



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 1, 2022



About Last Season: Final Grades for the 2021-22 Carolina Hurricanes

The season ended as a disappointment, but your votes indicated that time went a long way toward mitigating the sore spots.

By Brian LeBlanc

We might just start renaming our annual year in review series the Jaccob Slavin Awards.

For the third year of the past four, the Carolina Hurricanes' own version of the Rock of Gibraltar has topped the GPA calculations based on your votes. (Last year we didn't post the final numbers because... _(ツ)_/ ? Probably had something to do with the number cruncher moving to a new state in the middle of the series. Just a hunch.)

What stood out to me in compiling the numbers this year was how solid they all were. Out of 25 polls, 19 of them resulted in a grade of an A or B of some flavor. Now, to be fair, I did curve the grades a bit this year (mostly because previously it was literally impossible to get an A+), but let's be honest: this isn't the Hurricanes of the mid-2010s we're dealing with here, and thank God.

For a season that was almost universally regarded as a disappointment, the grades surprised me a bit. I have a feeling that if we had posted the polls a couple of days after the season ended, you'd have been much harsher on everyone except maybe Slavin and Seth Jarvis. Instead, waiting a few weeks seemed to cool the temperatures somewhat.

The criteria is the same as in past years: players who played at least 10 games with the Hurricanes and were still somewhere in the system at the end of the season got a full article and a grading poll. Let's take a look at this year's grades:

2021-22 Hurricanes: Final Grades

Player	GPA	Grade	A	B	C	D	F	Total votes
Andrei Svechnikov	3.061	B+	73	241	45	0	2	361
Antti Raanta	3.256	A-	98	177	15	1	2	293
Brady Skjei	2.968	B+	31	156	33	1	1	222
Brendan Smith	2.631	B	21	102	84	5	2	214

Player	GPA	Grade	A	B	C	D	F	Total votes
Brett Pesce	2.896	B+	38	93	46	4	1	182
Coaches and Front Office	3.249	A-	136	257	28	0	1	422
Derek Stepan	2.480	B-	11	101	104	13	0	229
Ethan Bear	1.580	C	3	28	215	177	22	445
Frederik Andersen	3.567	A	189	100	6	2	3	300
Ian Cole	2.230	B-	10	91	151	14	16	282
Jaccob Slavin	3.897	A+	252	18	1	0	2	273
Jalen Chatfield	2.987	B+	46	137	40	3	1	227
Jesper Fast	3.278	A-	94	150	18	0	1	263
Jesper Kotkaniemi	1.818	C	10	39	178	78	20	325
Jordan Martinook	1.036	D+	1	1	12	27	15	56
Jordan Staal	2.808	B	56	138	76	13	3	286
Martin Necas	1.453	C-	0	17	207	164	45	433
Max Domi	1.695	C	3	15	153	93	5	269
Nino Niederreiter	3.230	A-	88	188	20	0	0	296
Sebastian Aho	3.227	A-	165	248	42	6	2	463
Seth Jarvis	3.807	A	395	85	0	0	2	482



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 1, 2022

Player	GPA	Grade	A	B	C	D	F	Total votes
Steven Lorentz	1.780	C	9	21	168	99	3	300
Teuvo Teravainen	3.136	B+	41	62	8	4	3	118
Tony DeAngelo	3.338	A-	274	389	29	2	2	696
Vincent Trocheck	3.097	B+	119	343	64	2	0	528

Some notes and thoughts on the grades:

- There were a whole lot of A's this year, more than before. Of course, curving has a lot to do with that; all of those A-minuses would have been B-pluses in years gone by. But still, half of the polls resulted in a GPA of at least 3. I'd have killed for that in college.
- Only three players did not receive a single "F" vote, and oddly enough, not one of them remains with the team: Nino Niederreiter (RIP, fuel and fire), Vincent Trocheck, and Derek Stepan (?!).
- In terms of raw A votes, it wasn't Slavin that led the line. Instead, resident wunderkind Seth Jarvis tallied

nearly 400 A votes. (And two F's. If you were one of them, quit trolling our polls.)

- There wasn't a player who had an even bell curve. The closest was Jalen Chatfield, whose median vote was a B and had 46 above and 44 below. We didn't really have anyone whose results were all over the board. In general, you were very consistent in your votes.
- The one exception was Jesperi Kotkaniemi, and I don't blame our commenters for not knowing entirely how to evaluate him. He had almost twice as many B's as F's, but he had twice again as many D's as B's.
- Meanwhile, and this will come as absolutely no surprise to anyone, the poll with the most votes belonged to Tony DeAngelo, with almost 700. (It's almost like controversial players draw traffic. Who'da thunk it?) The average, if you're interested, was around 320 votes per player.
- Is the Rod Brind'Amour shine starting to wear off a bit? This is the first year since he took over that either he personally or the coaching staff in general racked up fewer A votes than B's.
- The only player to not get a single A vote? You guessed it...~~Frank Stallo~~ Martin Necas. Just like everyone would have guessed.

As always, thank you for participating in our grading this year, and we look forward to doing it again next season!



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 1, 2022



The 5 Most-Improved Teams of the 2022 NHL Offseason

By Marko Zlomislic

As salary cap restrictions are loosened and teams find themselves armed with a bevy of cap space at their disposal, the NHL offseason – beginning with the annual Entry Draft – is often the most exciting time on the league calendar. The 2022 edition did not disappoint, with a meagre \$1 million cap increase for 2022-23 forcing several teams to unload notable contracts for little to no return. As a result, the teams entering the offseason with clean books were poised to capitalize and capitalize they did, reminding everyone that cap space is the most valuable asset in the modern NHL.

Remember, this list only considers the talent difference between a team before and after the events of the offseason, not necessarily how they stack up to their competitors. With that, here are the five most-improved teams of the 2022 NHL offseason – let's dig in.

Ottawa Senators

Notable Additions: Alex DeBrincat, Cam Talbot, Claude Giroux, Jacob Larsson

Notable Subtractions: Matt Murray, Connor Brown, Filip Gustavsson, Colin White, Victor Mete, Chris Tierney

Has anyone enjoyed the 2022 offseason as much as Ottawa Senators general manager Pierre Dorion? First, he swung for the fences by acquiring sniper Alex DeBrincat from the now rebuilding Chicago Blackhawks in a draft-day deal with a package headlined by the seventh-overall pick. Although it's not insignificant, a first-rounder outside the top-five in a weaker draft is a small price to pay for a two-time 40-goal scorer under the age of 25 who remains under team control next season.

The offseason could have been labelled a success if Ottawa stopped there, but they also managed to procure the services of Claude Giroux, a native of nearby Hearst, Ontario. Although he's no longer at the peak of his powers, giving up nothing but cap space for a high-level playmaker who produced 73 points in 85 regular-season and playoff games is a win for the much-maligned Dorion. Furthermore, the Senators solidified their goaltending tandem for 2022-23 with the addition of Cam Talbot and sent Matt Murray to the Toronto Maple Leafs after several injury-riddled campaigns plagued by inconsistency.

Although DeBrincat has yet to sign long-term, he could be swayed by a rapidly accelerating project in Canada's capital promising to take the Eastern Conference by storm. The hefty extensions recently awarded to Brady Tkachuk, Josh Norris, and Drake Batherson show the organization is willing to spend, suggesting a big payday could be in the winger's future.

The Senators still lack depth, particularly on defence, but there is no question they are the most-improved team after a busy offseason. The playoffs remain uncertain due to an unforgiving Atlantic Division, but the pieces for a future Stanley Cup contender are slowly falling into place, which is welcome news for a long-tortured fanbase.

Seattle Kraken

Notable Additions: Oliver Bjorkstrand, Shane Wright, Andre Burakovsky, Martin Jones, Michal Kempny, Justin Schultz

Notable Subtractions: Haydn Fleury, Daniel Sprong, Derrick Pouliot, Dennis Cholowski, Victor Rask, Riley Sheahan

Simply put, the Seattle Kraken's attack was anemic during their inaugural campaign, as they scored a paltry 2.63 goals per game (29th in the NHL) and Jared McCann's 50 points were the lowest team-leading total in the league last season. The motive for general manager Ron Francis was simple: bolster the team's forward ranks. They seem to have done just that, jumping at the chance to acquire even-strength star Oliver Bjorkstrand from the cap-strapped Columbus Blue Jackets, and snapping up Andre Burakovsky from free agency, he of 61 points in the high-flying Avalanche system last season.

They also snagged top prospect Shane Wright fourth-overall in the 2022 Draft, solidifying a formidable one-two punch at center with Matty Beniers for the foreseeable future. He may not produce at an elite level offensively, but his mature two-way game should slot in nicely on a team which ranked eighth in 5v5 expected goals against per-60 (xGA/60) in 2021-22.

Adding Michal Kempny and Justin Schultz also gives the Kraken a pair of defenders to round out a stable group of blueliners including Adam Larsson, Jamie Oleksiak, Vince Dunn, and Carson Soucy. It's not a collection of brand-name talents, but a capable crew somewhat maligned by atrocious goaltending from Philipp Grubauer and Chris Driedger (last in team save percentage).

With even league-average netminding and an uptick in scoring, the Kraken could capitalize on a weakened Western Conference after a summer defined by an exodus of star talent. A division title is likely out of reach, but a first-ever playoff berth is within the realm of possibility.

Los Angeles Kings

Notable Additions: Kevin Fiala

Notable Subtractions: Olli Maatta, Dustin Brown, Andreas Athanasiou, Troy Stecher

The Los Angeles Kings didn't have the busiest of offseasons, but it featured one of the most significant power moves within



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 1, 2022

the Western Conference. After friction between Kevin Fiala and the Minnesota Wild organization and cap concerns brought on by the twin buyouts of Zach Parise and Ryan Suter led to him hitting the trade block, the Kings pounced without hesitation.

