



Columbus Blue Jackets Media Clips June 6-8, 2026

Blue Jackets News

- PAGE 2 Blue Jackets Monday Gathering: Dylan Larkin unlikely in Columbus, but pressure mounts to win
- PAGE 7 The Athletic / Blue Jackets mailbag, Part 2: How long can Werenski wait for a winner? Are they on the right track?
- PAGE 13 TSN / Greaves' whirlwind year helped solidify his starting role with Blue Jackets

Around the NHL News

- PAGE 15 The Athletic / How sensible is it for each NHL team to make a Dylan Larkin trade?

The Athletic / Blue Jackets Monday Gathering: Dylan Larkin unlikely in Columbus, but pressure mounts to win

By Aaron Portzline – June 8, 2026

A collection of notes, insights, ruminations and did-you-knows gathered throughout the week that was for the Columbus Blue Jackets:

Item No. 1: Larkin unlikely

It would be the ultimate irony, and a delicious bit of validation for the Blue Jackets franchise and their perpetually underserved fans.

For years, Blue Jackets fans had to listen to Detroit Red Wings fans scheme and imagine ways in which Columbus star defenseman Zach Werenski, a Michigan native, could his way out of Ohio and back to his hometown club.

So last week, when news leaked that Red Wings captain and No. 1 center Dylan Larkin had requested a trade, it immediately got Blue Jackets fans thinking and dreaming that this summer's offseason upgrades might include them adopting yet another Michigander.

Blue Jackets fans know all too well that Werenski and Larkin are best buds — Team USA, the University of Michigan, etc. — so they put two and two together and came up with a resounding: “Oh, heck yeah.”

Would Blue Jackets GM Don Waddell get in on that action? Could Werenski persuade Larkin to join him in Columbus?

Well, it's never nice to start a middle-of-the-offseason Gathering with a bouquet of wilted flowers, but that would seem to be the chances that Larkin's next stop is Nationwide Arena and a Blue Jackets sweater.

Pierre LeBrun of *The Athletic* reported last week that Larkin has a short list of teams for which he would waive his no-trade clause, and it stands to reason that he would want to play for a Stanley Cup contender in the short term.

And the Blue Jackets are not likely to be on that list.

Larkin's request was first reported by Sportsnet's Elliotte Friedman, who has further reported that the short list is likely to include the Minnesota Wild, Dallas Stars, Florida Panthers and maybe one or two upper-echelon clubs.

The Blue Jackets may or may not be headed in the right direction — their nosedive at the end of the season left a bad taste with many — but Larkin has spent most of 10-year career on a club, the Red Wings, who are also said to be “headed in the right direction.”

Except that neither team has yet shown they can get there.

That lack of postseason play in Detroit is said to be at the heart of Larkin's frustration, the chief reason he's taken such a bold step to rebuff Yzerman's plan and ask to be traded as the captain of an Original Six franchise.

Well, joining Columbus wouldn't solve that chief issue.

Detroit has missed the playoffs in 10 straight seasons, the longest run in the NHL, followed by the San Jose Sharks (seven seasons). The Blue Jackets' streak of six straight seasons outside the playoffs — the second-longest in franchise history — is tied with the Chicago Blackhawks for the third-longest active skid.

That doesn't mean that Larkin's trade request shouldn't reverberate in Columbus, however.

If you've paid attention to the NHL over the last five seasons, there has been a rash of young standout players forcing their way out of situations.

Jack Eichel from Buffalo to Vegas. Matthew Tkachuk from Calgary to Florida. Pierre-Luc Dubois has played his way off three clubs, including Columbus, before landing with Washington. Quinn Hughes made it clear he wouldn't sign in Vancouver, so he was traded to Minnesota. Now Larkin wants to make his pick.

Werenski's contract expires after the 2027-28 season, which means the Blue Jackets could sign him to an extension as soon as next summer. That also means that this coming season includes enormous pressure to start winning, or the situation with Werenski could start to mirror all of those others.

Playing for Team USA at so many recent high-level international events, Werenski has said — that's the World Championships, the 4 Nations Face-Off, and the Olympics — has reminded him how much he's missed winning,

The Blue Jackets made the playoffs in each of his first four seasons, and Werenski had started to believe that would be the annual rhythm of things. But it hasn't gone that way.

"I haven't had that much success in the playoffs here in the NHL, and I want that to change," Werenski said this week on NHL Network. "I had so much fun on those (international) teams. It's different with the long playoff run and all that, but winning anything is fun.

"I've been reminded of that these last 12 months. I want more of that."

None of that should be seen as a threat. But it's what's on Werenski's mind, and it's not crazy to wonder what he'd be thinking a year from now if the Blue Jackets had middling season in 2026-27.

Waddell and Werenski have a good relationship. Last Monday, they met for breakfast when Waddell was in town following a charity event. It's been made clear to veteran players that Waddell is looking to add firepower up front this summer.

Asked if the situation with young players dictating trades out of losing situations adds to the pressure to win in Columbus this season, Waddell said: "We're going to do everything we can in our power to put the best team out there."

Item No. 2: Who goes first?

Waddell has a full plate this summer, with players to re-sign, a roster to strengthen and a coaching staff to fill out around veteran head coach Rick Bowness.

He was hoping to get the ball rolling over the weekend in Buffalo on negotiations with pending restricted free agent forwards Adam Fantilli and Cole Sillinger, and goaltender Jet Greaves.

“But the agents weren’t quite ready to meet yet,” Waddell said. “They’re still needing to do a little more homework.”

