof of that, we'll see," Crosby told 32 Thoughts at the NHL's Player Media Tour. "But Pat and Kyle are talking and hopefully get something done."

The age-defying Crosby has posted an unprecedented 21 consecutive point-per-game seasons and has shown little sign of regression despite being one of the game's oldest skaters.

"I want to play for a number of years, for sure. But you don't know how you're going to feel a year from now, two years from now. I can go based on how I feel now, and I feel pretty good. For playing as long as I have, I'm pretty happy with how I feel."

Dubas told reporters on Sept. 28 that there is "always an open back-and-forth" with Crosby's camp.

"And I don't feel, from our end, that there's any real pressure to have it done by a certain date," the GM said. "We'll just continue to talk."

While rival teams (Montreal? Colorado?) can dream of the Penguins sliding down the standings and Crosby becoming available for trade, the player has always been loyal to Pittsburgh.

Age on July 1: 30

Position: Defence

2026-27 salary cap hit: \$7.35 million

The latest: While sitting a rung below Hughes, the versatile and productive Dunn would certainly command a bidding war if the top-pair D-man were to hit the open market.

Fortunately for the Seattle Kraken, their power-play quarterback and highest-paid player prefers to stay in the Pacific Northwest.

In October, Dunn told Sound of Hockey's Darren Brown: "My heart is with Seattle. I would love to retire as a Kraken."

Due to a market spike, Dunn could command something in the ballpark of \$9 million annually on a long-term deal. That he can block a trade to 16 teams increases his leverage this season.

Age on July 1: 34

Position: Defence

2026-27 salary cap hit: \$3.2 million

The latest: One of four veteran Carolina Hurricanes defencemen skating toward unrestricted free agency, Gostisbehere's value has at least doubled since his change of scenery.

The offensive blue-liner exploded for 50 points in 55 games last season, plus another 12 in 19 playoff contests en route to a Stanley Cup.

GM Eric Tulsy is facing more immediate pressure to deal with the disgruntled Alexander Nikishin's file — the RFA has asked for a trade and will be ineligible to play in the NHL if not signed by Dec. 1 — and has plenty of cap space to accommodate a raise for Gostisbehere.

In the meantime, Carolina's power-play QB has jumped off to a strong start and is poised to play an important role in the Canes' bid to repeat.

Age on July 1: 31

Position: Left wing / Right wing

2026-27 salary cap hit: \$4.5 million

The latest: Colorado's two-way, top-six winger picked the perfect season to leap into his hottest start yet.

Lehkonen, a Cup champ with a reputation for elevating under high stakes, was described as the Avalanche's "unsung hero" by goalie Mackenzie Blackwood.

GM Joe Sakic prioritized re-signing Makar and head coach Jared Bedar in the off-season, but now Lehkonen's rising stock should have his attention.

"Both sides are comfortable. We'll just see how the year plays out," Sakic told reporters on Sept. 30.

The cap-crunched executive is taking a patient approach here, but with Makar's \$20.4-million AAV kicking in next season, a proper raise for Lehkonen may well require freeing up money elsewhere.

9. Ryan O'Reilly

Age on July 1: 36

Position: Centre

2026-27 salary cap hit: \$4.5 million

The latest: Contenders are keeping an eye on the Nashville Predators, who may be tempted to deal some of their proven veterans — Stamkos? Jonathan Marchessault? Roman Josi — if they fall out of the playoff race.

O'Reilly, no stranger to trade rumours, would be the most obvious candidate, though. He plays a premium position, lacks trade protection, and is in the final year of his contract.

New GM Chris MacFarland has not been in any rush to extend O'Reilly, who told reporters that there hasn't been dialogue on that front.

"The focus is being here and winning hockey games. It's an amazing city, this team, the players in the room are great. But at the end of the day, it's a business, and you've got to win," O'Reilly said.

"My full focus has to be on that. And if that happens, then hopefully things will take care of themselves. You don't win, changes happen. I want to stick around here, I want to have success here, and I want this group to have success. There are so many great things about here, but again it's a business, and we've got to perform here."

Age on July 1: 31

Position: Left wing

2026-27 salary cap hit: \$5 million



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

The latest: Five consecutive 20-goal seasons have positioned the Seattle's reliable top-line forward for a juicy raise this summer.

An original Kraken, McCann speaks highly of Seattle, a young NHL city that has struggled to attract stars.

"Everybody who plays here loves it," McCann said (via SoundOffHockey.com). "Even guys that have moved on to other teams, they even say to us that this was an amazing place to play. Our fans are great. I mean, look at the facilities we have around, right?"

"The team does whatever they can to make the players feel comfortable, make the families feel comfortable, and we added some pieces on the management side of it. I wish I had a straight answer for you when it comes to why guys don't want to be here, but I don't."

General manager Jason Botterill is in the business of luring more talent, not letting it walk, so expect him to take a fair shot at keeping McCann in the fold.

The GM said he views both Dunn and McCann "as big parts of our group here moving forward."

The player holds a 10-team no-trade list.

Age on July 1: 33

Position: Goaltender

2026-27 salary cap hit: \$6 million

The latest: Binnington's uncertain future in St. Louis has been exacerbated by a slip in performance and the rise of a younger, cheaper Joel Hoffer, who has taken his starter's job for the Blues.

Still, Binnington has big-game pedigree, having backstopped St. Louis to its only championship as well as helping Team Canada to a 4 Nations crown and an Olympic silver medal.

Despite dustups of trade rumours, Binnington remains with his original NHL club, now managed by former teammate Alex Steen.

"I'm a competitive goaltender, right? I love St. Louis. I think for me, it's just taking care of what's in my control. It's the same old story I give every time. I think if I can take care of what's in my control, then the rest will unfold. I believe in myself and in my process. I'm excited to get to work," Binnington told reporters after 2025-26's elimination.

"I believe in what Steener has in mind for this group. I'm excited about that. And being a part of a good, winning, successful hockey team is where I want to be. That's something you just handle as it comes."

Considering his age and accomplishments, Binnington is the most intriguing pending UFA goalie. It would not be surprising to hear his name hit the rumour mill again, as he can only veto a trade to 10 teams.