The price was notable – prospect Brock Faber and a first-round pick – but the Kings' bountiful youth pipeline offered the leeway to make a trade for the disgruntled, but supremely skilled Swiss forward. It's tough to say they didn't make out like gangbusters here, shedding assets from a position of strength to acquire a 26-year-old who scored 85 points last season and locked him up for under \$8 million through his age-33 season. His neutral-zone prowess adds a different dimension to the Kings' offence and affects the balance of power in the Pacific Division.

Their departures include forward Dustin Brown, the longest-tenured player in franchise history, and depth pieces, the absence of which could be mitigated by continued development from their ensemble of promising talent. The Kings put on a good showing against the Edmonton Oilers in the first round of the 2022 Playoffs, and it's not unfeasible for them to win a round in 2023.

Detroit Red Wings

Notable Additions: Ben Chiarot, Andrew Copp, Ville Husso, Dominik Kubalik, David Perron, Olli Maatta, Mark Pysyk, Robert Hagg

Notable Subtractions: Thomas Greiss, Calvin Pickard, Marc Staal, Olli Juolevi

Although the questionable salary and length of some of the contracts handed out by Steve Yzerman this summer were concerning (Ben Chiarot and Andrew Copp), the Detroit Red Wings still upgraded at virtually every position. Chiarot, despite being miscast in a top-pair role, is at least an upgrade on the defensive corps trotted out last season, and Olli Maatta, Mark Pysyk, and Robert Hagg can be plugged in to play serviceable bottom-pair minutes.

Copp, Dominik Kubalik, and David Perron all boast histories of offensive production and can help insulate the Red Wings burgeoning skilled core. Copp and Perron in particular have flashed the ability to play within the top-six, and bring a wealth of playoff experience to an inexperienced club.

After betting on Alex Nedeljkovic after solid results in a small sample last summer, Detroit made a similar gamble on Ville Husso. The 27-year-old netminder only has 57 NHL games to his name, but performed well last season, posting a .919 save percentage (SV%) in 40 games while stealing the net from Jordan Binnington at times in the regular season.

The Atlantic still promises to be a bloodbath and the defence leaves something to be desired, but the Red Wings are well set up to play spoiler deep into the season. If their sophomore stars in Moritz Seider and Lucas Raymond take

a leap and Husso is a legitimate starter, there is a chance that the 2022-23 campaign could bear fruit by way of the playoffs. I still believe that bottoming out for another year would have been more beneficial for their progression given the calibre of the 2023 Draft, but there's no turning back now.

Carolina Hurricanes

Notable Additions: Brent Burns, Max Pacioretty, Dylan Coghlan, Ondrej Kase, Ryan Dzingel, William Lagesson

Notable Subtractions: Tony DeAngelo, Ian Cole, Max Domi, Brendan Smith, Vincent Trocheck, Derek Stepan, Josh Leivo, Nino Niederreiter

The Carolina Hurricanes observed a considerable amount of turnover this summer, waving goodbye to significant contributors in Tony DeAngelo, Vincent Trocheck, and Nino Niederreiter. That's not to mention the departing depth cogs in both attack and defence, requiring replacements at every position.

Yet, the Eastern Conference semi-finalists added top-line talent at a minuscule acquisition cost. First was the addition of Brent Burns, a 37-year-old rearguard who offers a bit more at both ends than the outgoing DeAngelo, with the added bonus of nearly 100 postseason appearances. A pair featuring defensive standout Jaccob Slavin and an adventurous Burns promises a perfect stylistic fit, with the two accounting for the other's deficiencies.

It hurts to lose Niederreiter and Trocheck, but introducing one of the league's top shot generators in Max Pacioretty (19 goals in 39 goals last season) and promising defender Dylan Coghlan for the scant cost of future considerations is an extraordinary move. Remember, it pays to have flexibility in a cap-defined landscape.

Elite talent is the most difficult commodity to acquire outside of the draft, but the Hurricanes did so without surrendering anything of consequence. For one of the league's most successful regular-season teams of the past few years (fourth in points percentage since 2018-19), the next step is breaking through in the playoffs.

Will the Improvements Lead to a Stanley Cup?

Apart from the Hurricanes, none of the other four teams included on this list can realistically call themselves legitimate Stanley Cup contenders, even after impressive offseason moves. Fortunately, those teams have built strong youth-led foundations looking to take the next step in their development. With further growth and additional roster tweaks, challenging for a title is within the realm of possibility in the near future. Patience is a virtue, even if exercising it can be frustrating. Just ask the Colorado Avalanche, it seemed to work out well for the reigning Stanley Cup champions.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 1, 2022

TODAY'S LINKS

<https://www.canescountry.com/2022/7/29/23283174/about-last-season-final-grades-for-the-2021-22-carolina-hurricanes>
<https://thehockeywriters.com/nhl-most-improved-teams-2022-offseason/>

SportScan

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

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IIHF seeking 'additional information' about Hockey Canada cases

The Athletic Staff 2-3 minutes 29/07/2022

The International Ice Hockey Federation is launching an inquiry to "obtain additional information" about sexual assault allegations involving Hockey Canada and how the national organization has addressed them, the world governing body announced Friday.

Hockey Canada was previously named in a lawsuit that alleged eight players, including some members of Canada's World Junior team, sexually assaulted a young woman in 2018. The alleged assault occurred in a London, Ont., hotel room in June 2018 following a Hockey Canada Foundation event.

The lawsuit, which was resolved via a settlement agreement between Hockey Canada and the woman who made the allegations, was filed in April and became public in May.

"The IIHF was informed by Hockey Canada about this settlement in May 2022 and has launched an inquiry to obtain additional information concerning the cases and Hockey Canada's actions to address them," the IIHF said in a statement. "These are deeply troubling incidents that the IIHF takes extremely seriously."

Authorities in London have reopened an investigation related to the 2018 allegations. Last week, Chief Steve Williams said a sexual assault investigation began in June 2018, and eight months later, it was concluded with no criminal charges laid. Hockey Canada said earlier this month it was reopening a third-party investigation into how the incident was handled.

New allegations of a group sexual assault in Halifax involving members of the 2003 Canadian World Junior Team surfaced last week. Halifax police have opened an investigation into the claims.

Earlier this week during parliamentary hearings in Ottawa, multiple MPs called for Hockey Canada executives to resign. MP Kevin Waugh asserted to current Hockey Canada president and CEO Scott Smith that "Canadians have lost trust."

The IIHF said it will "monitor Hockey Canada's actions, including the reopened investigation, to ensure that it is acting in accordance with the IIHF Abuse and Harassment Code."

The Athletic LOADED: 07.30.2022

1250609 Websites

One of the Sabres' best teams ever has become a feeder to NHL front offices

Tim Graham 10-12 minutes 29/07/2022

Thomas Vanek played 1,029 NHL games over 14 seasons with eight organizations.

All along the way, Vanek's teammates praised his sharp hockey mind. When he began his career in 2005-06, the Buffalo Sabres' dressing room spoke his language and molded his perspective.

"The conversations we had about hockey with so many of those guys," Vanek said, "we would say 'Yeah, I understand exactly what you mean' and go out and execute it."

At first, Vanek believed that's just the way it was in the NHL, where the best skaters and best competitors and best thinkers assemble atop the hockey world.

He eventually learned otherwise.

"Later in my career," Vanek said, "I might try to explain that same concept and you could tell they just didn't get it or see it the way I saw it."

"That Sabres team had a high, high hockey IQ."

Many consider 2005-06 to be the greatest team in Sabres history. They emerged from the lockout a speedy, relentless fireball seemingly destined for a championship before an obnoxious rash of injuries doused them one cruel period shy of the Stanley Cup Final.

Buffalo's collection of skill and character was obvious, but what we're discovering almost two decades later is just how much brainpower congregated inside the dressing room.

The San Jose Sharks this month named Mike Grier general manager, bestowing the same power 2005-06 linemate Chris Drury has with the New York Rangers. The Philadelphia Flyers this year named Daniel Briere special assistant to the GM. Last month, the Chicago Blackhawks promoted Brian Campbell to hockey operations adviser, a role that could increase more with senior adviser Scotty Bowman's departure two weeks ago.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 1, 2022

Jay McKee last month won an OHL championship as the Hamilton Bulldogs' head coach. Adam Mair is the Sabres' director of player development.

"That's the group we had," said Ryan Miller, the NHL's 2005-06 breakout goaltender. "We were competitive, and we worked hard. We came to things honestly. That bubbles up. You've got to have knowledge of a lot of different aspects of hockey."

"They're wired that way. All these leaders have taken the next step in their hockey evolution, leading off the ice makes a lot of sense."

Miller and more of those Sabres might also be on their way to NHL front offices and benches. Former teammates consider Miller, Vanek, Jason Pominville and J.P. Dumont coaching or front office naturals.

Dumont is the Nashville Junior Predators' coach and director of hockey operations.

The other three want to wait until their children are older before diving in. Miller attended the NHL Draft as an adviser to old friend Kay Whitmore, the league's senior director of hockey operations. Pominville coached the Montreal Junior Canadiens, including his son, to a championship at the prestigious Quebec International Pee-Wee Tournament.

"It's really fun for a friend and former teammate to see all these guys doing well," said Vanek, who has been emphasizing baseball and other sports as much as hockey for his three sons in Minnesota. "You want those guys in the game. That's what's great. It's new blood, and it's the right blood."

With so many 2005-06 Sabres already involved and more willing to jump in, those glory years will remain alive as former teammates try to emulate what worked so well when overflow crowds stood outside HSBC Arena to watch playoff games on projection screens.

Even with Drury and Campbell winning the Stanley Cup and Briere reaching the final on other clubs, the Sabres' roster built for 2005-06 must be on their minds as one to emulate.

They'll also have seen first-hand to avoid mistakes such as GM Darcy Regier's policy of not negotiating contracts during the season, which eliminated crucial leverage and led to heartbreaking departures, most notably Drury and Briere to free agency in 2007.