There’s another way to say that: Nobody wants to go first, Waddell reasoned, perhaps because the market for all level of players is going to reset this summer as the NHL salary cap begins growing significantly over the next three seasons.

That’s especially true with Fantilli, the No. 3 pick in the 2023 draft. He’s in an elite cluster of players — along with Chicago’s Connor Bedard, the No. 1 pick that season, and Anaheim’s Leo Carlsson, the No. 2 pick — whose entry-level deals are up this summer.

As of July 1, those players will all be eligible to negotiate with other clubs and sign offer sheets, but those remain exceedingly rare in today’s NHL. And it’s a relatively pointless move in a situation in which so many teams have ample cap room to match.

The Blue Jackets, for instance, have a projected \$32.3 million available under next season’s \$104 million NHL salary cap.

“As soon as some of these (RFA) guys start getting signed, they’ll start happening across the league,” Waddell said.

As for the Blue Jackets’ four remaining unrestricted free agents — forwards Boone Jenner, Mason Marchment, Danton Heinen and defenseman Erik Gudbranson — Waddell said none of them have been informed by the club that they’ll be allowed to hit the market on July 1.

In fact, there could be further talks with one or more of them this week.

The one who would likely draw the most interest on July 1 is Marchment, who is still in his prime at 30 years old. That’s why he’s also the most likely of the four to hit the market.

Item No. 3: The carousel

There are three NHL clubs still looking to settle on their head coaches for next season and beyond: Edmonton, Toronto and the Los Angeles Kings, who still have interim coach D.J. Smith twisting in the wind.

When those positions either fill or begin to take clearer shape — Toronto has reportedly interviewed 20-plus candidates — you’ll start to see assistant coaching positions fall into line behind them rather quickly.

The Blue Jackets are looking for two assistant coaches to join returning assistant Jared Boll on Bowness’ staff. One assistant, as reported last month by *The Athletic*, will be Trent Vogelhuber, who is on his way to the NHL after four seasons as head coach of AHL Cleveland, the Blue Jackets’ top minor-league affiliate.

The other hire is still in the interview process, but Waddell said he's hoping to have the coaches in place before the draft is held on June 26-27.

"We're hoping to have one wrapped up this week," Waddell told *The Athletic*.

The second assistant will likely be a veteran coach, one who could currently be waiting to see if a head-coaching interview is in the cards for him or her this summer. Depending upon that coach's expertise, Waddell said, the Blue Jackets may also add a skills coach.

Once this is settled, the Blue Jackets will need to either hire or promote a coach from AHL Cleveland to replace Vogelhuber.

Item No. 4: Snacks

- As of this weekend, the Blue Jackets had not been asked for permission to speak with former coach Dean Evason, who was fired by the club in January. His contract runs through next season. Evason's assistant coaches — Steve McCarthy was fired with him in January, while Scott Ford and Mike Haviland were let go after the season — have blanket permission to speak with any club, Waddell said.
- Defenseman Egor Zamula, who was signed by Columbus last Jan. 5 after his release by Pittsburgh, seems poised to sign with the KHL after his rights in that league were traded from Torpedo Nizhny Novgorod to CSKA Moscow last week. Zamula, who has been in North America since 2017 when he came over as a 17-year-old to play in Canada's Western Hockey League (Regina), has not yet signed in the KHL. If he stays in Columbus — he's an RFA with arbitration rights — he's likely the Blue Jackets' eighth defenseman, if he's even extended a qualifying offer.
- Defenseman Stanislav Svozil, a third-round pick (No. 69) of the Blue Jackets in 2021, has signed to play back home in Czechia. He played two NHL games, both at the end of the 2022-23 season.
- The KHL contract of Blue Jackets prospect goaltender Sergei Ivanov expired one week ago today, but Ivanov, through his agent Shumi Babayev, continues to negotiate with Ivanov's KHL club and the Blue Jackets, who want him to sign a two-way deal and start next season with AHL Cleveland. Talks continue, Waddell said. Ivanov, who has a .923 save percentage in 108 career KHL games, was a fifth-round pick (No. 138) of the Jackets in 2022.
- Here's Waddell on what type of player he expects to be available for the Blue Jackets with the No. 14 pick: "Most of these kids in the draft, once you get past the No. 1, 2, 3 or 4, you're looking at a three-year window (before they hit the NHL). At No. 14, it's a player who is going to play junior or college hockey, likely, and then probably spend some time in the American League."
- That, Waddell noted, is pretty much the schedule for last year's first-round draft pick, defenseman Jackson Smith, who also went at No. 14. Smith, who had a tremendous freshman season at Penn State, is back with the Nittany Lions for a sophomore season, and will likely turn pro next spring, perhaps drawing in with AHL Cleveland.
- About this year's No. 14 pick? "I would listen (to trade offers)," Waddell said. "We've told everybody that we're trying to make our team better today. I'm not trading it for a 32-year-old guy, but if the right guy comes along..."

- The IIHF last week reversed its earlier decision to ban Russia from all international events in 2026-27, saying it would treat each tournament on a case-by-case basis. This has a long way to go before it's settled, and expect Finland, Sweden, Czechia and other countries to oppose it vehemently. But it could open the door for some of the Blue Jackets' more prominent players — forwards Kirill Marchenko and Dmitri Voronkov, and defenseman Ivan Provorov — to return to international play. The governing body suspended Russia in February 2022 after Russia invaded Ukraine. Of those three, Voronkov was the last to represent Russia, playing in the 2022 Olympics, which did not have NHL participation.
- The Stanley Cup Final between Vegas and Carolina has tremendous theatre, but imagine watching it from Waddell's perspective. It'll be three years this summer since he left the Hurricanes to join the Blue Jackets, but his fingerprints are all over the Carolina roster, from the coaching staff to the players and support. "It's been an incredible series," Waddell said. "I have so many good friends over there (with Carolina). If they could win, I'd be happy for all of them."