Age on July 1: 37

Position: Defence

2026-27 salary cap hit: \$11.5 million

The latest: Despite his age, Karlsson ranked second among all 2025-26 Penguins in scoring (66 points) and has jumped off to another productive season, possibly his final one as a Penguin.

With future Hall of Famers Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and Karlsson all on expiring deals, next summer should be one in which Pittsburgh gets younger. A new contract for Karlsson had not been discussed prior to puck drop.

"I think that the situation is pretty given on what it is and what it's not," Karlsson said on Sept. 17. "I've got one year left. You know, our team is in a weird stage, I think. So, we'll see how it goes this year. All I can say is that I enjoyed myself. I like being here."

Dubas maintains an open dialogue with the smooth-skating right-shot defenceman, who holds a full no-move clause but would surely garner interest as a playoff rental — if Pittsburgh can't return to the dance.

"Those conversations with Erik have been very direct, and very open and great," Dubas said. "When you're a player of that calibre and you've achieved so much, everyone wants to handle it a different way. For us, it's about being respectful, plus being open with them about where we see things going here so that they are comfortable with that."

More notable UFAs in 2027: Josh Anderson, Ryan Hartman, Morgan Frost, Blake Coleman, Lawson Crouse, Evgeni Malkin, Paul Cotter, Logan Stanley, Jalen Chatfield, Andrew Copp, Nino Niederreiter, Samuel Girard, Barrett Hayton, Chris Kreider, Mats Zuccarello, Drew Doughty, Sean Kuraly, Jared Spurgeon, Ross Colton, John Gibson, Philipp Grubauer, Elvis Merzlikins, Sam Montembeault, Tyler Seguin, Jason Zucker, Cody Glass, Justin Brazeau, Drew O'Connor, Alex Killorn, Jamie Benn, Michael Amadio, Kirby Dach, Corey Perry, Claude Giroux, Victor Olofsson, Teuvo Teravainen, Oliver Bjorkstrand

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.22.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

1403208 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Early analysis: What are this year's Maple Leafs?

Justin Bourne

On Monday's edition of Real Kyper and Bourne, when the Toronto Maple Leafs were fresh off a disheartening 4-1 Saturday loss to the New York Islanders, I made a comment to Kyper that I hoped would be played back for me later in the season, but for positive reasons: I said that I believed this would be the low point of Toronto's season. That at 3-4-2, and dead last in the Atlantic, my neighbour who said this was "another lost season" may have been overreacting.

Why did I say that?

Well "talent" mostly. The Leafs have plenty of it. This league goes in fits and starts with its intensity levels across the season, but out of the gates everyone still has a chance, everyone is alive. You get under-talented teams playing motivated, hopeful hockey. You get young players still scrapping to make the roster, veterans jockeying for the good linemates and special teams spots and ice time. You get new and old coaches alike pouring through video and leaning on their guys to get off to a good start.

Sometimes in hockey under-talented teams can be in the right places and can grind better teams to close games, so anyone can win any night. The Leafs played to one-goal finishes in seven of their first eight games.

The problem for those teams punching above their weight is that it isn't sustainable. Call-ups from the AHL can look great for a night, but rarely an entire season. That's the small-scale version of what I'm talking about. As the year goes on and teams settle in, they may take their foot five per cent off the gas. They travel, they get sick, they get hurt and they get tired, so there's a lot of hockey from now until March where the teams with more talent just find a way to make a few more plays and win games on that alone.

As far as how this relates to the Leafs, they have a deeper roster of playmaking talent than they did last year, and in fact have more of that than about half the league.

On Tuesday night against Columbus, the Leafs got their first win this season against an opponent they just have more talent than, and that talent showed up. The Blue Jackets have a star defenceman in Zach Werenski, but their best forward (Adam Fantilli) didn't crack Sportsnet's "50 best players" heading into the 2026-27 season.

Real Kyper and Bourne

Real Kyper and Bourne

Nick Kypreos and Justin Bourne talk all things hockey with some of the biggest names in the game. Watch live every weekday on Sportsnet and Sportsnet+ — or listen live on Sportsnet 590 The FAN — from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. ET.

Full episode

Auston Matthews had a casual one-and-one for two more points (he's up to second in the league with 18 in 11 games), as did William Nylander. Toronto's complementary skill players (Easton Cowan, Jack Roslovic, Kirill Marchenko, Gavin McKenna) had a good night and the game was effectively over with 30 minutes still to play.

This is not to say the Leafs are amazing, but it's clear they're more than a sub-.500 roster (as long as it stays mostly healthy), and I expect them to be in the playoff fight up to the very last week.

So after 11 games, that's what I think I know about this Leafs team: they're going to skill their way to some wins. From there, let's talk about four other things about this team, and we'll start to get a sense of what we're set to watch as they push to return to the post-season this year.

1. Without Tanev, the defence corps is a legitimate problem

That's the nice way to phrase it, as the D-corps with Tanev isn't exactly great either. For it to be good this year the Leafs needed:

• A healthy Tanev

Of those, they've got Raddysh supplying good play in huge minutes, and you could argue Rielly has been slightly better after he's put up two good games in a row.

But Tanev got hurt, and both McCabe and OEL — who've taken a beating the past couple seasons — look a step behind. Suddenly Troy Stecher is arguably one of their most important defencemen — and he's been great — which is indeed some kind of sentence.

The Leafs' possession numbers will get buried if they can't break the puck out of their zone, and their goalies' lives will be hell if they can't box out in front. Both of these things are issues right now.

If I gave you the choice of this Leafs blue line or any other in the Eastern Conference, there are not many teams you wouldn't immediately swap with. If you've got a blue line that ranks in the bottom few, life gets really hard. There's talk about John Chayka making a trade or two to help it out, and if the Leafs are going to make the playoffs, it might hinge on that happening sooner than later.

Heaven help them if McCabe's injury isn't a quick fix.

2. Their special teams success (top-five PP, No. 1 PK) is generally sustainable

Through 11 games and 38 minor penalties, the Leafs are even on the penalty kill. One goal against, one goal for. That is obviously not what's sustainable here.