"You don't realize how important culture is until you lose it," Briere said. "We had guys who wanted to be together and play together. That goes a long ways. And we had so many guys who always want to learn."

"That's what was so cool about it. We all had our own ways to lead, but we were learning other ways too."

The suit-and-tie emergence of these Buffalo teammates is even more remarkable when considering they haven't branched off the tree of any particular coach or executive.

Scores of NFL coaches and executives have been given opportunities around the league simply through working relationships with New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick. San Antonio Spurs coach Gregg Popovich has had a similar effect in the NBA.

Sabres coach Lindy Ruff's influence doesn't quite correspond, but he is viewed as a common denominator.

"With Lindy," said McKee, "I don't think it was always about winning and losing as much as it was about doing all you can and leaving it all out there. When that becomes ingrained in you as a person, when you move on from playing, you don't just turn that off."

"Myself as a coach, and these guys that are GMs now, that whatever-it-takes mindset stays with you, whether it's putting the extra time in or outworking everyone around you."

The 2005-06 Sabres featured a slew of former and future captains. The number was inflated somewhat by Ruff, who, the season before, switched Buffalo's captaincy every month.

But five players in the 2005-06 dressing room were permanent NHL captains at some point in their careers. Drury and Briere were co-captains. Vanek and Pominville would become captains at the start of the Sabres' record-breaking, 11-season playoff drought. Defenseman Teppo Numminen, who arrived with over 1,200 games, previously served two years as Phoenix Coyotes captain.

Sabres forwards Ales Kotalik and Jochen Hecht and defenseman Dmitri Kalinin became captains in their respective home countries' pro leagues. Defensemen Rory Fitzpatrick and Nathan Paetsch were AHL captains. Dumont and center Derek Roy captained their junior clubs. Rookie forward Daniel Paille was Team Canada's captain at the 2004 World Junior Championship.

"That's a lot of C's," said Pominville, "that I wasn't even aware of until you say them."

"Everybody had an opportunity to lead in their own way. When it's always the same guy repeating things, sometimes it can get old. But it was always somebody different, stepping up with the right words at the right times."

The Sabres were so awash in leadership that McKee never was the captain (he was injured half the season of Ruff's monthly rotation), but McKee was the permanent alternate to Briere and Drury in 2005-06.

Grier never wore a letter in Buffalo and never was a captain anywhere else, although he was an alternate with the Sharks and Edmonton Oilers.

"We didn't have anyone who thought, 'I need to be the leader!' " Vanek said. "I viewed eight or nine of those guys as the leaders. It spread through the room that we were one; we were here together."

Lest we forget the goaltenders, who are not allowed to be NHL captains or alternates.

Buffalo had a pair of starting-caliber goaltenders with complementary leadership personalities.

"Millsie would snap once in a while," Pominville said with a laugh. "He was not scared to say what he needed to. He would get emotional."

Then there was Martin Biron, the effervescent raconteur. When the Flyers traded for Biron in February 2007, he ranked third among all Sabres goalies in games, wins and save percentage.

"Of anybody on the team," Vanek said, "Marty probably deserves the most credit because he could have been a No. 1 goalie in the league for 20 other teams. But he put his ego away, never was in a bad mood and was a fun guy."

"Even though he was competitive, he was there for Ryan, supported Ryan, supported all of us."

Compared to Vanek's other stops, he noted the 2005-06 Sabres didn't have players who would shrug off defeat just because they had a good stat line that night, a common phenomenon in all sports.

Buffalo's dressing room almost generated its own gravitational pull. McKee explained when an individual attitude didn't align with the team's dynamic, that player eventually would yield to the group or need to be traded.

"That group's leadership and culture was just off the charts," McKee said, "and we would have won the whole thing without the injuries."

Although the Sabres reached the Stanley Cup Final in 1975 and 1999, many believe their best chance to win it all was 2006.

The scary-good Sabres tore through the Flyers and gobsmacked the Ottawa Senators before bad luck overcame their immense wisdom and talent.

A concussion for center Tim Connolly, a broken left ankle for Kalinin, a hip injury for Numminen, a broken arm for defenseman Henrik Tallinder, a freak ankle infection for McKee.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 1, 2022

"That's always the team you look back on and think, 'Ugh!' " Vanek said. "That's a team that didn't win, but it was the best team I ever played on because of the guys we had and the feel of wanting to come to the rink and wanting to get better.

"That '05-06 team provides so many examples of how to create the right culture."

The 2006-07 Sabres won the President's Trophy, but the Senators trounced them in the Eastern Conference Final. Briere and Drury were co-captains again, but anybody who played on both teams will say the chemistry just wasn't the same.

Grier, Dumont, McKee and Fitzpatrick weren't brought back. Connolly was unable to return from his concussion until the penultimate regular-season game. Tallinder was sidelined half the year. At the trade deadline, Biron went to the Flyers for a second-round draft choice.

As the Sabres' most recent glory years fizzled into darkness, the competitive fire within those players continued — and their generalship evolved — over the years and into retirement.

"I knew we had a really good leadership group, but we couldn't have known what it took to be good executives," Briere said. "So I'd be lying if I told you that I knew we'd have so many future executives.

"We didn't know what would happen in 20 years. It's amazing to look back and see how special that room was."

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1250610 Websites

ESPN / NHL free agency 2022 - Analysis, grades for all the big signings

Greg Wyshynski, Kristen Shilton

The NHL free agency signing period for 2022 is underway.

For each key deal, ESPN NHL reporters Greg Wyshynski and Kristen Shilton will assess the player's fit with his new team, weigh whether the terms of the deal make sense and hand out an overall grade for the team.

We'll continue to grade the most notable moves through the offseason, so check back for fresh grades as deals are consummated; the newest grades will be listed first.

Day 1 winners, losers

Draft recap: Every pick | Takeaways

Note: Advanced stats via Natural Stat Trick and Evolving Wild, unless otherwise noted.

John Klingberg, D, Anaheim Ducks

Terms: One year, \$7 million

Where does he fit: As the free agent frenzy slowed, the Ducks were still on the hunt for a veteran defenseman, as the team parted ways with Hampus Lindholm and Josh Manson at the trade deadline this past season.

Enter Klingberg, who turns 30 on Aug. 14. The former Dallas Stars defenseman had 47 points in 74 games last season, his eighth in the NHL. He was expected to be one of the offseason's top unrestricted free agents, but he was on the outside looking in as some speculated suitors - the Carolina Hurricanes and Seattle Kraken among them - looked elsewhere to bolster their blue lines.

Agent Craig Oster of Newport Sports Management confirmed to ESPN this week that he was now representing Klingberg, who was previously repped by agent Peter Wallen. Without a long-term option to his liking, Klingberg opted for the ol' Taylor Hall plan: Signing a one-year, big-salary deal with a rebuilding team.

Does it make sense? Absolutely. The Ducks had ample cap space to bring on a \$7 million defenseman, and Klingberg should bring even more scoring to a blue line that includes Cam Fowler (42 points in 76 games) and Kevin Shattenkirk (35 points in 82 games). He'll also bolster a power play that clicked at 21.9% last season, as Klingberg can be an exceptional quarterback with the man advantage.

He makes the Ducks better. And the better the Ducks are, the better it is for its collection of young players that could benefit from a taste of a playoff race next season -- or, if things go extremely well, the playoffs. If they don't go well, Anaheim can gobble up part of his cap hit and move him at the deadline to a contender. Which was also from the Taylor Hall signing playbook, as the Buffalo Sabres flipped him to the Boston Bruins in 2020-21 for Anders Bjork and a second-round draft pick.

It also makes sense for Klingberg, who makes a million more in salary than last season (\$6 million) and joins an offensively potent team to pump his numbers before another run at free agency next summer.

Grade: A. While Klingberg won't exactly help the Ducks' defensive issues at 5-on-5, he helps them in several other ways. It's a short-term play but a smart one for GM Pat Verbeek. Meanwhile, Klingberg gets a chance to build up his market value again.

Nino Niederreiter, RW, Nashville Predators

Terms: Two years, \$4 million AAV (\$8 million total)

Where does he fit: Niederreiter will be a versatile player in the Predators' lineup.

The 29-year-old boasts a strong two-way game that makes him a dangerous top-six playmaker, or he can thrive in more of a third-line checking spot. Niederreiter put up 24 goals and 44 points in 77 games with Carolina last season, and has been a consistent threat offensively throughout his career. Where Niederreiter is traditionally underrated is his forechecking ability, and how he helps maintain possession and drive play for his teammates. Niederreiter can also log significant time on the power play, and he's especially good as a net-front presence.

All of that should make Predators' coach John Hynes happy. Nashville has good center depth that needed more complementary parts on the wing. Niederreiter elevates the Predators' options there immediately. You could see him being a good fit on Nashville's second line with Ryan Johansen and either Tanner Jeannot or Philip Tomasino on the other side. Niederreiter's addition makes the Predators' deeper where they were arguably weakest up front.

Does it make sense? This is a great deal for Nashville and a solid opportunity for Niederreiter.

The Predators were middle-of-the-pack in scoring last season, averaging 3.20 goals per game. In the playoffs though, their offense dried up significantly (2.25 goals per game) and that contributed to Nashville's early exit via a first-round sweep by Colorado.

Niederreiter will boost the Predators' offense right away. He can plug in anywhere and be successful. Plus, he can play a more physical, heavy game driving the net and getting some of those greasy goals that go a long way in tight contests.

General manager David Poile did well to wait out the market on Niederreiter and sign him for just two years at a reasonable price. Often those long-term contracts handed out to players approaching 30 don't hold up. This deal gives Nashville a winger to help them win now, without handcuffing the team to a deal it'll be worried about the player living up to for years to come. Fine work all around.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 1, 2022

Grade: A. Really, there are no notes here. Nashville signed a useful player in Niederreiter to a short-term, team-friendly contract. Niederreiter in turn will have a chance to play on a good team with top talents who are hungry to improve on a strong 2021-22 season. The Predators appear to be solid at forward, defense and in goal, and pulling Niederreiter in should only make them that much more dangerous come fall. -- Shilton

Ondrej Palat, LW, New Jersey Devils

Terms: Five years, \$6 million AAV (\$30 million total)

Where does he fit: Ondrej Palat was a Swiss Army knife in Tampa Bay for the past decade. He'll be one again for the Devils.