[The Athletic / Blue Jackets mailbag, Part 2: How long can Werenski wait for a winner? Are they on the right track?](#)

By Aaron Portzline – June 5, 2026

Well, the NHL offseason just got a lot more interesting with the news on Thursday that Dylan Larkin has requested a trade from the Detroit Red Wings. You might know that Larkin's best friend is Columbus Blue Jackets defenseman Zach Werenski.

Ladies and gentleman, start your rumors!

The Stanley Cup Final is off to a hell of a start, now headed to Las Vegas with the series knotted 1-1. Meanwhile, the rest of the league is in Buffalo for the scouting combine, where GMs get together for chats that may or may not bear fruit in the coming weeks.

Earlier this week, we answered myriad questions about the Blue Jackets' short-term plans this offseason, how they plan to get better after missing the playoffs for a sixth straight season.

There's a few of those here, too, but also more long-range issues, including questions about Werenski's patience, the Blue Jackets' overall progress, the club's next GM after Don Waddell, etc.

How much longer should Zach Werenski tolerate the Blue Jackets' mediocrity? How much longer will he tolerate it? — Ed P.

It's a great question, but probably one that only Werenski should/could answer. He's won a gold medal both in the Olympics and the World Championships. He's now won the Norris Trophy as the NHL's top defenseman. Really, the only thing Werenski hasn't accomplished is team success in the NHL. He has two years remaining on his contract. On July 1, 2027, the Blue Jackets can sign him to a massive extension. I don't think it's a reach to say that this coming season could be massively important. The Blue Jackets certainly expect to win in 2026-27, and that would make it a whole lot easier for players to commit long-term. If they take a backward step, who knows? Werenski will be 30 years old when he begins play under his next contract. He's in his prime now, and he will be then. But he wants to win, and NHL careers don't last forever.

What do we need to do to sell Werenski on the future? And should we? — G.R.

Well, as of Thursday, I'd be making a call to the Red Wings to inquire about Larkin. Werenski and Larkin are extremely close, and have been for a long time. So there's a start, but there are other ways. Keep building. Keep growing from within. Both of those things, not just one. Boone Jenner is an unrestricted free agent, and may be playing somewhere else next season. The would open up the captaincy, and Werenski is an obvious choice. Werenski has always spoken highly about living and playing in Columbus.

Where did it all go wrong? It feels like an enormous gulf exists between us and the elites of the league and we can't do anything about it year after year. — Joshua R.

Let's go back four years to 2022-23, when the Blue Jackets bottomed out, dumped veterans for first-round picks and started to do what most would call a rebuild. Starting in 2022-23, their overall league finishes, respectively, were 31st, 29th, 20th, and 18th. Since that same starting point, their point totals,

respectively, have been 59, 66, 89, and 92. There's a pretty clear direction there. Sure, the step they took this season wasn't a big enough improvement to make the playoffs, but I would argue that the gulf isn't that big and that it's definitely closing. No question, the end of the season was deflating and demoralizing. But two months later, if you step back, you can see the climb that's taking place.

If you had to take a guess, what kind of contract does Adam Fantilli get this summer? — Union Blue Soldiers

If it's a short-term deal, I suspect the Blue Jackets would want the contract to walk him up to one year within UFA status so that they still have that margin of control with the next deal. In that scenario, I'd say three years, \$8 million to \$8.5 million per season. If it's a long term deal, the Blue Jackets will pay for the UFA seasons they'd be buying. In that case, I'd guess six years, \$10 million to \$12 million per season. For a 21-year-old, No. 1 center, you're paying for his so-far production (already a 31-goal season) and you're paying for potential, which is enormous.

Do the Blue Jackets need a No. 1 shutdown defenseman to compete for the Cup? — Nick S.

Honestly, I don't think we're going to know what they need to compete "for the Cup" until we know what this team looks like in the playoffs. They have to get there first, and in that regard, I think the bigger issues are up front rather than on defense. If the 2025-26 version of Damon Severson can be the consistent version, I like their top four, especially as Denton Mateychuk continues to emerge. I really want to see this group under the pace and pressure of the playoffs. We learned a lot late last season, and what we learned wasn't pretty. It'll be fascinating to see how they respond next season and see how they elevate — and who elevates — if they actually get into the playoffs. That's when beards grow and young players grow up.

We were in the trade market last season for Noah Dobson before he went to Montreal. Any rumblings of the same? — Ethan B.

You'll recall that the pursuit of Dobson was made while Ivan Provorov was a pending UFA. But once the Blue Jackets bowed out of Dobson talks with the Islanders, they turned back and signed Provorov to a lengthy extension. That top four, with Werenski-Severson and Denton Mateychuk-Provorov, is pretty well-established now. Not saying they couldn't flip it upside down with a trade or two, but the Blue Jackets' *needs* this summer have changed.

Who do you think Waddell will target this summer? My four: Jordan Kyrou, Troy Terry, Bryan Rust, and Pavel Buchnevich — Undisclosed

Could certainly see Rust, who might be on the move from Pittsburgh. Kyrou would bring the potential of speed and scoring, which they need, but he's not coming off a great season in St. Louis. I could see Jake DeBrusk, who could be on the move out of Vancouver. Your question was submitted before Larkin's trade request was known, but that's an obvious phone call for Waddell to make. Truth be told, there are probably several other players available that haven't drawn public mention just yet. This could be a fun summer.