That said, they do legitimately have the horses to have a top-10 (maybe top-five?) penalty kill in the league, with new additions Colton Sissons, Nick Paul, Brandon Duhaime and Teddy Blueger. Matthews can kill too, and they're using Easton Cowan in that role, as well as Nylander in the final 30 seconds when the opposition gets sleepy (which has led to chances for Toronto).

Stecher, McCabe, OEL, these defencemen are naturally good PK guys, even if they aren't electric at 5-on-5. Sergei Bobrovsky still moves well laterally, and can be a big part of it too. They can be good here.

On the power play they're as loaded as any team in the NHL. All five of their PP1 guys are legitimate weapons, and there are still more sitting on the bench (particularly when John Tavares returns and the power play plan for Gavin McKenna gets murky).

If they do what they've been doing so far -- rotating throughout the five spots on the 1-3-1 and not getting stagnant -- they'll be able to take advantage of broken plays and seams as well as any unit in the league. They should be a top-10 power play without any issue.

3. Their forwards aren't the "inside" types

One offensive concern is that the Leafs haven't actually created as much to the inside as you'd like to see to call their offensive play "sustainable." They're way better at generating offensive zone time than last season, but a lot of it gets pinned to the outside walls. The Islanders didn't let them get in, so they were content to stay outside.

What that means is you probably need at least one of the "inside" types on each line. Paul, Tavares (when healthy), Sissons, Duhaime and Blueger fit this mould, but outside of them Toronto primarily has perimeter types. Matthews can get inside, but won't park and stay there in a way that forces the defence to the net, and thus opens up room to the outside. He's like a hybrid in that he flies through the net-front, but keeps moving.

This may be random after a day where Roslovic made a great pass to Matthews and looked good, but it might be fun to see Matthews with some mix like McKenna and Paul. Let Paul be huge at the net and forecheck, while McKenna and Matthews do their thing.

It's no coincidence that every "perfect line" I try to make right now involves Paul, who's been a huge bright spot for Toronto thus far. Here are some insane lines I put together (when healthy), because making lines is fun:

McKenna – Matthews – Paul

Marchenko – Sissons – Nylander

Cowan – Tavares – Roslovic



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

Duhaime – Blueger – MacEwen

Not sure about that third line, but Tavares with Marchenko/Nylander is a defensive problem.

One more random note: I've really like Zack MacEwen, who's a perfectly cromulent fourth line heavy/energy guy. He should be on the NHL roster all year as their 13th forward when healthy.

4. The goaltending should be about league average

By all-strengths save percentage the Leafs sit above average at 10th, which is roughly on the better end of what should be expected. But Bobrovsky looks healthy and consistent, giving up about one "hmm maybe he could've had that" goal per game, while making a couple "I'm not sure how many other guys would save that" saves per game.

Sportlogiq has Bobrovsky 10th in goals saved above expected (saving about three goals more than a league-average goalie would be expected to), and 15th in the same stat as a "per game" rate. Stolarz is also back on the right side of the numbers, a whisper better than average.

And finally,

Something I don't know:

1. What Hiller is going to be like as a coach

As the team searches for its identity, it's also not yet clear what Hiller's will be as a coach. The promise going into the year was to better embrace offence, and they've done that, though I also think a big part of the reason why is because the roster is just more talented.

The handling of McKenna has been notable and well-discussed. When Toronto was up 5-1 Tuesday night the rookie got two shifts in the second period, and just two in the third until the final few minutes when it was clear the game was over so he got out a few times in the final minutes. These seem like good moments to get him involved, and to gain experience.

But otherwise I feel like Hiller's done a good job with the lines and defence pairs. I love the move to add Nylander and Cowan at the end of penalty kills. I like how the goalies have been handled.

I think he's doing a fine job so far, but as the team searches for its strengths, Hiller's searching too. There's plenty of hope they could find it together, as they've had both wins and adversity already in the early going.

Roster changes may help things yet, but this team was essentially a group of strangers a month ago, and it's clear they already have the potential to be a handful for their opposition on any given night.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.22.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

1403209 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canucks GM Ryan Johnson preaching patience as losses pile up

Iain MacIntyre

VANCOUVER — The evening before training camp opened, general manager Ryan Johnson gathered the Vancouver Canucks' staff and players for a dinner meeting at the team's lakeside hotel in Penticton, and then spoke the truth.

"The No. 1 thing I talked about is: 'You have no idea how hard this is going to be,'" Johnson recalled Wednesday. "Like, 'what you've signed up for here is almost impossible.' You'd be ignorant... if you thought you were just going to walk in and things would fall into place. I said: 'You've got to be ready because you're going to get punched in the face real quick.'

"And here we are. Game 11."

Here they are, bruised and spiralling through an eight-game losing streak and just 2-8-1 through the start of the rebuild's first full season.

In their last five games, Vancouver has been tied or led four times through 40 minutes and trailed (by a goal) once, then been outscored 11-0 in the third period while losing all of them.

The rebuild is not the impossible part that Johnson referred to just five weeks ago, although there is overwhelming evidence around the National Hockey League — see the Detroit Red Wings, the Canucks' opponents Thursday — that it will be difficult.

The impossible part is believing the Canucks, under new management, with new coaches and new systems, many young and new players, and lofty organizational priorities regarding culture and environment, would somehow come out of the gate and be successful competitively against a murderer's row of initial opponents.

In seven of their first 11 games, the Canucks have faced a team that has either won the Stanley Cup or been to the final in the last five years. And like 7-Eleven, the Canucks' team defence has been open at all hours, surrendering an NHL-worst 51 goals.

As Johnson predicted, they have been punched in the face. And kneed, kicked, gouged and slapped in a lot of other places, too.

"This is exactly how I laid it out," the GM said during a conversation in his Rogers Arena office, which lacks a desk, computer and whiteboard and is set up more like a cozy meeting room because Johnson doesn't want players to feel like they're entering the principal's office when they walk in. "Before it gets better, it was going to get really hard, and we have to understand that.

"Look at the teams (we're playing) and their desperation to be Cup contenders. And then we're trying to establish structure and how we're going to operate. This is what I said was going to happen."

What he feared was going to happen?