Palat could conceivably keep up with New Jersey's top-six talents or could take on more of a third-line checking role. In all likelihood he'll be called upon to do both. The 31-year-old has averaged over 17 minutes per game in his career and has logged time on the power play and penalty kill. Palat does it all, and does it well, which is how he was able to reel in this lucrative contract even after an average regular season (18 goals, 49 points in 77 games) that ultimately gave way to a sensational postseason (21 points in 23 games).

The veteran will be expected to produce on the ice, but Palat will also be a valuable asset off of it. New Jersey is deep with burgeoning young players in Jack Hughes, Nico Hischier and Jesper Bratt who will benefit from a sounding board like Palat, with two Stanley Cup championships on his résumé. New Jersey wants to be a playoff contender again, and Palat boasts 138 games of postseason experience, along with 48 goals and 94 points. His voice will carry some serious weight with the Devils.

Does it make sense? This should be a great match for player and team.

New Jersey had cap space to burn but not a great depth of veteran talent up front. It also missed out on landing Johnny Gaudreau, who passed on the Devils' offer. The team needed to pivot, and Palat was a solid choice.

He was available because the Lightning handed out three eight-year extensions Wednesday -- to Mikhail Sergachev, Anthony Cirelli and Erik Cernak -- that made it clear that Palat was no longer in their future plans. But that's not a reflection on Palat's value. His versatility playing on either wing will be an asset as New Jersey figures out how best to deploy all its (hopefully) healthy forwards, and Palat will be a reliable presence to fill in the gaps.

And if the Devils can get some consistent goaltending and find their way back to the postseason, that's where Palat has traditionally shined. He scored more third-period goals (7) than anyone else in the playoff field this season as Tampa Bay chased a third straight Cup. Those included netting the overtime winner in Game 5 of the Stanley Cup Final against Colorado to keep the Lightning alive as well as two game-winners in the Eastern Conference finals against the Rangers. Palat comes through when it matters most. That sort of pedigree should have a genuine effect on the Devils and the confidence they carry into the coming seasons.

Grade: B. This is a rich, long-term deal for an over-30 player. Not to say Palat isn't worth investing in now, but how will those figures hold up in a few years? We can't blame Palat for cashing in, of course. And he should be a terrific plug-and-play skater for New Jersey who will enhance the development of the Devils' other forwards. Those are all good things in the present. What happens down the line will be judged accordingly. Right now, New Jersey adding Palat makes it a better team than it was at season's end. -- Shilton

Johnny Gaudreau, LW, Columbus Blue Jackets

Terms: Seven years, \$9.75 million per season (\$68.25 million total)

Where does he fit: Johnny Gaudreau goes right to Columbus' top line. As he should. And what a surprise.

There's a reason Gaudreau was one of the most highly coveted unrestricted free agents on the market. He's an elite winger, passer and playmaker who can single-handedly turn a game around. Gaudreau put up the best numbers of his career last season playing with Matthew

Tkachuk and Elias Lindholm in Calgary, generating 40 goals and 115 points in 82 games. Whomever Gaudreau is lined up with in Columbus will benefit from his expertise, and he will make the Blue Jackets a true contender in the ultra-competitive Metropolitan Division.

Does it make sense? The initial reaction is the Johnny Hockey saga having an unexpected ending. All signs pointed to Gaudreau leaving Calgary, which made an aggressive offer that was similar to Columbus' in order to keep him, so that he could play closer to his home base on the East Coast. Gaudreau ended up taking less money than his skill set probably is worth to suit up with the Midwest-based Blue Jackets. Curious.

Columbus doesn't have many other top-tier talents that reach Gaudreau's heights up front. Patrik Laine is a restricted free agent who should be back after receiving a qualifying offer this week. But Gaudreau is a head above everyone else, which is why Columbus pursued him. This is the type of splashy signing that can turn a team around and put the rest of the league on notice that they are committed to bouncing back -- something Columbus should be desperate to do after missing playoffs in back-to-back seasons. The Blue Jackets had money to burn; why not throw their hat in the ring?

But what's in it for Gaudreau? Why leave Calgary for Columbus? That may not have been his original plan, granted. Philadelphia was rumored to be in the mix on their hometown product, but the Flyers didn't have enough cap space to make it happen. The Blue Jackets haven't been capable of attracting a free agent like Gaudreau in, well, maybe ever. There will be less pressure on Gaudreau -- and less spotlight -- than he would have attracted in New York or New Jersey (or even in Calgary). That could have been an incentive. Still, it will be interesting to see how Gaudreau's addition pans out for the Blue Jackets and for the winger personally.

Grade: A. The Blue Jackets really pulled off a stunner. Having Gaudreau locked in for seven years could help general manager Jarmo Kekäläinen get something done long-term with Laine, too. And that would be another huge win for an organization that wants to make itself more appealing to free agents in the future. In the present, Gaudreau is going to be a difference-maker (and then some) that could catapult Columbus into contender status. -- Shilton

Jack Campbell, G, Edmonton Oilers

Terms: Five years, \$5 million average annual value (\$25 million total)

Where does he fit: Edmonton needed a new No. 1 goalie when it became clear veteran Mike Smith, who gave the Oilers his all last season, was headed toward long-term injured reserve. Enter Jack Campbell, who will take over that mantle.

The 30-year-old spent the last 2½ seasons with Toronto and worked his way up to being the Leafs' starter. Campbell had never carried the load in net full time before last season, when he produced a 31-9-6 record with .914 save percentage and 2.64 GAA. Campbell was better in the first half of the season than the second, when he battled through a COVID-19 absence and was slowed by injuries. The Michigan native's overall body of work clearly drew Edmonton in, even if Campbell's experience as a starter is less extensive than others they could have targeted.

Does it make sense? Yes. The Oilers had a goaltending vacancy. Toronto didn't make Campbell an offer so he needed a job. There's the fit. Now, how successful will this partnership be? That remains to be seen. Campbell wasn't great in the playoffs (3-3-1, .897 SV%, 3.15 GAA) as the Leafs made another first-round exit, and he's dealt with several injuries the last two years. The Oilers have to feel confident in Campbell's ability to remain available and that his health won't be a factor moving forward.

Edmonton has a solid defense for Campbell to play behind and the Oilers obviously boast a deep top-six group of forwards (led by Connor McDavid, Leon Draisaitl & Co.) that should provide Campbell with decent



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 1, 2022

goal support. All that works in Campbell's favor and will set a foundation for his potential success in blue and orange.

Grade: B. Edmonton is making a significant investment in a veteran goalie without long-term starting experience (and a recent injury history). There is some risk involved here. However, the goaltending market was piping hot and there weren't a ton of free agent options to choose from. Campbell has been more good than average in the last year-plus and if his health holds up -- at least for most of the five-season term -- Edmonton should come out feeling good about the move. -- Shilton

Darcy Kuemper, G, Washington Capitals

Terms: Five years, \$5.25 million average annual value (\$26.25 million total)

Where does he fit: The Washington Capitals have been chasing a true starting goalie ever since moving on from Braden Holtby in 2020. They hoped either Ilya Samsonov or Vitek Vanecek could become one. They attempted to bring in Henrik Lundqvist before a heart condition ended his NHL career. But after last season, when the Capitals were 23rd in team save percentage (.898), they decided to go all-in on finding a true starter, and that starter was Kuemper, who appeared in 57 games for the Colorado Avalanche last season.

The Capitals sent Vanecek to the New Jersey Devils. They walked away from restricted free agent Samsonov, who signed with the Toronto Maple Leafs. Whatever they would have paid them was instead handed to Kuemper, securing the services of a goalie who is a few weeks removed from being mobbed by teammates after winning the Stanley Cup.

Does it make sense? Scanning the goalie market, it makes a lot of sense. Kuemper was the only true starting goalie on the unrestricted free agent market -- Jack Campbell and Ville Husso were both tandem netminders. For what the Capitals needed, Kuemper was the guy.

Kuemper did what he needed to do in the playoffs for the Avalanche: He didn't lose them the games they needed to win. He was also outstanding in the second half of the regular season after getting his bearings in a new market, with 30.4 goals saved above average and 5.3 wins added to the Avalanche. There's no question that he's in the upper echelon of NHL goaltenders -- in the 96th percentile in WAR over the past three seasons -- but some of his underlying numbers reveal below-average rebound control and low danger save percentage.

He's an upgrade over what the Capitals had, but Washington is a downgrade compared to what was in front of Kuemper in Colorado. But hey, the guy used to star playing behind the Arizona Coyotes. He'll be OK.

Grade: A-. Look around the NHL. Look at some of the scrambling, desperate moves that were made by teams hoping that a backup goalie could become a starter or that an oft-injured goalie suddenly could find stability. To find an established starter with Kuemper's numbers -- let alone one who just helped his team win the Cup -- and get him without having to surrender a player or a draft pick is a coup for the Capitals.

Age is an issue. Kuemper is 32. In the short term, he'll be able to shoulder most of the workload. Toward the end of this deal, he'll need a little more help. But the Capitals are still a team of now rather than later, and Kuemper certainly makes them more competitive. -- Wyshynski

Brian Boucher says the Capitals have more work to do in free agency and breaks down the Darcy Kuemper signing.

Vincent Trocheck, C, New York Rangers

Terms: Seven years, \$5.625 million average annual value (\$39.4 million total)

Where does he fit: Right next to Artemi Panarin in the Rangers' top six. That's where Ryan Strome played during his four years with the Rangers before they let him walk to unrestricted free agency. That's where New

York expected Andrew Copp could play when it acquired him at the trade deadline from the Winnipeg Jets, but Copp opted to test the open market and found a new home with the Detroit Red Wings.