Will the NHL salary-cap increases outpace the Blue Jackets' budget? Can smaller-market teams keep pace? — Stephen C.

The NHL also has a salary “floor,” which requires clubs to be within 15 percent of the NHL’s salary cap midpoint. That’s in place to keep clubs from having massive disparities, as in the pre-cap era when the \$105 million Red Wings played — and pummeled — the \$18.6 million Blue Jackets. So there’s that. Plus, this belief that the Blue Jackets don’t spend money doesn’t stick with the facts. The same people who complain about Provorov’s big ticket last summer and Charlie Coyle’s this summer are often the same who complain that owner John P. McConnell — and by extension, Waddell — aren’t big spenders. If they aren’t at the cap over the next two years, just know that they’ll need to set aside \$16 million per season for Werenski in two years.

Do we expect a big offseason move? Or will the McConnells' internal cap present a challenge for Waddell? They seem content to just grow their equity line and limit expenses. — Sean H.

The most criticism the Blue Jackets have taken in recent summers is for overspending on players — Severson’s contract, Provorov’s, Coyle’s ... get ready for the next wave this summer, especially with the cap going up. It’s not my place to tell fans who or how to criticize anybody with the Blue Jackets, and their struggles over time certainly leave them wide open to fair critiques. But the ownership complaint always lands with me as people not knowing who else to blame. If an owner is always visible, they meddle. If they put hockey people in charge and step out of the way — which is the approach most fans say they want — they get accused of not caring, or not being present, when the team is struggling.

Are the Blue Jackets looking specifically for coach with a more flexible approach to power-play zone entries and defensive-zone exits under pressure? — David L.

Well, Rick Bowness has a pretty good idea of how he wants his teams to play and how he thinks these Blue Jackets should play. But, yes, they’re hiring at least two assistant coaches. As reported in this space, one will be Dublin, Ohio, native Trent Vogelhuber. I’m hearing names on the other, but there are lots of moving parts across the league right now. I would expect adaptations in the way the Blue Jackets play, but I don’t think you’re going to see radical changes. Also, see what type of lineup changes are made between now and October. That will impact how they can and want to play, too,

Is Mateychuk our only real trade piece to acquire a top forward via trade? We lack true top prospects because of the Cayden Lindstrom pick, which is looking worse by the day. — Chad. T.

Mateychuk is not the only “real trade piece,” no. And I wouldn’t trade a 21-year-old, top-four defenseman coming off a 13-goal season unless it was part of a monster package coming back. The Blue Jackets’ top prospect is Jackson Smith, who is a really impressive young defenseman. Also, the Lindstrom pick looks much better now than it did a year ago, when you wondered where it was going following his back surgery. He played a full season at Michigan State against much older players, and it was a struggle for him. His sophomore season in East Lansing will be judged much more by his production, but the key in year one was to play games and move beyond his lost season due to injuries. That’s no small feat.

Any thoughts on Rick Nash? I didn't hear his name mentioned during various GM searches. — Daniel S.

It hasn't been specifically articulated by the club that Nash will succeed Waddell, but that is the assumption. Waddell took Nash under his wing upon getting hired in Columbus, so unless something has changed, that still seems to be the course. Nash is a quiet guy. He neither seeks nor wants any headlines, so there's that to consider. But the Blue Jackets actually have a couple of good NHL GM candidates in house.

When will Chris Clark become the next GM? — Mark P.

Yep, that's the other strong candidate. Clark is very highly regarded around the game. I would suspect his name is going to be start percolating whenever there are GM openings around the league.

What about Misha Donskov as an assistant coach? — Scott Q.

It's a great question, and, frankly, I'm a little surprised that his name doesn't surface more when there are openings around the league. For those who don't know, Donskov is a Columbus guy, but he's worked all over hockey, from the OHL (London) to the Vegas Golden Knights, the Dallas Stars, Team Canada ... the guy has done a little bit of everything, and done it all well. Right now, Donskov is wrapped up with Team Canada for another year, but he's a name that should be popping up when there are openings. It's pretty clear from our conversations that he wants to coach, but Donskov could legitimately go any direction he wants.

When George McPhee was hired to start building the Vegas franchise, Donskov was the first guy he hired. And it was Donskov who scoured the likely protected list and helped determine the type of club Vegas could build with the anticipated players available. The guy's resume is impressive. He's had talks with NHL teams. He talked with the Blue Jackets when he left the Golden Knights, but the Blue Jackets couldn't find a spot for him in the front office at the time. It's definitely a career worth watching.

What does the organization see long term with Jared Boll? What do they like about him? — Daniel S.

Boll is one of those guys who brings people together with his energy and can lighten the mood in a tense room. My sense is that he's really grown in terms of Xs and Os, and there's a reason Bowness wants him on the bench after he was initially sent to the press box to be the eye in the sky. People don't see the work that NHL assistants do beyond the practices and games. Boll is often the guy out with injured players before practice as they work their way back. Then he stays on for practice. Then he stays on *after* practice and works with the players who aren't dressing. It's a lot of work, and it requires a lot of energy. That's Boll.

Going back to Bowness' end-of-year tirade, he said some guys "should be happy we don't have practice tomorrow." A couple of months later, any additional thoughts on that? — Michael Q.

That's classic coachspeak for "I would skate them into the ground!" if they had another practice. I remember Ken Hitchcock taking the job and being delighted that the practice rink was "right down the hall" from the main rink. His vow was that, if the Blue Jackets didn't empty the tank during games, he'd march them over the practice rink and skate them some more. Pretty sure the NHLPA's ears perked up on that one, and it never happened, but old-school coaches had "punishment" skates once or twice a year. Pretty sure that's all he meant.