"No, not feared because we have to go through it," Johnson continued. "Nobody wants to win a one-off hockey game more than myself. I get it. (But) that can't be our sole focus until we get a bunch of non-negotiables in place — from our structure to our professionalism, how we speak to each other as teammates, our awareness of what a room, ground zero, is supposed to feel like. That is the hard part.

"We're 11 games in. We've said these are going to be the challenges. But we're seeing differences in some players from Game 1 to now, Game 11, taking the right steps."

Although the losing streak is stark enough to be attracting coverage from media outlets that do sports in-person only when things are really good or extremely bad, Johnson is not worried about the losses specifically.

He likes the resilience the Canucks have shown hanging in or battling back in several games, and doesn't believe young prospects like

defenceman Zeev Buium, vital to the rebuild, are being harmed when Vancouver gets overrun by a superior opponent.

But the lopsidedness in some of the games is not healthy for anyone on the losing team, and every player on the Canucks is genetically predisposed to trying to win at all costs. (If they weren't, nobody would want them).

So the losses, predictable or not, take a toll.

As senior defenceman Luke Schenn, a three-time Canuck and two-time Stanley Cup winner with the Tampa Bay Lightning, told Sportsnet this week: "Guys are getting unbelievable opportunities here, and you've got to make the most of it. Obviously wins and losses are important to every player. But I never want to be viewed... that you weren't hard to play against. I think that's probably the worst thing that you could say about a pro athlete, that you didn't make it hard on them. Myself included, we've all got to be much harder to play against.

"The game, as much as it's changed, it hasn't changed: it comes down to competing in one-on-one battles and taking care of the puck and winning the hard areas."

Johnson largely agreed, and noted this is one of the key lessons for the Canucks from the first 11 games.

"It's the attention to detail of the small areas of the game," Johnson explained. "We need to win more puck battles as a group. Those 50/50 (battles) come in so many facets of the game. It's not like we don't have a competitive group but, like I said, there's a lot that they're processing. I envisioned us being harder to play against. But I can tell guys are still at times thinking their way through a forecheck and, as you know, when guys are thinking their way through, your feet stop moving."

Johnson said one of the most positive aspects of the Canucks' start is the players' attitudes coming to the rink and how hard they practise. It was an interesting subject for him to raise because poor practice habits were noted by previous GM Patrik Allvin upon his arrival nearly five years ago, and that Canuck team, undermined by dysfunction and disharmony, was eventually dismantled.

"We've been an incredibly good practice team," Johnson said. "When the group, as a whole, continues to focus on the mornings, good things will come from it. It isn't yet second nature to the entire group. But let's get to Game 20, and then we'll get to Game 40, and we will see. Then it's on me, if I've got to make some decisions. But there are parts that we're not seeing (in games) that we are seeing daily in the mornings.

"A lot of these teams (we've played) that have been together for six-plus years, when they get kicked in the gut, they always have a foundation to go back to. We're still trying to put in the pillars. Our thing to fall back on is, like, 'Holy s---, now what?' But I keep saying, we're learning a tonne. You have to lose before you can learn to win. At times, it sucks."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.22.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

1403210 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / From cowboy boots to kilometres, Calgary left its mark on Coleman

Eric Francis

CALGARY – Blake Coleman came to Calgary without cowboy boots.

Five years later, he owned a pair bought specifically for the Stampede, his young daughters were saying “zed” instead of “zee,” and the occasional “kilometres” was slipping into family conversations.

The Texas native may have left the Flames this summer, but Canada clearly isn’t done with him yet.

“Oh man, definitely not comfortable with kilometres - I still don’t know how to convert those,” said Coleman, laughing.

“But I do say ‘eh’ a lot. My family calls me out from time to time.”

Consider that the Calgary souvenir that keeps on giving.

The boots, the Canadian vocabulary, the Christmases spent in Banff, and the Montana property he’s building a couple of hours down the road from his former hockey home are all reminders of just how much the city got under his skin.

“I guess that’s kind of a permanent impression that it left on us,” said Coleman, who returns to Calgary Thursday night for his first game against the Flames since being traded to Minnesota in the off-season.

“I don’t think I ever would have discovered Whitefish if we hadn’t been playing there.”

That’s quite the legacy for a hockey town sometimes accused of being a little too cold, a little too remote and a little too attached to an aging arena.

Even the Saddledome won him over.

“I still remember my first impression when you walked in,” said Coleman.

“You kind of feel like you walked into a junior hockey locker room.”

But five years of memories have a funny way of changing your perspective.

“The more you’re there, the more you almost kind of appreciate it, and find things that you like about it. I think that’s just kind of it - it just felt like home for five years,” he said.

He figures the same goes for the city itself.

Coleman, 34, is still an unabashed Calgary ambassador, raving about the people, the schools, the sunshine and the lifestyle that made it such an easy place to raise a young family.

Six-year-old Charlie and five-year-old Carson spent several of their Christmases in Banff, had many friends, and felt supported by a community and an organization that took care of Coleman and his family in every way possible.

“It kind of checks all the boxes,” said Coleman, whose wife gave birth to Cooper two years ago while he played in Calgary.

“The people are great there.”

Coleman’s connection to Calgary goes beyond family memories. A three-time Good Guy Award winner, he leaves behind a legacy defined by leadership and community impact, matching the value of his 20 and 30-goal seasons.

An elite defensive player who could contribute in virtually every situation, Coleman was the kind of veteran a rebuilding team could hardly afford to lose emotionally, even if moving him made sense on paper.

The trade wasn’t easy, or particularly fruitful for the Flames, but general manager Craig Conroy did right by him, moving Coleman in the summer so his family could settle into Minnesota before the season began.

That mattered.

“Connie” has become a friend, said Coleman, praising a GM who understands that looking after departing veterans matters as much as building the roster.

“I think the way he treats guys and wants to take care of players and help them get to the best situation for them, while trying to help his team, goes a long way,” said Coleman.

He believes that reputation, combined with the momentum surrounding a new arena, will make Calgary increasingly attractive to players over the next five to 10 years.

“Calgary’s got a reputation for, whatever reason, maybe it’s the Dome or the winter, but I feel like the more guys that come out of there, the more guys have good things to say about the organization,” he said.