That opened the door at center in New York for a free agent acquisition. The Rangers were in the mix for Colorado Avalanche star Nazem Kadri, but opted for a younger (29) and more thrifty option in Trocheck, who spent the past three seasons with the Carolina Hurricanes.

Does it make sense? Committing seven years to a second-line center never really makes sense, but that's what the Rangers needed to do to get Trocheck in at \$5.625 million, making him the fourth-highest-paid forward on the team. The Rangers now have Mika Zibanejad and Trocheck both signed through 2029. Now that's stability.

Trocheck can bring some flashy playmaking to the middle of the ice and has been a strong special teams player during his career. Strome is a better finisher than Trocheck, but Trocheck brings a bigger bag of tools to the mix.

Grade: B. The deal's term is coin of the realm in order to get a solid cap hit for one of the more coveted centers on the open market. Coach Gerard Gallant knows him well. If he can get Trocheck back to the form he showed in Florida, when he was considered one of the NHL's most underrated offensive players, this could look pretty good. Well, for at least the first few seasons. -- Wyshynski

Andrew Copp, C, Detroit Red Wings

Terms: Five years, \$5.625 million average annual value (\$28.1 million total)

Where does he fit: Wherever the Red Wings need him to fit, to be honest. The true value of Andrew Copp is that he's a Swiss Army knife of a forward. The Winnipeg Jets cast him as a defensive forward and played him up the lineup with their stars. The Rangers played him up with Artemi Panarin and Ryan Strome.

The Red Wings likely see Copp as a second-line center behind Dylan Larkin, which could have him playing with the likes of Jakub Vrana and Filip Zadina for new head coach Derek Lalonde.

Does it make sense? Absolutely. When the Rangers acquired Copp from the Jets at the trade deadline, the assumption was that he would move into Strome's spot next to Panarin on a new contract. But the Rangers had someone else in mind -- Vincent Trocheck -- and let Copp walk to free agency.

Their loss is the Red Wings' gain. Copp's versatility makes him an asset for a team that is still trying to see where the young pieces fit in their lineup. He's not the strongest finisher, but he's got a decent shot. He's a good passer if not a great playmaker. Even if his offensive numbers fade by Year 5 of this deal, he does so much more for a team that it's a worthy investment.

Grade: A-. Once upon a time, the Red Wings signed a free agent named Frans Nielsen to a six-year contract worth \$5.25 million annually. That contract ... did not work out. There are echoes of that signing in bringing on Copp, who is another underrated forward who will be asked to build on the offensive promise of his 53 points in 72 games this past season. I don't believe history will repeat itself here, as Copp is hitting his stride as an offensive player. Plus Nielsen arrived as Detroit's kingdom was crumbling, while Copp arrives as the Wings are trending back up. -- Wyshynski

Claude Giroux, C, Ottawa Senators

Terms: Three years, \$6.5 million average annual value (\$19.1 million total)

Where does he fit: Giroux can slide in just about anywhere for the Senators, one of many reasons coach D.J. Smith is going to love having him in the fold.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 1, 2022

The 34-year-old projects to start on a line with Tim Stutzle and Ottawa's newly acquired prize Alex DeBrincat. That's a formidable top-six unit for the Senators to roll out. But with Giroux's versatility, he could be used in a checking role as well if called upon. And he's coming off a terrific season -- 21 goals and 65 points in 75 games.

The veteran also will elevate Ottawa's power play (20th overall last season at 19.3%), and he's an excellent faceoff man (60.3% in 2021-22). He brings more than 1,000 games of NHL experience, with 294 goals and 923 points to his credit, and that alone is invaluable.

Does it make sense? Without question. And that's on and off the ice.

Giroux grew up near Ottawa and has made his offseason home in the area. The Senators have struggled to attract -- and keep -- star players in the past, and now one of the most coveted free agents on the market is choosing to play the last years of his great career there. It's a much-needed boost of confidence for Ottawa.

The Senators have a stable of young talent that will benefit from being around one of the NHL's most respected leaders. Stutzle, Josh Norris, Shane Pinto and others will have the ultimate sounding board and mentor in Giroux (who captained the Philadelphia Flyers from 2013 until he left for Florida in free agency last spring).

Giroux's decision to waive his no-move clause in March to chase a Stanley Cup championship with the Panthers didn't pan out as planned. But the Senators can benefit from his nearly 100 games of postseason experience if they're able to finally get back into the postseason picture.

Grade: B-plus. A three-year deal for a 34-year-old is a bit risky. But Giroux is worth it. He's going into Ottawa knowing the Sens won't compete for a Cup this season, but it's not out of the question they'll be back as a playoff team. Giroux will help there, having proved last season that he's far from over the hill. Knowing how much he'll impact the franchise's foundational pieces only sweetens the deal. Giroux is a home run acquisition for the Senators. -- Shilton

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Sportsnet.ca / 5 intriguing landing spots for star UFA Nazem Kadri as decision looms

Gotta See It: Avalanche's Kadri scores OT winner in first game back from injury

Sonny Sachdeva@sachdevasonnyJuly 29, 2022, 11:45 AM

Few would've predicted Nazem Kadri would still be available this far into the off-season, weeks after the NHL's 2022 free-agency window officially opened. Fewer still have been able to figure out which way the centreman's leaning as he mulls the career-altering opportunity in front of him.

As everyone in every corner of the hockey world is aware by now, the 31-year-old UFA's coming off a dominant, career-best campaign, one that saw him amass the most points he ever had in his 12-year big-league career, and one capped off by a gutsy playoff run that ended with a Stanley Cup ring.

It's more than just the numbers he put up that's brought the suitors to Kadri's door this off-season, though. It's the wider shift that's taken place, the change in the perception of who he is as a player and how immensely impactful he can be. That shift started way back in the early goings of 2021-22, when the former Toronto Maple Leaf found himself among the top scorers in the game, staying there until injuries halted his ascent.

And then came that Cup run, which saw Kadri not simply chip in along the way, but come up with marquee moments, battling through injuries and proving his mettle as a key piece of Colorado's winning squad.

Which brings us here, the London, Ont., native deciding what his next chapter will look like, the dust having settled on that title run.

Kadri's made it clear a return to Colorado remains one of the top options — no surprise given what he and the Avs accomplished together. Running it back isn't impossible. The Avs have just under \$4 million in cap space, and could clear enough to re-sign the centreman by moving out a depth piece. But after playing out a six-year deal that paid him \$4.5 million per season — a wild bargain for Colorado this past year — Kadri's set to earn a significant, well-deserved raise. If he doesn't get Johnny Gaudreau money, as was initially expected, he'll get at least a few million more per year than last season's sum.

That might be doable for Colorado right now, but it gets trickier when you factor in the deals they'll need to sign down the road, particularly the one for offensive focal point Nathan MacKinnon.

So, an exit might seem inevitable after all, even in the wake of that magical season together. According to Avs beat writer Peter Baugh, Kadri's set his sights on joining another contender if he does leave Colorado, and has ruled out clubs not viewed as part of that group. Baugh also reported a number of teams have been trying to work deals to clear cap space in order to sign him, which would explain the weeks-long delay.

That all said, where might the champion pivot end up in the end?

CALGARY FLAMES

Since Gaudreau first declared his intention to leave Calgary, all eyes turned to Kadri as the most obvious star-for-star replacement. That only intensified when Matthew Tkachuk decided to move on from the Albertan club too, though the question of whether the Flames remain a contender was complicated by the departure of the two stars and the addition of Jonathan Huberdeau and MacKenzie Weegar.

Either way, as it stands right now, the Flames are still less potent offensively than they were last season, with two 100-point talents in Gaudreau and Tkachuk going out the door and one in Huberdeau coming back. There's still a need to bolster their offence to get, at least, back to where it was during a promising 2021-22 campaign, and Kadri still appears the best avenue to do that.

Cap-wise, there seems to be room for a deal. The Flames' current \$9 million in cap space will evaporate quickly once they re-sign Andrew Mangiapane and Oliver Kyllington, but if they're able to find a deal to move out Milan Lucic (and his \$5.35 million) or even Sean Monahan (\$6.38 million), they should wind up with enough room to reel in one more key piece.

Reports from the early days of free agency suggested the Flames had made an offer to Kadri, but not one that would've paid him the hefty money most expected him to sign for at that time. That means the team does seem to be interested in what the Cup winner could bring to Calgary's lineup, though. As for the number they're offering, if Kadri's hoping to sign with a contender — all of whom have limited cap space — it won't be for a massive Gaudreau-esque salary no matter where he ends up.

If he was looking to ink a massive deal and simply cash in on a career year, it seems Kadri could've done that already in the early days of free agency. All signs point to this delay coming because he's looking to join a club that can win. And if a Colorado return isn't in the cards, Calgary seems the clearest option — a club with elite pieces up front (in Huberdeau and Elias Lindholm), with whom he would be a key piece (likely slotting in as the 2C behind Lindholm, perhaps linking up with an elite winger in Huberdeau), with a Vezina-nominated netminder in Jacob Markstrom, and a solid blue line that just got a key upgrade in Weegar.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 1, 2022

Brad Treliving's done a nice job of rebounding from what initially looked like a devastating off-season for the Flames. Returning next season having replaced Gaudreau and Tkachuk with Huberdeau, Kadri and Weegar might even be considered a step forward for the team's contending hopes.

BOSTON BRUINS

If we're talking clubs who still seem to have the pieces to go on a deep run, but have room for Kadri to step into a key role, the Bruins seem a fairly good fit too. There's also a plausible reason for the delay, with Boston reportedly still mulling the return of veteran unrestricted free agents Patrice Bergeron and David Krejci.