There were surprisingly few call-ups from AHL Cleveland this season. Other than Luca Del Bel Belluz, is there anyone who projects as a full-time NHL player next year? — CVH C.

I would say it's likely that Del Bel Belluz will play most of his games with Columbus, not Cleveland, next season. That's seems reasonable. I don't see anybody else who would do that without being a very pleasant surprise in training camp. But that's what training camp is for, right? That's what the offseason is for, right? The Monsters do not have blue-chip prospects — those guys all jumped directly to the NHL — but they have some players who are clearly getting better (Guillaume Richard) and some who are getting left behind (Jordan Dumais).

Why do the Blue Jackets not have a Russian translator on staff? — William P.

There are a couple of different theories here. The Blue Jackets had a “handler” for Nikolai Zherdev back in the day, and many wondered if that made it easier for Zherdev to remain inside his bubble and not really immerse himself with the rest of the club, especially the young guys. Turns out, that was just Zherdev, not the situation. The idea is for the players to integrate, and part of that is learning a passable English. The Blue Jackets have, on occasion, provided a translator for interviews, but only Dmitri Voronkov needs one at this point.

Talk me off the ledge, Porty. It's incredibly irritating to see the Vegas Golden Knights waltz into the league on a red carpet, have every break bounce their way, and make their third Stanley Cup Final. How does Columbus finally get the breaks? — Nick J.

As a longtime fan of Ohio sports teams, I say ... embrace *schadenfreude!* That's what sports have become for so many fans these days, especially when your favorite teams chronically struggle. The suffering of your least favorite teams becomes your new enjoyment. It'll never match the joy of your own team winning (I'm a Browns fan, so I think this is true), but it's something to occupy your time in purgatory. Hey, give Vegas credit — I know you don't want to — for really maximizing the system the NHL put before them. And, as proof that modern expansion isn't just a ready-made path to wins, look at the Seattle Kraken. So I'm not sure you can say they've waltzed the red carpet. And, hey, the league is better when there are villains.

Do the Blue Jackets have a sports psychologist on staff or on retainer? Interested to hear your thoughts on having someone to get their mental games in better shape to deal with pressure. — Ben D.

Unless something has changed within the year, the Blue Jackets make a sports psychologist available for players, but it's not a person who is around the team constantly. Years ago, under Hitchcock, the Jackets were one of the few clubs that had one around them frequently, even on road trips. Let's be clear, we're talking specifically about performance-based sports psychologists. As for mental health experts, the NHL and member clubs provide them on retainer as part of the collective bargaining agreement. That's part of the league-mandated healthcare across the league.

What have you heard about the hometown Remix uniforms? — Charles P.

Nothing. And I don't like them already. Kidding. They're expected out in September, just ahead of training camps opening. I'm sure they'll leak in advance. Stay tuned.

With the official kickoff to grilling season upon us, what is the best condiment combination for a hot dog? Is there a CBJ hot dog speciality? What's an absolute no-no? — Ed H.

Two demands before we even start adorning this dog. First, the hot dog must be slightly charred. Just a bit. Second, the bun should be grilled or at least toasty. Then, relish, mustard and an onions — in that order — are perfect. I know of no such thing as a Blue Jackets-themed hot dog, but I'd say the marketing department just received its Fourth-of-July marching orders. As for big no-nos ... I pass no judgment. But I saw a dude put ketchup and kraut on a dog in Cincinnati once, and I believe that to be a Class 3 misdemeanor.

TSN / Greaves' whirlwind year helped solidify his starting role with Blue Jackets

By TSN Staff – June 5, 2026

Jet Greaves has had a whirlwind of a calendar year with the Columbus Blue Jackets.

The 25-year-old netminder began the 2024-25 campaign as the third-string goalie in Columbus behind Elvis Merzlikins and Daniil Tarasov and finished the season winning five straight games in April and falling just two points short of the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

This season, Greaves took the lion's share of the starts in net with the Blue Jackets, going 26-19-9 with a .908 save percentage and 2.60 goals-against average as he solidified himself as an NHL goaltender.

He ended the hockey season by claiming Canada's starting role at the 2026 World Hockey Championship, going 6-2 with a 1.88 GAA and .920 save percentage in a fourth-place finish.

"Maybe I don't take as much time as I sometimes should to appreciate it, but I'm so grateful for the experience, it's been so fun," Greaves told TSN1050's First Up on Friday while vacationing in Switzerland. "To be able to play in the National Hockey League, to be able to play for Team Canada at the World Hockey Championship, these are things you dream about.

"It's a balance of enjoying it but also learning and improving. That, for me, is such an exciting part of this game and this life. There are always things to improve on."

Greaves' path to the NHL was a challenging one after signing with the Blue Jackets as an undrafted free agent in 2022.

He began his professional career with the ECHL's Kalamazoo Wings to start the 2021-22 campaign before being called up to the American Hockey League to play for the Cleveland Monsters.

The 6-foot netminder then took the starting role in Cleveland for three seasons, getting the occasional taste for NHL action with Columbus until his big break at the end of the 2024-25 campaign.

"There have been so many impactful people that come to mind [that's helped me along the way]," said Greaves. "So many people have supported me since I've been playing hockey as a kid. They've always believed in me and gave me every opportunity to play the game and continue pursuing it.

"I played in Kalamazoo a little bit when I was 20 and it was such a different experience living away from home, living in a new country and [goalie coach] Joel Martin and [head coach] Nick Boatland helped me so much to make me comfortable and create a natural experience."