“Calgary is a good place to go and play. I don’t have anything bad to say about Calgary. I loved it there. My family was happy there.”

For now, Coleman is happy in Minnesota, skating on the second line and enjoying life 15 minutes from his brother and family. He’s looking forward to catching up with his remaining Calgary buddies Wednesday night at Jonathan Huberdeau’s house, where he’s volunteered for the important duty of helping with the babies after the wives’ night out.

He’s also been keeping tabs on his former team, watching games when the time difference allows. The Flames’ difficult start hasn’t escaped him, but he knows what comes with the territory when veterans are shipped out and prospects and draft picks come in.

“I’d imagine it’s not a huge surprise,” he said of the Flames’ 2-6 start.

“I think everybody knew there’d be a little bit of pain before it bore some fruit. I would imagine it’s just kind of expected that when you have that much turnover, and that many young guys coming in there’s going to be some growing pains throughout the process.”

Coleman will always want his old buddies to succeed. And when he comes back Thursday, to what will surely be a rousing ovation, he’ll find a city that helped shape his family, a franchise he helped lead and an arena that somehow grew on a guy who initially thought it resembled junior hockey.

Five years can do that.

They can even teach a Texan to say “eh,” buy cowboy boots, and build his future just down the road.

Just don’t ask him to convert the kilometres.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.22.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

1403211 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Oilers' Podkolzin off to flying start riding shotgun with McDavid, Draisaitl

Mark Spector

EDMONTON — How on earth does a team like the Edmonton Oilers, in the middle of their Stanley Cup window, end up with an emerging, 25-year-old power forward like Vasily Podkolzin?

From a Vancouver team that could dearly use such a player? For just the miserly price of a fourth-round draft pick, no less?

Well, it all started with a phone call from former Chicago Blackhawks general manager Stan Bowman, to his former head coach in Chicago, Jeremy Colliton, who just happened to be Podkolzin's head coach in AHL Abbotsford.

"I was already leaving to go to New Jersey at the time he called me, and I think Stan had recently taken the job in Edmonton. (Podkolzin) was available, I guess is the best way to put it," began Colliton, over the phone from New Jersey.

"I felt like he could be a top-nine guy on a top team, just because of the package that he offers. I could see him playing the playoffs. Probably a complementary player in the top nine. Obviously, he's in a pretty good complementary spot right now."

Colliton had Podkolzin in Abbotsford for 72 games over two seasons (2022-24). He quite liked the player, but it is clear now that Colliton's bosses in Vancouver didn't really know what they had.

Consider this anecdote from Bruce Boudreau, the Canucks head coach for parts of Podkolzin's first two seasons there:

"I remember our first meeting with (Canucks president) Jim Rutherford and the GM (Patrik Alvin)," Boudreau recently told Edmonton Sports Talk. "I said, 'I think (Nils) Högländer and Podkolzin should go to Abbotsford to get their game going a little bit. We're asking them for big minutes here, and they're really young guys coming from a different situation.'"

"And they looked at me like I had two heads. So that went about as far as anything else I said in Vancouver."

Today, Podkolzin roams the left side of one of hockey's most dangerous lines, with Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl. He has seven goals and 12 points in nine games, but his path to production isn't the one anyone thought he would travel when he was drafted 10th overall in 2019.

"I was the 10th pick. So, yeah, expectations are high," Podkolzin said this week. "You grow up pretty fast here in this league, and then you figure out what role you have. I'm happy with mine."

His role evolved from franchise saviour in Vancouver to a steady, sturdy forechecker in Edmonton with offensive potential.

How much potential? Who really knows?

"I remember having a meeting with him," recalled Colliton. He told Podkolzin, "I see your game transferring. I see you playing on a playoff team and being a heart-and-soul guy. That is incredibly valuable, and you've got to get your head around that being really good — whether you score 40 goals or not."

"Like, there are only so many of those guys around," Colliton told him. "I'm saying to him, 'I'm not going to put a ceiling on you — ever — but you've got to value that role.'"

Like so many high picks, Podkolzin had to accept that there was another route to a steady NHL job other than leading his team in scoring the way he had growing up.

"Back in those days, I'm still trying to figure it out, what kind of role I'm going to get in this (Vancouver) organization," Podkolzin said. "(Colliton) was a guy who pushed me and believed in me, no matter what. He

actually thought much more about my potential. We had so many meetings. We (would) talk a few times a week in his office.

"One day he told me, 'I think you can be the game-changer. The guy who will be super useful for playoffs.' He was a great coach for me. I got lucky."

Today, Zach Hyman sees himself in the young Muscovite.

"The foundation of his game is his work ethic, his tenacity and his ability to be hard on pucks," Hyman said. "You can do that as a bottom-six guy, and you can do that as a top-six guy. It's allowed him to have a lot of time in the league to learn how to score and to figure it out."

Like so many before him, Podkolzin just had to accept that he might not be the guy everyone thought he would be.

"Not accepting. It's confidence," Hyman corrected. "Podz was a 10th-overall pick. So he's been a scorer growing up. Then you get to the league, and it's building the confidence that, 'Hey, I can score in this league. And I can score over and over again.'"

"You don't go from zero to 50. I went from 10 to 15, to 20, to 30 (to 54). He'll be a guy who does that. There's no reason he can't do that."

No reason at all, if you're patient enough.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.22.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

1403212 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Marchenko, Cowan help Maple Leafs earn rout in Columbus

Sonny Sachdeva

COLUMBUS — They rained jeers down on Kirill Marchenko when his name was first announced through the Nationwide Arena loudspeakers. They volleyed even more when he first stepped onto the ice. More still the first time he touched the puck, and every time after that, too.

But the crowd filling the Columbus Blue Jackets' arena booed loudest eight minutes into this tense Tuesday night affair, when their former starring man darted to the net, turned his skate blades toward the crease, and let an Auston Matthews bullet pass career off his foot and into the back of the cage, spurring the beginning of an eventual 6-2 Toronto Maple Leafs rout.