If Bergeron decides it's time to hang up his skates and call it a career, the Bruins' need for Kadri's services becomes even more pressing, as the club would find itself with a massive hole down the middle. But if the perennial Selke winner does return for another ride, there's still room for Kadri to potentially join the mix as the top-tier second-line centre the B's have been craving — someone who could not only stack points himself but help get the best out of the talent Boston has on the wings among their top six, and someone who brings some bite, too.

Of any team Kadri could sign for, Boston seems the best option in terms of the calibre of talent he could line up with. However the lines shake out, he'd be beside at least one of Brad Marchand, David Pastrnak or Taylor Hall, and part of what would become one of the East's most formidable top-six units.

Now, if Krejci returns to his old 2C role after his 2021-22 campaign overseas, the situation becomes more complicated. Signing on for a third-line role on a team that doesn't look like an absolute home-run of a contender, as opposed to perhaps taking less to simply stay on a team that does, in Colorado, doesn't seem too unlikely.

A Krejci return also complicates any possibility of a Kadri signing financially. The Bruins have roughly \$4.8 million in cap space at the moment, not enough to bring in Kadri even before potential deals for Bergeron and/or Krejci. Moving out a depth forward or defender could clear space, but there's no obvious solution. And long-term, the team has some key deals to plan for, with Pastrnak and netminder Jeremy Swayman both free agents after the 2022-23 season.

Simply put, Boston's situation still seems in flux given the question marks around their veteran talent. But if there's space to bring in Kadri, there's no doubt he could raise the level of the B's entire top six. And what wild theatre it would be for Kadri after all those years on the other side of the Leafs-Bruins battles.

MINNESOTA WILD

The Wild are fresh off a campaign that saw their contending hopes take a massive step forward, their 113 points the most ever put up in franchise history. But despite finishing just six points shy of the eventual Cup champs, Minnesota found itself bounced in the first round of the playoffs for the third straight year, losing to the St. Louis Blues in six games. The Wild are knocking on the door, and adding a top-tier offensive talent like Kadri to the mix could help push their current iteration to the next level.

Bill Guerin threw cold water on any hopes of his club making a massive splash in the early days of free agency by preaching patience above all else.

"A lot of mistakes are made on this day," he'd told The Athletic's Michael Russo. "With how sensitive our cap situation is ... our team is pretty set — we're going to need one more body — so I feel like we can afford to wait. I just don't want to make a mistake. I think stepping back and being patient is better than just signing somebody to sign somebody to say that I did something. I don't need to do that."

It's tough to see any desire for adding one of the most coveted names on the market in there. But, at the same time, that early whirlwind of risky moves has come and gone, and perhaps the prospect of potentially adding Kadri has become more realistic. Bringing in the Cup champ for

ridiculous money doesn't seem to be something Guerin is interested in, but again, that doesn't appear to be the route Kadri's taking either. If there's a more reasonable deal to be made, it's something the Wild should consider, surely.

In terms of fit, Minnesota's got a solid pair leading the top six down the middle in Ryan Hartman and Joel Eriksson Ek, both of whom are coming off excellent seasons. Still, there's no question Kadri would be an upgrade there, whether he slotted in on the top line alongside the dynamic Kirill Kaprizov, or on the second line, which would bolster the bottom six by pushing Eriksson Ek to the 3C spot.

On the cap side, Guerin has around \$4 million to work with at the moment, with all his free agents inked for next season. One factor that could be key, though — according to Russo, Guerin has "quietly shopped" defenceman Matt Dumba, who's heading towards the final year of his contract. And the Wild GM's reportedly looking to add another forward to his offence. Should he find a swap that makes sense, and move out Dumba's \$6-million cap hit, a Kadri deal becomes more of a possibility. Whether it's possible Kadri would leave Colorado to sign with one of the Avs' division rivals is less clear, but wilder things have happened this off-season.

NEW YORK ISLANDERS

Outside of the clubs above and the Avalanche, there aren't many options for Kadri in terms of bona fide contenders who could potentially fit him into their cap situation without major cap surgery. If the net is widened a bit, though, the Islanders are a team that will surely be in the mix.

The club's coming off its worst season in the past half-decade, and recently parted ways with the head coach seemingly responsible for the better times that came before 2021-22, but all isn't lost for Lou Lamoriello's squad. Though they missed the post-season last time around, the three years prior saw the Isles sweep the Pittsburgh Penguins, and then go on two deep runs the next two years, both of which ended only at the hands of the champion Tampa Bay Lightning. They've taken a step back but there's clearly still something there that works.

Looking at the rest of the contenders in the East, the Isles seem in need of some more dynamic talent to lead their top six, especially with Barry Trotz and his system no longer part of the equation. Kadri seems a clear potential solution to that issue. While the Islanders have two solid top-six centres in Mathew Barzal and Brock Nelson (and a quality 3C in Jean-Gabriel Pageau), moving one of those top options to the wing in pursuit of a more dangerous offence overall seems a worthy approach.

Perhaps a shift to the wing could unlock even more of Barzal's offensive potential — after an exceptional rookie season, the numbers haven't quite stacked up to the expectations for the 25-year-old, who remains one of the most talented stickhandlers and skaters in the game. He and Kadri could do plenty of damage together on a newly-formed top line. Or, the pair could lead the Isles' top six on separate lines, with Nelson moving over to become Kadri's finisher.

It appears the Isles are in the mix, with team beat writer Kevin Kurz reporting recently that he'd heard the Islanders have been making a push to sign Kadri. We know Lamoriello likes what Kadri brings, given the veteran GM was the one who inked him to a long-term deal back when both were in Toronto. It wouldn't take too much to make space for a reunion — the Isles have some key deals still to figure out, namely for RFA defenders Noah Dobson and Alexander Romanov, but they have \$11 million in space to work with. Even if those RFA deals cut into that sum, a trade to move out any of the five forwards on the club who make between \$2.5-\$5 million could open up plenty of space.

If Kadri's looking for another surefire chance at the Cup in 2022-23, the Islanders might not be his best bet. But if he's looking for a move back East, closer to home — which seems to be the theme of this off-season — maybe he gives Lamoriello's new squad a look.

DETROIT RED WINGS



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 1, 2022

On the other end of the spectrum, we have the Red Wings. They're not a contender, not by a mile, given the club hasn't made the post-season in six years. But they're no down-and-out rebuilding squad either.

Steadily improving over the past few years, Detroit took another key step in 2021-22 on the back of its youth movement, as star rookies Lucas Raymond and Mo Seider showed a glimpse of their elite potential. Add that to the potential growth still on the horizon for 22-year-old Filip Zadina (the club's sixth-overall pick in 2018), Simon Edvinsson (sixth-overall, 2021), and Marco Kasper (eighth-overall, 2022). Then there's the pair of proven veterans in Dylan Larkin and Tyler Bertuzzi, both still in their mid-20's, coming off 30-goal, 60-point campaigns.

And, of course, the veteran talent GM Steve Yzerman's already thrown into the mix this off-season: forwards David Perron, Andrew Copp, and Dominik Kubalik, defenders Ben Chiarot and Olli Maatta, and, perhaps most importantly, netminder Ville Husso. Given that bevy of moves, it's clear Yzerman feels it's time for his project to take a bigger leap forward. But the veteran GM still has more than \$10 million in cap space to work with, and only a couple in-house free-agent questions to address.

The Red Wings' top six has already been steadily improving under Yzerman. Dropping Kadri into the 2C spot behind Larkin would give it a significant push forward, with Raymond, Larkin and Bertuzzi up top and Kadri perhaps between Perron and Jakub Vrana. Which would push Copp down into a role as a quality third-line centre, or onto the second-line wing, with one of the other wingers moving down to bolster the bottom six. Either way, it would be an undeniable upgrade for the group's overall level.

And there's no denying Kadri would be the type of player Yzerman would covet, given all we've learned about what the Hall of Famer looks for in players. Broadcaster and former NHLer Darren Pang, a close friend of Yzerman's since their teenage years together, shed light on that subject for us a while back.

"He always had that eye. He always knew a hard player to play against or a guy that was a little soft in the corners, would give up a puck rather easily," Pang told Sportsnet a few years ago, when Yzerman was still GM of the Lightning. "I'd ask him about this player or that player — he'd always say, 'No no, watch that player in the corner. He'll give up the puck easy. Watch this player, his second and third effort is incredible. And you look at Tampa Bay's players and who they've scouted — if they're undersized, they're undersized, but they're competitive. Every one of them. They're competitive hockey players — they want the puck, they'll do whatever it takes to get the puck."

"He saw something inside them — their soul, their spirit, their competitiveness, their hunger. That's the way Steve was, the whole time."

Given the mettle Kadri showed during Colorado's Cup run, he seems a player who'd stack up well in Yzerman's eyes. A deal with Detroit wouldn't be joining a sure-thing contender, but it would give Kadri the chance to join an up-and-comer built by the same GM who helped create one of the league's current behemoths. And the chance to take on a new role, to bring some Cup experience and veteran leadership to a talented young squad, to help lift one of the game's historic franchises back to the post-season.

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Sportsnet.ca / NHL's Top 10 unsigned RFAs: Latest rumours, reports

Flames won't wait to start contract talks with Gaudreau, Tkachuk

Luke Fox@lukefoxjukeboxJuly 29, 2022, 10:58 AM

26

Last week's flurry of trades and signings swept some star players — Matthew Tkachuk, Pierre-Luc Dubois, Patrik Laine — from the top of our RFA board.

But there are plenty of intriguing young names still unsigned deep into July.

As these RFAs look to bank off their platform seasons and owners wrestle with a relatively flat salary cap and pandemic losses, some tense negotiations (or trades?) are still on deck.

The situations in Edmonton and Dallas are particularly interesting.

Arbitration cases have been filed, and the deadline to sign qualifying offers has long passed.

Offer sheets can now be negotiated by those without an arbitration hearing.

Here's where things stand with the top 10 RFAs of 2022.