Greaves says he's had great relationships with his goalie coaches throughout his short professional career, including Brad Thiesson in Cleveland and Manny Legace when he first arrived in Columbus.

Former NHL netminder Niklas Backstrom is the current goaltender coach with the Blue Jackets, and Greaves likes to get his opinion since Backstrom has gone through many of the trials and tribulations that Greaves will go through.

“It’s just awesome having him there,” said Greaves. “He has so much experience because he’s had such a great career himself. Just to be able to learn from him and pick his brain every day.

“I’m the one out there every day playing, but it’s really so many people who are behind every save and every moment.”

Greaves’ experience at the World Hockey Championship was another feather in his cap as he got to experience international hockey for the first time while rubbing shoulders with some of the best players in the game.

Team Canada featured superstars like Sidney Crosby and Macklin Celebrini, while also including perennial all-stars like John Tavares, Ryan O’Reilly, Mark Scheifele, and Evan Bouchard.

He believes just watching how those players operate and how they prepare for games will help him in the future.

“[Celebrini and Crosby] are in different points in their careers, but they are two of the best players in the game and two great people,” said Greaves. “When you spend a little bit of time around those guys, it’s easy to see why they have the success that they do. They approach the game the right way; they put in a lot of work to prepare and recover.

“They mentor people too, which I think is the biggest thing that anyone who knows those guys would say. They’re great people and great teammates, which goes a long way. So many guys on that team are great players in the NHL who have had great careers. So, to be around so many of those guys where I can learn from them, ask them questions about their experiences is such an amazing experience that I enjoyed so much.”

Greaves’ path to the successful career he has now is uncommon in the NHL, and it may have been understandable if he lost motivation along the way. However, he said it’s his faith and love for the game that kept him on his path, and he is reaping the rewards for it now.

“For me, my faith is just a huge foundation for me because it helps me be present,” said Greaves. “I know that I don’t always control everything that’s going to happen but just being present in each moment is super important to me.

“I think at the end of the day, I’ve always just loved playing hockey. I’m always trying to get better and that’s so much what the process is about. If I wasn’t getting paid at all, I would be wanting to play hockey. I grew up with a rink in our backyard, and my favourite memories is just playing hockey with my brother all day after school.

“At the end of the day, it’s the same game, but the setting is just a little bit different. So, I think enjoying it first is foremost has been so helpful to me. Then it’s just trying to learn and improve.”

[The Athletic / How sensible is it for each NHL team to make a Dylan Larkin trade?](#)

By The Athletic NHL Staff – June 6, 2026

Dylan Larkin's future has become one of the top storylines heading into the NHL offseason after the longtime Detroit Red Wings captain and Michigan native shockingly requested a trade, according to league sources.

That has led to league-wide speculation about where the 29-year-old center, who has control of his situation with a full no-trade clause, might fit on the market this summer.

How sensible is it for each team to make a trade involving him?

This week, *The Athletic* asked its NHL staff to put teams into one of four categories: it makes a lot of sense, it makes some sense, it makes a little bit of sense and it makes no sense.

Here's what they said.

Anaheim Ducks

It makes a lot of sense

One development in the Ducks' breakthrough season was Mason McTavish's inability to lock down the No. 2 center spot. Healthy scratches during the regular season and playoffs have put McTavish in the trade rumor mill. Unless they believe top prospect Roger McQueen has the offensive upside to eventually slot in behind Leo Carlsson, it would behoove general manager Pat Verbeek to gauge his former boss Steve Yzerman's interest in a McTavish-centered trade package. — *Eric Stephens*

Boston Bruins

It makes some sense

The Bruins do not have a No. 1 center. Larkin would be an excellent linemate for David Pastrnak. But the Bruins also need a high-end right-shot defenseman, and the defenseman is the priority. Do they have enough trade assets to land both? — *Fluto Shinzawa*

Buffalo Sabres

It makes some sense

I don't know if the Red Wings are going to be willing to trade Larkin within the division, but the Sabres should inquire. They have a lot to figure out this summer when it comes to the salary cap, but top-six centers don't become available too often. Depending on the cost, Larkin could be a nice fit on a young center depth chart. — *Matthew Fairburn*

Calgary Flames

It makes no sense

The Flames are a rebuilding team and there's no need for them to put together a package for the 29-year-old center. They're much better off trying to draft or trade for a younger version of him. The Flames are on the right track, but it'll take them some time before they're truly ready to be a viable destination for players of Larkin's caliber. — *Julian McKenzie*

Carolina Hurricanes

It makes a lot of sense

The Hurricanes seem to have found their second-line center in Logan Stankoven, but you can never be too deep down the middle. Larkin would certainly be of interest to the Hurricanes, who have Jordan Staal — three months shy of his 38th birthday — under contract for one more season. Larkin is also a player whom coach Rod Brind'Amour has long admired, and Carolina has the assets — surplus draft picks and a top prospect in Bradly Nadeau — to make a strong pitch to the Red Wings. — *Cory Lavalette*

Chicago Blackhawks

It makes some sense

The Blackhawks are open to adding a viable top-six forward. Larkin is probably a little older than what they were hoping to target, but it's not as if his play is falling off. He'd be a serious upgrade for the Blackhawks. He's also played for Jeff Blashill before. His contract, including the money and term, would fit Chicago, too. The question is whether the Blackhawks have what the Red Wings would want for him. Detroit is looking to win now and probably wants more than first-round picks. — *Scott Powers*