"You know, the best thing is to score early, I think, so he got that one right away," head coach Jim Hiller said after the dust settled on his club's impressive road win. "That was probably a pretty good relief for him. And I thought he played well. He was dangerous. He was what the Columbus fans have come to see out of him — a dangerous player, and pretty electric."

There was no love lost between Marchenko and the city he called home for the past four years. That much was made clear as crystal hours before the two teams even hit the ice, when the winger's former linemate, Adam Fantilli, made his feelings about No. 86's exit from Columbus known.

"Marchy not wanting to be here, it's tough not to take it personally," the Blue Jackets centreman said after Columbus's morning skate. "I'm happy we've got guys who want to be here. It would've been a nightmare having a guy that didn't want to be here all year."

Ten minutes into Tuesday night's game, Fantilli put an exclamation mark on that statement, leaning into a hefty check that laid the Russian out on the ice. A few minutes later, the Nationwide Arena staff replayed the hit on the jumbotron, as a few lines from Taylor Swift — "We are never, ever, ever getting back together" — rang out overtop. The crowd went wild.

A couple minutes after that, Marchenko was given a brief 'Welcome Back' tribute of sorts for the four seasons he played as a Blue Jacket before making his desire for a new chapter clear. But not without another tinge of venom — the winger was shown on screen for a moment, with CeeLo Green's 'Forget You' playing in the background, before the jumbotron cut back to the Fantilli hit once more.

"It's fine," Marchenko said of the hostile reception late Tuesday night. "I've been ready for that. I can't control that. ... It doesn't matter for me, actually. I just do my work on the ice, and try to be better."

Despite the tension in the air Tuesday, the 26-year-old said this return to his old barn was one to remember.

"A special night, for sure. I tried to think about my game, tried to focus on what I can control — my game, my shifts, work hard," he said. "Happy to play here, happy to be back. Thank you to all the fans, everybody who was here when I was here for four years. I have only positive notes. It was a good time."

"But I'm really happy to win this game. It's so important for me."

While No. 86 was the subject of much of the morning's discussion in the Blue Jackets locker room, while he got on the board early to get his club going, it was Toronto's top line that led the Maple Leafs to Tuesday's dominant win.

After William Nylander struck early in the second period to give Toronto a one-goal lead, the club's top trio of Auston Matthews, Easton Cowan and Jack Roslovic reeled off a goal apiece to take the visitors into second intermission up 5-1.

It was a banner night for young Cowan, whose tally came off a short-handed two-on-one alongside Nylander — "I think the goalie was favouring Willy, which I probably would too," Cowan said with a chuckle post-game — and who finished the night with his first career three-point game.

"I can't say enough good things about him, honestly," Hiller said of the young winger post-game. "He's exceeded my expectations — and I had high expectations for him. But he told me this is what he was going to do. So, he's living up to his end of the bargain."

Easier said than done for a 21-year-old in just his second campaign, perhaps. But the 2023 No. 28 pick has seemed a different player this season compared to the nervous young gun who suited up for Toronto as a rookie last season.

"I think a lot of players, they have high expectations for themselves. But as a young player, it's hard to fulfil those expectations this early," Hiller said. "Especially some of the stuff with his game that he had to change a little bit. But he's done it."

"It's just understanding how the NHL works. It's one thing how junior works, it's one thing how college works, one thing how the American League works. How does the NHL work? You've kind of got to understand that. I think he's gotten there."

The breakout gives Cowan 10 points through 11 games this season. A matching three-point night gives Roslovic nine points in as many. And Matthews, who seems to have fully unearthed the all-world form that won him a Hart Trophy a half-decade ago, now sits at eight goals and 18 points through 11 tilts.

"His leadership, it goes a long way," Cowan said of No. 34's immense impact so far this season. "You guys see what he does on the ice, but off the ice he's just as good. He's been great for us."

"He's our captain for a reason."

It was a worrying night for another key leader on the Maple Leafs bench, as Jake McCabe went down with a dangerous injury late in the first period of Tuesday's win. The veteran defender was clipped up high by an errant stick from Columbus's Kent Johnston, whose blade appeared to rake McCabe near his left eye. He stayed down on the ice for some time as trainers rushed to his side, cleaning up the blood.

McCabe didn't return, heaping more pressure on an already short-handed defence corps that's still missing Chris Tanev. Hiller said post-game that the former appeared to be alright.

"We held him out for precautionary (reasons)," the coach said. "He seems to be doing OK. But we just wanted to make sure."

"I'm really grateful it looks like it wasn't as bad as we originally thought," said fellow defender Marshall Rifai, who was thrust into a greater-than-expected role with the veteran sidelined, and earned his first career NHL goal as a result. "That was scary there for a second, but he's a huge piece of this team, and he'll be back helping us."

McCabe's uncertain status aside, it was a memorable night and a well-earned two points for the visiting Leafs, who've now rebounded from their three-game slide earlier this month with back-to-back wins. But it's the process that the team is focusing on more than the results.

"It feels really good," Morgan Rielly said of the turnaround. "You know, there's pace, it looks pretty simple, pretty straightforward. That's the good news — I think as a group, we've had a tendency to overcomplicate things or try to make too many plays. I think when we're able to keep it simple and just manage the puck, our big guys can take over. I think that's what happened here."

"I think our leaders led the way," added Rifai. "Auston was unbelievable again, Rielly was unbelievable. I think our leaders really stepped up. Our best players were our best players, and that's why we got the two points."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.22.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

1403213 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canadiens' Dobes misses chance to right ship with costly penalty

Eric Engels

MONTREAL — This 4-3 overtime loss for the Montreal Canadiens was the result of a series of bad decisions, and the last one will haunt the player who needed a win most.

Goaltender Jakub Dobes came into the game at 1-2-1, down on his luck and with his confidence spiralling. The opportunity to change that was right in his hands before he fumbled it away with a penalty in overtime.

To see Dobes drop it as he did was to know this might get worse for him before it gets better. Just 20 seconds after the struggling goaltender needlessly interfered with Collin Graf, Macklin Celebrini wired home the overtime winner with his second goal of Tuesday's game.

We don't know what Dobes was trying to do in that instant, because he wasn't available to explain it after the game. But we know that, like with everything else he does, he was trying his hardest — the quality that endeared him most to his teammates through his extremely successful rookie season, but also the quality that is plaguing him most right now.