1. Jason Robertson

Age: 23

Position: Left wing / Right wing

2021-22 salary cap hit: \$795,000

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: 2021 All-Rookie Team and Calder Trophy runner-up. Bronze medalist for Team USA at 2021 worlds. Rare Stars forward under age 25 who can produce elite offence: 58 goals, 125 points through first 128 NHL games.

The latest: A major reason Jim Nill is unlikely to re-sign UFA defenceman John Klingberg is because the Dallas GM is seeking to invest a greater portion of his limited cap space in youth.

Robertson and Stars starting goalie Jake Oettinger supplied excellent value on their entry-level contracts. Both are restricted free agents, however, and require juicy raises. Robertson has been a godsend, establishing himself as a top-line threat and picking up slack from aging leaders Tyler Seguin and Jamie Benn.

Nill faces a compelling question: Try to lock up as much of Robertson's prime now in hopes he looks like a bargain later, the way Nill did with 2021 RFA Miro Heiskanen? Or go with a bridge deal and risk handing Robertson increased leverage down the road?

2. Jesper Bratt

Age: 23

Position: Left wing

2021-22 salary cap hit: \$2.75 million

Arbitration rights: Yes — and filed

Bargaining chips: Fast becoming one of the NHL's most underrated forwards. Silky mitts. Steadily increased his points per game over four seasons. Selected to Sweden's 2019 world championship squad. Devils' highest scorer with a career-best 26-goal, 73-point performance.

The latest: Bratt is about to make the franchise pay.

Delivering back-to-back career seasons since signing his two-year bridge contract, Bratt thrived in a breakout showing for New Jersey.

The sixth-rounder might be a late bloomer, but his confidence and underlying numbers are accelerating upward. In a somewhat surprising move, Devils GM Tom Fitzgerald committed early and aggressively to Bratt's younger teammate, Jack Hughes, with an eight-year, \$64-million whopper.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 1, 2022

Hughes is a centre and arrived more highly touted; Bratt is a winger.

With the Devils' largest cap hit, P.K. Subban (\$9 million), coming off the books, space to extend Bratt won't be an issue. But keeping his price tag well below Hughes's might be.

Kevin Fiala's seven-year, \$55-million deal with Los Angeles is the one we're pointing to if we're Bratt's agent.

GM Tom Fitzgerald described Bratt as "a big part of our future" when the season concluded.

"We've talked to Jesper and made him an offer, an offer that shows the commitment that (Devils co-managing partners) David Blitzer and Josh Harris have in this young gentleman for very good reasons," Fitzgerald said at the NHL Draft. "He's a really good hockey player that makes our team better."

The GM denied ever putting Bratt on the block and asserted he's never spoken with anyone about a possible trade. Fitzgerald prefers to go long-term here.

"We don't make the offers we've made with the intention of not having the player, and we want to build with Jesper," Fitzgerald said. "Last time we negotiated (with Bratt), were they smooth? No. But not all negotiations are. At the end of the day, we want Jesper Bratt to be a New Jersey Devil for a long time."

Bratt filed for arbitration, which is set for Aug. 3 and ensures there will be no offer sheet. This will soon get settled one way or another.

3. Noah Dobson

Age: 22

Position: Defence

2021-22 salary cap hit: \$894,167

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: First-round pick. Represented Team Canada at 2019 world juniors. Already earning top-four minutes in New York. Right shot. Crushed career bests in goals (13) and points (51). 20 games of playoff experience.

The latest: Ryan Pullock and Adam Pelech didn't secure their life-changing extensions until their late-20s, and Dobson will sit down at Lou Lamoriello's negotiating table with little leverage (i.e., no arbitration rights) unless he dares sign an offer sheet.

"I don't even think like that," Lamoriello said at the draft, when asked about the urgency of locking Dobson up. "It's not even in my vocabulary, in other words."

"We'll do whatever we can to get him signed whenever we can, but we're not gonna be threatened by worrying about doing something because of an offer sheet. I've been in this too long to worry about that."

Yes, Dobson finding his stride in the final year of his entry-level deal is fantastic news. Still, we bet it'll be in the player's and team's best interest to go short term. By the time Dobson is ready for a big extension, the cap should be on the rise.

"I think he's playing with a lot more confidence," future Hall of Famer and most recent defence partner Zdeno Chara said. "You can see in his game he's making some plays, being there for us in crucial times. He's using his hockey sense and his skating ability. He's playing really well."

How does three years and \$10 million sound?

4. Andrew Mangiapane

Age: 26

Position: Left wing / Right wing

2021-22 salary cap hit: \$2.425 million

Arbitration rights: Yes — and filed

Bargaining chips: MVP for gold medalist Team Canada at the 2021 worlds, scoring seven goals in seven games at the tournament. Named to Canada's Olympic long list. Provides critical even-strength scoring. Solid penalty killer. Accepted a team-friendly bridge deal last time. Hit career highs in goals (35), points (55) and plus/minus (plus-20).

The latest: Mangiapane said he was open to a long-term deal in Calgary the last time he turned RFA, but the Flames' tight cap situation made a two-year contract the best option.

Well, the versatile forward appears ready to make them pay this time — either by landing a windfall or setting himself up to walk away in his prime.

"My advice to him would be to do a short-term deal by way of arbitration or negotiation — negotiating ideally — and then let's wait and take a look at the landscape," agent Ritch Winter told Eric Francis.

"You're a year away from being an unrestricted free agent at age 27 and, really, in the heart of your best producing years of your career. There's nothing more valuable in a player's career than his ability to look into free agency and see what the options are, and I highly recommend that he focus on that."

The best option for Mangiapane may be the worst one for Treiving, who is still riding the roller coaster.

With Treiving spending so much time on Gaudreau and Tkachuk, Mangiapane's business was pushed to the back burner for most of July.

Winter told the Eric Francis Show that his client is keen to sign for longer than the one year that would walk him to the open market.

"I don't want to get into the negotiations. I share Brad's view that it's never really healthy for the process. But I think, ultimately, to admit that Andrew has submitted a proposal on a multi-year deal tells you he's quite interested in staying here despite the uncertainty that surrounds Matthew Tkachuk," Winter said.

"Certainly, Andrew feels very comfortable with the coaching staff. He likes the management team here. He likes the city. He's had a good experience."

"He said to them he's quite willing to stay on a longer-term deal."

Arbitration is set for Aug. 5.

5. Mario Ferraro

Age: 23

Position: Defence

2021-22 salary cap hit: \$925,000

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: Won gold with Team Canada at 2021 worlds. Skates an eye-popping 24 minutes a night. Fan favourite who runs his own YouTube channel. Beginning to flex some of the offence he wielded in college. Plays bigger than his size.

The latest: Ferraro won't wow you with his stat line, but he's increasingly assuming a more important role on a San Jose blueline desperate for a youthful boost.

Surely, Ferraro noted his UMass D partner, Cale Makar, hit a home run in negotiations with the Avalanche last summer, and it sounds like he'll be gunning for security as well.

"The Sharks are the team that trusted me and drafted me," Ferraro told reporters. "I'm very loyal to this to this organization. I don't see there ever being any better organization that I'd like to be a part of."

"I'd love to be a Shark forever."



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 1, 2022

The affable Ferraro is being mentioned as future captain material.

While there's no rush to slap a letter on him yet, there is more money available to take care of him with Evander Kane's salary freed and Jonathan Dahlen not qualified.

Ferraro told reporters in May that he'd prefer a long-term commitment.

"I'd love to be here for a long time," he said. "Being a successful NHL hockey team and winning a championship, that's something I dream of doing as a Shark.

"Those are things that I really can't control. I'm just taking it day by day with whatever happens, happens. But yeah, it would be nice."

A Ferraro extension is but one of a long list of items on brand-new GM Mike Grier's to-do list.

Since trading Brent Burns, Ferraro's importance to the lineup has only escalated.

6. Jake Oettinger

Age: 23

Position: Goaltender

2021-22 salary cap hit: \$925,000

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: First-round pick. Two-time world junior medallist. World championships medallist. Took starter's job in competitive Dallas crease. Posted career-best 30 wins and .914 save percentage in the regular season. Great size (6-5, 220 pounds) and growing confidence. Led all goalies in the 2022 playoffs with a .954 save percentage.

The latest: The only healthy NHL-level goaltender under club control, Oettinger has emerged as a critical piece to Dallas's hopes now and in the future.

The playoff stud said he was "just scratching the surface" of his capabilities after willing his team to a seven-game series with the heavily favoured Calgary Flames — a star turn that should boost his bargaining power this summer.

With true No. 1 goaltenders so difficult to come by, Nill should consider locking up Oettinger long term. If not, rivals would be wise to consider an offer sheet.

7. Lawson Crouse

Age: 25

Position: Left wing

2021-22 salary cap hit: \$1.53 million

Arbitration rights: Yes — and filed

Bargaining chips: First-round pick. Gold medal winner at world juniors. Coming off a career season (20 goals, 34 points in 65 games). Big body (6-4, 215 pounds). Coyotes short on impactful offensive players.

The latest: The rebuilding Coyotes would be wise to keep Crouse — an improving power forward — in the fold.

A breakout offensive season has placed Crouse in line for a significant raise, and that payday was ensured once he filed for salary arbitration.

Contract negotiations had been slow to this point, but with an arbitration hearing scheduled for Aug. 8, expect talks to heat up.

8. Pavel Zacha

Age: 25

Position: Centre

2021-22 salary cap hit: \$2.25 million

Arbitration rights: Yes — and filed

Bargaining chips: Sixth-overall draft pick. Big body (6-3, 210 pounds). Three consecutive 30-point seasons. Boston Bruins gave up a useful middle-six forward to obtain rights. Belief that ceiling has yet to be reached.

The latest: Zacha never quite met his expectations as a high draft pick in the New Jersey Devils' system, so his July 13 trade to Boston makes sense for a fresh start under a more veteran group.

GM Don Sweeney made the swap without an extension already in place, but an Aug. 11 arbitration date will make sure at least a short-term contract is in place well before training camp.