Colorado Avalanche

It makes no sense

The Avalanche seem pretty set at center for the foreseeable future, with Nathan MacKinnon signed through 2031, Brock Nelson signed through 2028 and Nazem Kadri signed through 2029. Those three centermen account for a combined \$25.7 million, and recently acquired Nicolas Roy is also still under contract for next season. Colorado could probably make better use of its available cap space by extending Brett Kulak and/or adding another blueliner. — *Jesse Granger*

Columbus Blue Jackets

It makes some sense

Oh, the irony if Dylan Larkin should end up in Columbus. For years, Blue Jackets fans have listened to Red Wings fans plot and organize for Michigan native Zach Werenski to leave the Blue Jackets for his hometown team. Now, Larkin, in this imagined scenario, would leave Detroit for Ohio. The Jackets would be formidable with Adam Fantilli, Charlie Coyle and Larkin (in some order) centering their top three lines. Plus, it would help assure Werenski's continued happiness after six non-playoff seasons. — *Aaron Portzline*

Dallas Stars

It makes no sense

While it's fun to dream about a lineup that has Wyatt Johnston, Roope Hintz, Matt Duchene and Dylan Larkin down the middle, and while Jim Nill is never shy about making a big move, Dallas' focus this offseason is getting Jason Robertson under contract. There simply won't be money to make Larkin fit (unless Nill were willing to move out someone such as, say, the extremely talented but injury-prone Hintz). — *Mark Lazerus*

Detroit Red Wings

It makes a lot of sense

It would be hard to pick any other category with Larkin requesting a trade. The harder question is which direction they take in a trade: try to replace Larkin to continue chasing the playoffs, or look to go younger and retool? It could be a robust trade market this summer, and Larkin is now squarely at the center of it. — *Max Bultman*

Edmonton Oilers

It makes a little bit of sense

The Oilers are strong up the middle with Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl, so Larkin would be a luxury. However, if (as was implied by management in exit interviews after the season) the team wants to run McDavid and Draisaitl together on the same line, Larkin would be an option for second-line center. Darnell Nurse would need to be part of the return for the Red Wings. Otherwise, the Oilers' roster is too cap-heavy to bring in Larkin's contract. Detroit may find more attractive offers. — *Allan Mitchell*

Florida Panthers

It makes a little bit of sense

You can never count the Panthers out when it comes to making a big deal. And Florida certainly has the cap space to accommodate Larkin, especially if Sergei Bobrovsky leaves as a UFA. But this is a team well set down the middle, and the Panthers aren't exactly loaded with picks and prospects to send the other way. Plus: Would Detroit really want to move him to a division rival? — *James Mirtle*

Los Angeles Kings

It makes a lot of sense

They've got a serious need for a proven center to pair with Quinton Byfield, and while Larkin would not turn the Kings into a Stanley Cup contender, he'd fill a gaping hole in the middle as they head into the post-Anze Kopitar era. But even if Larkin was open to a reunion with Kings general manager Ken Holland, do they have enough quality assets to facilitate a deal? Look, they're not rebuilding — even if many Kings fans say they should — so you would imagine that Holland is interested. — *Eric Stephens*

Minnesota Wild

It makes a lot of sense

The Wild will pursue Larkin, plain and simple. After giving up a haul for Quinn Hughes, it's uncertain if they have enough to get it done. But Larkin controls the process because of his no-trade clause, so if he

wants to come to Minnesota, the Wild may not need a package that beats out teams he has no interest in. The Wild need a No. 1 center, love Larkin, have connections to him throughout the organization because of USA Hockey, and he's got plenty of friends in Minnesota. But he has friends in many places and will generate a lot of interest. — *Michael Russo*

Montreal Canadiens

It makes a lot of sense

It sure makes a lot of sense for the Canadiens to make a pitch for Larkin because he would be the ideal candidate to fill their gaping hole in the middle of their second line. But it would make absolutely zero sense for Steve Yzerman to trade Larkin to a direct competitor in his division, and if he did, the price would surely be significantly higher because of that. — *Arpon Basu*

Nashville Predators

It makes some sense

A 29-year-old center who has been roughly a point-per-game player for the past five seasons? Yes, this should interest the Preds. If all goes well under new personnel chief Chris MacFarland, they could be competitive with plenty of good hockey left in his career. Do they have anything to offer while protecting the top prospects? That's a more difficult question. Ryan O'Reilly and some picks? That seems like a stretch. — *Joseph Rexrode*

New Jersey Devils

It makes some sense

It would be a big move to kick off the Sunny Mehta era, and it would likely come at a high cost. Would moving the necessary pieces to get the Red Wings to make a deal deplete the roster too much? Would it require Nico Hischier going the other way? It makes some sense, but it'd also require balancing the potential risk with the reward. — *Peter Baugh*

New York Islanders

It makes a little bit of sense

The Islanders unquestionably need more top-six talent, and Larkin is exactly that. He's a two-way center who can be leaned on in all situations and would give the team a boost opposite Bo Horvat in the top six. The problem is, the Islanders would be paying top dollar for a center when that isn't technically their No. 1 area of need. Sure, Mathew Barzal and Brayden Schenn could both shift to wing to open up a spot for Larkin, but it's a pricier path than necessary. — *Shayna Goldman*

New York Rangers

It makes a little bit of sense

Larkin makes sense if the Rangers want to put themselves in playoff contention, and all indications are that Chris Drury wants to do just that. But New York would have to pay a heavy price that would presumably include win-now pieces going back to Detroit. It might not be the time to make a move like

that, given where New York is in its contention window. Plus, Larkin might nix a trade to a non-playoff team. — *Peter Baugh*