It started off with a great win in Toronto, in which Dobes made the difference.

But then he allowed six goals in a loss to Pittsburgh. Then five goals in a loss to Carolina. And after being iced out for three straight games thanks to great performances by Jacob Fowler, it was another five goals in a loss to the Washington Capitals to set him back further.

Up 3-1 in the third period, Tuesday's game looked like it was going to be a step forward for Dobes.

But the Canadiens lost their balance in front of him before he slipped up near the end.

"When you're up two in the third, (with) the way you're playing, this game should be over," said coach Martin St. Louis. "I think we need to understand the score of the game, and what we need at that time, and what we don't need. It's very simple."

The Canadiens simply didn't need a hope play from Lane Hutson in the offensive zone when he was one of the last two players back and didn't have proper cover in the event of a turnover. They simply didn't need Arber Xhekaj dropping his gloves and swinging at Michael Kesselring for a penalty just four minutes after Keifer Sherwood took advantage of that Hutson turnover to set Michael Misa up with his first goal of the season. And they simply didn't need Dobes to set a pick on Graf while they were in control of the puck in their own zone and set to make a line change.

But no one needed that less than Dobes, who had stopped Ivar Stenberg from all alone in front of him on the shot that came just seconds before Celebrini's laser to the top of his net ended the game.

Was he distracted?

"It's definitely a lot of the outside noise that he might be dealing with," said Cole Caufield, who knows it's only going to get louder around Dobes.

It was at full volume before Tuesday's game, when fans vocalized their displeasure on social media with him getting the start over Fowler, who had helped the Canadiens beat the Buffalo Sabres 4-3 on Saturday.

But Dobes had fans chanting his name after making several great saves in the first period and one spectacular one on Graf after Caufield made it 3-1 in the second period.

He came up with calm, routine saves (like the one he made without allowing a rebound on Celebrini on the first shift of the third period), and he came up with timely ones (like the one he made on a Will Smith half-breakaway right after Misa got the Sharks within a goal).

But getting in the way of Graf in overtime was just another example of Dobes getting in his own way, of aggressively pursuing the win instead of letting it just come to him.

It's a balancing act you wouldn't expect a 25-year-old with just 83 games of NHL experience to have mastered just yet.

St. Louis, who played over 1,200 NHL games, knows.

The coach gave Dobes a chance to recalibrate Tuesday, and now he'll have to give Dobes something else.

"If you feel your player is just constantly overworking and not being efficient on the ice, I think that can spiral longer, so as a coach you really have to help a player out when you feel he's controlling everything he can," St. Louis said earlier on Tuesday. "You really just have to calm the mind down a little bit and reassure him that things are going to be OK and try to steer him in the right direction... Sometimes you want it so bad that you work yourself out of what you think you should be doing, what you would normally do when you're a confident player. So, it's a balance..."

Dobes is fighting to find it. Almost too hard.

That penalty he took before Celebrini ended the game was a perfect example of it.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.22.2026



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

1403214 Websites

TSN.CA / 'Exceeded my expectations': Cowan continues to cook beside surging Matthews on Leafs top line

Mark Masters

Jim Hiller knew Easton Cowan was good. The Leafs coach didn't know he was this good.

"I can't say enough good things about him, honestly," Hiller raved after watching the sophomore winger produce three points in Tuesday's win in Columbus. "He's exceeded my expectations and I had high expectations for him."

Cowan is logging shifts on the league's top-ranked penalty kill and just earned a promotion to Toronto's top line beside Auston Matthews and Jack Roslovic. The 21-year-old made it clear to Hiller that he was ready for more during their conversations before the season began.

"He told me this is what he was going to do, and so he's living up to his end of the bargain," Hiller said.

"A lot of players, they have high expectations for themselves," the coach continued. "But as a young player, it's hard to fulfill those expectations this early, especially some of the stuff with his game that he had to change a little bit. But he's done it. He's done it so far."

Cowan is up to 10 points in 11 games. He's tied for third on the team with eight even-strength points behind only Matthews and William Nylander. He leads the team in takeaways.

The hard lessons learned during a rookie season that saw Cowan produce 29 points in 66 games with a struggling Leafs team are now being applied.

"Just understanding how the NHL works," Hiller said of Cowan's evolution. "It's one thing how junior works. It's one thing how college works. It's one thing how the American League works. How does the NHL work? And you've got to understand that and I think he's gotten there."

Cowan capped his first season of professional hockey by helping the Toronto Marlies win the Calder Cup title. During the short off-season that followed, the pride of Mount Brydges, Ont. focused on getting leaner and winning more puck battles along the wall.

"It was evident when he got back to camp, he's taken a step," said defenceman Marshall Rifai, who played with Cowan in the American Hockey League. "He's more confident. He's quicker, more assertive."

Cowan's confidence was evident on his first career short-handed goal in Columbus. He called his own number on a 2-on-1 rush with Nylander.

"I think the goalie was favouring Willy, which I probably would too," Cowan said with a laugh. "So, yeah, I just picked my spot. It felt good."

Hiller promoted Cowan to the top line on Monday because Nylander was recovering from an illness and he wanted a full strength unit to match against Macklin Celebrini. Toronto held the San Jose Sharks centre off the scoresheet in a 3-1 win.

"It's pretty fun," Cowan said of top-line duty. "I mean, two elite players, so I just try to bring my speed and hound some pucks and try to make some plays."

Cowan picked up an assist on Matthews' eighth goal of the season on Tuesday.

"For me, personally, just his leadership, it goes a long way," Cowan said. "And you guys see what he does on the ice, but off the ice he's just as good. He's been great for us and he's our captain for a reason."

Before Monday's game, Matthews declared he wanted to inject some emotion into the team as the Leafs looked to snap a three-game skid (0-

2-1). The captain promptly delivered a three-point effort against the Sharks.

With Toronto trailing 1-0 in Columbus, Matthews made a strong move to the net on a power play to set up a goal by Kirill Marchenko.

"Our leaders led the way," said Rifai. "Auston was unbelievable again. [Morgan] Rielly was unbelievable. So I think our leaders really stepped up. Our best players were our best players, and that's why we got the two points."