With the Bruins yet to get veteran UFAs Patrice Bergeron and David Krejci under contract, Zacha is key to Boston's centre depth.

Zacha's agent, Darren Ferris, texted the Boston Herald shortly after the trade and assured a new deal for Zacha "should be completed in short order. Lots going on."

Ferris's top priority remains No. 1 unrestricted free agent Nazem Kadri.

9. Kailer Yamamoto

Age: 23

Position: Right wing

2021-22 salary cap hit: \$1.175 million

Arbitration rights: Yes — and filed

Bargaining chips: First-round pick. World junior medallist. Hit the 20-goal and 40-point plateau in his first full 82-game campaign. Maintained 0.5 points-per-game pace in the postseason. Quick feet and hands. Driven to succeed despite small frame.

The latest: Yamamoto is certainly on better terms with management than fellow RFA right wing Jesse Puljujarvi, and is therefore more likely to ink a two- or three-year extension and remain in Edmonton.

The smart, tenacious winger saw an uptick in both ice time and production once the Oilers shifted bench control midseason from Dave Tippett to Jay Woodcroft. This is a positive sign that should help Yamamoto earn a bridge contract in the \$3 million AAV ballpark.

His hearing is set for Aug. 7, but there is no reason a deal cannot be reached in advance.

10. Alexander Romanov

Age: 22

Position: Defence

2021-22 salary cap hit: \$894,167

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: F 20-plus minutes a night.

The latest: Here's the other 22-year-old defenceman the New York Islanders must get under contract.

Lou Lamoriello acquired the young, left-shot rearguard (as well as the 98th pick) from the Montreal Canadiens on the draft floor in exchange for the 13th pick. (Montreal then flipped picks 13 and 66 to Chicago for Kirby Dach.)

The deal was a bit of a stunner considering the Canadiens had previously let go of another prized Russian D-man (Mikhail Sergachev) before his prime, and Romanov had expressed his desire to remain with the club that drafted him.

"I love Montreal so much. That's why I want to stay here as long as I can," he told reporters in the spring.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 1, 2022

By acquiring Romanov, Lamoriello made an effort to fill the gap he created by dealing Devon Toews to the Avalanche in 2020.

Romanov has already been spotted working out in his Isles gear while training in South Florida. There's no reason to believe Lamoriello won't be able to bridge both Dobson and Romanov.

When their contracts will actually be announced, however, is anybody's guess.

More notable pending RFAs: Sean Durzi, Kirby Dach, Martin Necas, Oliver Kyllington, Nicolas Hague, Nicolas Roy, Rasmus Sandin, Michael Anderson, Erik Brannstrom, Barrett Hayton, Yakov Trenin, Ryan McLeod, Mason Appleton, Miles Wood, Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen, Cayden Primeau

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TSN.CA / MPs request judicial inquiry, Conservatives call for ouster of Hockey Canada executives, board

Rick Westhead

Members of Parliament from four Canadian political parties are calling for the government to convene a judicial inquiry to explore the issue of abuse in sports and provide survivors with a forum to share their stories.

Conservative MP John Nater said his party is also calling for the immediate removal of Hockey Canada's board of directors and senior leadership team.

"Those who oversaw the cover-up of alleged sexual assaults cannot be trusted to be the ones to implement the necessary structural changes at Hockey Canada," Nater wrote in a text message to TSN on Friday. "The Liberal government must look at all options to ensure that there is appropriate leadership at Hockey Canada, whether through a third-party independent trusteeship, guardianship, or other measures."

Nater was joined in calling for an inquiry by Liberal MP Lisa Hefpner, NDP MP Peter Julian and Bloc Quebecois MP Sebastien Lemire. The four MPs are members of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, which has been examining Hockey Canada's response to sexual abuse allegations. The MPs said the committee should also continue with its study of Canada's richest and most powerful national sports organization (NSO) with more hearings and witnesses in September.

"The culture we've seen within both Hockey Canada and Sport Canada is deep-rooted," Nater wrote. "I would hope that an in-depth inquiry would be able to tackle some of these issues and provide long-term recommendations. Of course, in the short term, we still need to see immediate change at both organizations."

A Hockey Canada spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

A judicial inquiry, which University of Ottawa law professor and constitutional law expert Benoit Pelletier said is the modern equivalent of royal commission, is typically headed by a judge and can last several years. Inquiries have the ability to subpoena witnesses and documents and can hear witness testimony in public or in camera.

"We know it's not just hockey and there are problems in many sports across the board with violence and sexualized violence against both sexes," Hefpner said in an interview with TSN on Thursday. "We have shown through our Parliamentary committee that shining the light on the problem can effect change and force higher-ups to be more accountable and have a reckoning and understand how widespread this problem is."

Lemire said it's important that survivors of abuse in sports other than hockey also have an ability to pursue accountability by scrutinizing the organizations that govern lower-profile sports in Canada.

"We need to give [survivors] the opportunity to speak," Lemire said in an interview on Thursday.

The subject of abuse in sports has become prominent over the past two-plus months since TSN reported in May that Hockey Canada had settled a \$3.55-million lawsuit over allegations that a woman was sexually assaulted by eight Canadian Hockey League players after a 2018 Hockey Canada gala event in London, Ont. The allegations were never tested in court.

A parliamentary committee is continuing to investigate Hockey Canada. Sport Canada has frozen funding for the organization and major sponsors have paused their partnerships with Hockey Canada.

Both Hockey Canada and the London police have reopened investigations into the assault allegations in London and the National Hockey League is also investigating. Halifax police are investigating an alleged sexual assault involving members of Canada's 2003 World Juniors team.

"We have heard from enough Canadians across the country to know that many of our national sports organizations are in crisis," said Julian. "It's not just Hockey Canada. There are a number of other organizations where we're seeing issues of sexual violence and sexual abuse not being dealt with effectively. A judicial inquiry makes a great deal of sense because it can actually give a forum for victims to tell their story and relate their experiences to the Canadian public."

If the government decides to establish an inquiry, it would be the first to delve into the subject of sports since Ontario judge Charles Dubin presided over eight months of testimony from more than 100 witnesses in 1989 as he investigated the use of banned performance-enhancing drugs in international sports. The Dubin Inquiry was formed after Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson lost his gold medal following a failed drug test at the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul.

Dubin was named the head of a commission to study drug use in sport in October 1988. His report was submitted to the federal government in June 1990.

During testimony this week in Ottawa, the committee heard that Sport Canada was advised in June 2018 by Hockey Canada about an alleged sexual assault in London, Ont., involving players from Canada's world junior hockey team. Sport Canada officials testified that after being informed of the alleged incident, they never shared any details with the office of Canada's sport minister, never followed up with Hockey Canada to determine what had happened with its investigation of the alleged assault and continued providing Hockey Canada with millions of dollars' worth of funding.

"The government also has an obligation to provide clear, direct and specific answers about how Sport Canada ignored these allegations, having known about them since 2018," Nater wrote.

Beginning in 2018, Canadian NSOs have been required as a condition of receiving government funding to advise Sport Canada about the number of cases of alleged abuse reported each year. Several athletes have alleged in interviews with TSN that at least two NSOs have misreported this information.

Julian said it was apparent that Sport Canada was operating an "honour system" without verifying the information provided by the NSOs was accurate.

A spokesperson for Sport Minister Pascale St-Onge said the government is investigating the allegation that some NSOs have not been transparent about the number of abuse allegations they have received.

For the moment, St-Onge has refused requests from members of parliament and advocacy groups for abuse survivors to request cabinet form an inquiry.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 1, 2022

Instead, the minister has attempted to focus public attention on a new federal agency called the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner, which is mandated with receiving abuse complaints and investigating them independent of NSOs.

Since the office opened formally in April, NSOs for weightlifting and volleyball have become signatories. Hockey Canada has said it will become a signatory to the office.

"What athletes in Canada need is action and the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner is now in place," St-Onge said in a statement provided to TSN on Thursday. "I am working to make it mandatory for all NSOs. I also announced last month that all federal funding agreements will be reviewed. This will require NSOs to be more accountable and transparent.

"Athletes have told me that they need an independent mechanism that they can turn to in situations of abuse, maltreatment, and discrimination. That is why we have and are taking action to put this in place."

More than 500 current and former gymnasts have requested the government commission an independent investigation to examine the allegedly toxic culture within the sport and on Friday, the advocacy groups Global Athlete and Gymnasts for Change Canada in a joint statement called for a judicial inquiry.

"It is time to rethink sport in Canada," Global Athlete director general Rob Koehler wrote. "It is time to correct the power imbalance between sporting organizations and athletes that has fostered years of abuse."

In addition to a judicial inquiry, MPs said they want to pursue their study and call more witnesses to testify as soon as September about Hockey Canada.

Lemire said that he would like to call former Hockey Canada president Bob Nicholson to testify about how the organization has historically managed sexual assault allegations. Lemire also said he wants to hear testimony from Hockey Canada's past and current board members, insurance company AIG, which provides Hockey Canada with coverage for abuse claims, and Bob Martin, a former Ontario Provincial Police officer who is head of security for both Hockey Canada and the London Knights.

Julian said the committee also should hear testimony from former sport ministers Kirsty Duncan and Steven Guilbeault about the relationship between Sport Canada and the minister's office. Duncan was the minister of sport from January 2018 to November 2019, when Guilbeault succeeded her. Julian said he also wants St-Onge to testify, for a third time, before the committee.

After hearing Hockey Canada officials say on Wednesday that the organization has paid \$8.9 million since 1989 to settle 21 cases of alleged sexual assault, Liberal MP Anthony Housefather said in an interview on Thursday that he wants the committee to expand its study to consider how other NSOs have confronted abuse issues.

"Our committee needs to delve into a broader question about safe sport in all of our sports federations," Housefather said. "Hockey Canada may be the tip of the iceberg, or it may be an anomaly. We need to know which is true."

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