Ottawa Senators

It makes a little bit of sense

As unlikely as it might be, there's no harm for the Senators to at least see what the asking price is on Larkin. After all, the Sens are trying to solidify their playoff status in hopes of being a veritable contender. Their biggest holdup is having the necessary assets to acquire him. And that's before knowing whether Detroit would deal in-division, or whether Larkin, who has a no-trade clause, would come to Canada. But we're always open to surprises in the nation's capital. — *Julian McKenzie*

Philadelphia Flyers

It makes a lot of sense

The Flyers have a solid group of still-improving young players in place, as evidenced by their surprising run to the second round of the playoffs. What they don't have is a potential top-line center on the roster or in the system. That's most likely going to have to be acquired via trade, so if Larkin is available, I would expect the Flyers to be very interested. — *Kevin Kurz*

Pittsburgh Penguins

It makes a lot of sense

The Penguins are looking for an impactful forward, preferably a young one. They have an enormous amount of cap space. They have Bryan Rust and Rickard Rakell, veteran forwards who might well be appealing to the Red Wings. They have draft picks and prospects to offer, too. Larkin isn't a youngster, but I still think he makes a lot of sense for the Penguins. I'd be surprised if Kyle Dubas doesn't inquire. — *Josh Yohe*

San Jose Sharks

It makes no sense

With Michael Misa progressing nicely as a rookie with a big future ahead for the 19-year-old, the Sharks could already have their second-line center for many years and don't need Larkin as much as other teams. Especially if it will cost several assets to get him ... including Misa, who is 10 years younger and could have at least a Larkin-like ceiling. — *Eric Stephens*

Seattle Kraken

It makes a lot of sense

We know the Kraken pushed hard for Artemi Panarin and are eager to make a splash in a crowded Seattle sports market in which they've struggled to resonate. It follows that a star first-line center — and a member of the USA Olympic gold medal team — would fit the bill as a headliner for the Kraken. Seattle would also have the assets, including potentially Shane Wright, to dangle credibly in return. The question is whether Larkin would accept a trade to a non-contender in the Pacific Northwest. — *Thomas Drance*

St. Louis Blues

It makes a little bit of sense

Many Blues fans are wondering if anything could make sense here. I even saw a straight-up one-for-one trade proposal for Robert Thomas. Would Larkin be great to have? For sure. But if the Blues were wondering whether Thomas, 26, was young enough to fit their time frame to contend again, how would Larkin, who'll be 30 in July, fit? If the Blues were interested in Larkin, it would be veering off the path they've set, and if they'd give up Thomas to make a deal, then we know the motive for moving him is not his age. — *Jeremy Rutherford*

Tampa Bay Lightning

It makes no sense

Between Brayden Point and Anthony Cirelli, the Lightning have strength down the middle of the top six. Would Larkin punch that up? Sure, likely shifting Cirelli to more of a shutdown 3C role to deepen the lineup. But that just shouldn't be a priority right now. The Lightning have bigger questions to answer and limited assets to figure it all out, so this would be too out of budget. — *Shayna Goldman*

Toronto Maple Leafs

It makes a lot of sense

Larkin is just what the Leafs need right now, a No. 2 center who can provide two-way support behind Auston Matthews. Add Larkin, mind you, and the Leafs can finally lessen John Tavares' responsibilities by moving him down the lineup or over to the wing as he heads into his 18th NHL season. The timing couldn't be better either, with Matthews wavering on his future in Toronto. Do the Leafs have the goods to pull it off? Does Larkin want to be a Leaf? If so, yes, this makes a lot of sense. — *Jonas Siegel*

Utah Mammoth

It makes some sense

Larkin and Logan Cooley would be a strong one-two punch down the middle, plus it would allow Nick Schmaltz to return to the wing, where he's arguably more effective. The debate will come down to whether now is the right time for this up-and-coming Mammoth team to spend premium prospects and draft picks on a soon-to-be-30-year-old, especially when Caleb Desnoyers might plug the team's top-six center hole at some point down the road anyway. — *Harman Dayal*

Vancouver Canucks

It makes no sense

The Canucks are rebuilding. Larkin absolutely rocks, but he'll turn 30 this summer and, in any event, surely wouldn't waive his no-trade clause to join a rebuilding team in western Canada. If there's a Canucks angle to this, it's whether or not Detroit might consider rolling the dice on Elias Pettersson as a first-line center replacement after first making a Larkin deal. — *Thomas Drance*

Vegas Golden Knights

It makes no sense

From a roster-building and needs perspective, Larkin to the Golden Knights doesn't make much sense. Vegas has its four centers (Jack Eichel, Tomas Hertl, William Karlsson and Nic Dowd) under contract for multiple years, and they account for a combined cap hit of \$29.15 million. It doesn't seem like there's room for another expensive center. But it's the Golden Knights, so never count them out. — *Jesse Granger*

Washington Capitals

It makes some sense

The Capitals, as ever, are looking to add a high-end piece. Larkin would qualify, and a center depth chart including him, Dylan Strome and Pierre Luc-Dubois would be intriguing, but adding him wouldn't fix their primary issue. They'd still be a well-built team without a true franchise-caliber player, and while they'd be closer to true-contender status, they'd still have some work to do. — *Sean Gentile*

Winnipeg Jets

It makes some sense

Winnipeg is trying to re-establish a competitive window despite missing the playoffs in 2026, and its biggest hole by far is a center of Larkin's caliber to take some of the offensive workload off Mark Scheifele. The Jets would get more out of their top players, offensively and defensively, if they had a second scoring line they could count on. The one concern? Larkin's trade protection. — *Murat Ates*