Returning to Columbus for the first time since a blockbuster trade on the eve of the season, Marchenko heard boos every time he touched the puck.

"Oh, it's fine," the 26-year-old Russian said. "I ready for that ... I can't control that. I appreciate all fans who's been here when I played, and it doesn't matter for me. Actually, I just do my work on the ice and try to be better."

The Jackets very briefly welcomed Marchenko back on the video board in the first period with the CeeLo Green song 'Forget You' blasting.

Marchenko was a fan favourite during a four-year run in the Ohio capital. He led the team in goals in each of the last three seasons. But during the summer, he made it known he wanted out and didn't explain why upon meeting the media at the start of training camp. The Jackets eventually traded him to the Leafs in exchange for a package that included winger Matthew Knies.

Before Tuesday's reunion, Adam Fantilli admitted it was hard not to take Marchenko's departure personally considering they were supposed to be linemates this season. The Jackets centre pledged to play Marchenko hard and delivered a big hit in the first period.

"Good hit," Marchenko said. "A couple guys hit me. I take it as fine. It's not a surprise. But it's a good hit, actually. Really, [I] need to be aware next time and heads up quicker or maybe shot quicker. That's it Happy to win. I can take so many hits if we win the game. If we have the two points, it's so nice."

Marchenko smiled throughout his media session.

Down the hall, the mood was much, much different.

"They're on a back-to-back," Fantilli told reporters. "We've been waiting for them. We gotta have it, whatever that looks like. The intensity. Our game. Getting on top of them. There's absolutely zero excuses."

Knies, meanwhile, saw his point drought stretch to six games. He took a penalty and finished minus-one while failing to make a major impact in the game.

"It sucks," the 24-year-old told reporters. "I mean, every night I want to have a good performance. We want to win, we want to, you know, be able to leave the rink with our heads held high [knowing] that we gave a good effort and tried our best. It doesn't kind of feel that way tonight."

Knies was dropped to the second line at Columbus' practice on Wednesday.

Rielly refused to answer when asked about Cowan's development.

"He's in the room," the 32-year-old defenceman said with a grin while peering at Cowan, who was waiting for his turn in front of the microphones. "I can't answer that question."

Rielly was asked again.

"No, no, not with him standing right there," he insisted before walking past a smiling Cowan.

Cowan was more than happy to pump Rielly's tires.

"Another great leader on and off the ice," he said.

Rielly, like Cowan, had three points in Columbus. His two assists in the second period helped the Leafs burn the Jackets in transition.

"Those two plays he made, that was vintage Morgan," said Hiller, who also coached Rielly early in his career when he was an assistant in



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 22, 2026

Toronto. "Up in the play, tape-to-tape pass (snaps fingers), skating, joining, and so I was really happy for him on those two plays because that's his game offensively ... Good night for him."

Rielly did not have a three-point night all of last season. The last time it happened was April 13, 2025.

Rielly had been limited to just one assist in the previous seven games while watching his ice time tick down last week.

Rielly highlighted the team's straightforward approach against the Jackets.

"I think as a group, you know, we've had a tendency to overcomplicate things or try to make too many plays," the longest-serving Leaf said. "I think when we're able to keep it simple and if we just kind of manage the puck our big guys can kind of take over and I think that's kind of what happened here."

The Leafs posted their most lopsided win of the season despite losing gritty defenceman Jake McCabe to an injury in the first period. McCabe was bloodied after taking a stick to the face from Kent Johnson in the first period.

McCabe was held out of the rest of the game for precautionary reasons, Hiller said.

"I bumped into him, seems to be doing okay," the coach added. "But we just want to make sure we go slow."

McCabe was spotted in the bowels of the arena after the game with bruising around his eye.

"It's always a bit scary when that happens, especially when it's up high," Rielly said. "I think he's doing alright."

"Really grateful that it looks like it wasn't as bad as we originally thought," said Rifai. "That was scary there for a second. He's a huge piece of this team and he'll be back in, helping us."

That's good news for a Leafs team that's currently missing defenceman Chris Tanev, who is week-to-week with an undisclosed upper-body issue.

The Leafs host the New York Rangers on Thursday before travelling to Edmonton to face Connor McDavid and the Oilers on Saturday.

With McCabe out, Rifai stepped up and played 19 minutes and 14 seconds. The most he played in his previous four NHL games was 11 minutes and 46 seconds.

Hiller revealed that the coaching staff wasn't sure if Rifai should draw in and play his second game of the season and first since Oct. 13. They ultimately decided that his size (6-foot-2, 211 pounds) earned him the nod over Nick Blankenburg (5-foot-9, 179 pounds) against a bigger Jackets team.

"He's been waiting patiently," Hiller said. "He's kind of a big, strong guy, and we really needed him [in this game]. What a night for him. We didn't expect this much, and to cap it off with a goal, that's a pretty special night."

Rifai's first career NHL goal came late in the third period.

"I thought maybe Auston touched it so I kind of waited there," Rifai said with a smile. "But it was a cool moment for sure."

The 28-year-old Harvard product is hoping the moment may provide a bit more confidence although he's also keeping things in perspective.

"Ultimately, you know, that's not going to be my calling card to help this team," he stressed. "I understand that. I'm going to have to block shots. I'm going to have to break pucks out, you know, use my feet and close space. You know, those are the things that are going to keep me around. And I'm just trying to earn my teammates' respect first and foremost and build off that."

How does he earn respect?

"That's a good question. I think that's something that's not done in one day. It builds over time and I've got to continue to stack good days, make

sure they know I'm a guy they can count on, and bring an honest effort and a good attitude to the rink every day."

Rifai and Rielly tied for the team lead with four blocked shots on Tuesday.

Leafs lines at start of Tuesday's game:

Cowan - Matthews - Roslovic

Marchenko - Paul - Nylander

McKenna - Sissons - Lettieri

Duhaime - Blueger - MacEwen

McCabe - Raddysh

Rielly - Stecher

Rifai - Ekman-Larsson

Stolarz starts

Ahktaymov

TSN.CA LOADED: 10.22.2026