



**Columbus Blue Jackets News Clips
November 12, 2024**

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Columbus Dispatch / Columbus Blue Jackets stumble again in loss to Anaheim Ducks: 3 takeaways

By Brian Hedger – November 12, 2024

Frustrations are boiling over now.

The Blue Jackets haven't won in five straight games after falling, 4-2, to the Anaheim Ducks on Sunday at Honda Center, which stings because they dominated nearly everything but goals again. John Gibson, making his season debut, became the latest goalie to stymie the Blue Jackets with a 38-save performance to win a game his team was outshot 40-30 and spent extended time in the defensive zone.

It resembled the Blue Jackets' 2-1 in overtime loss Tuesday in San Jose, when they outshot the Sharks 50-27 and lost the opener of a four-game road trip. Now, after a promising 5-3-1 start, the Blue Jackets are 5-7-2 and reeling amid a five-game skid.

"I don't care if we outshoot them 50-20 or we get outshot 50-20," Blue Jackets defenseman Zach Werenski said during postgame interviews on the FanDuel Sports Network. "At the end of the day, we have to find a way to get points in this league and win hockey games, and we haven't done it."

Here are three takeaways:

Urgency skyrockets for spiraling Columbus Blue Jackets

All it takes is a glance at the Blue Jackets' schedule to see how important the finale of their trip is Tuesday against the Seattle Kraken.

After that game, they return to Nationwide Arena for a pitstop Friday against Sidney Crosby and the Pittsburgh Penguins – a team that historically has owned them – before heading back to the road for games in Montreal and Boston. Should none of those games end their winless slide, it'd reach eight straight defeats going into a four-game homestand later this month that starts with games against the Tampa Bay Lightning and Carolina Hurricanes.

Those are the type of skids that sunk the Blue Jackets to the NHL's basement the past two years, so the importance of ending this one in Seattle has grown exponentially. The seas aren't exactly friendly for the Jackets, who've averaged just 1.8 goals in their past six games after averaging 4.1 through the first eight.

"At the end of the day, we have to find a way to get into the win column on this trip and Seattle's our last chance," Werenski said. "We're working hard, and the process is right and all that, but at the end of the day, you have to find wins and we're not doing it. This is unacceptable."

Zach Werenski still firing away for Columbus Blue Jackets

Werenski hasn't scored a goal in seven games, but the Jackets' top defenseman continues to soak up ice time and launch attempts in large quantities.

While logging his 500th NHL game Sunday to become the 10th player in Blue Jackets history to play that many with the club, he sent 18 attempts from his stick, putting eight on goal. According to FanDuel Sports Network, that was the highest number of attempts (shots on goal, shots blocked and misses) by a Blue Jackets player since the NHL began tracking it 11 years ago.

It was the seventh time in Werenski's career that he's finished with eight shots on goal, which is two shy of his career-high 10 shots in a game — which he's done twice. Werenski, however, didn't score against the Ducks and only has one goal among his top nine shot totals.

“I’ve obviously gone through slumps before,” Werenski said. “I had a lot of ‘Grade A’ chances (Sunday) and I didn’t score, but it’s on everyone. We’ve got to find ways to score goals and win hockey games.”

According to Natural Stat Trick, Werenski is third in the NHL in attempts (123) thus far, trailing Nashville Predators forward Filip Forsberg (129) and Boston Bruins forward David Pastrnak (125).

Leo Carlsson edges Adam Fantilli in first NHL matchup

Going into the 2023 NHL Draft, the Ducks held the second overall pick, and the Blue Jackets had the third.

Anaheim’s interest in Carlsson quickly spread leading into the first round, and the Ducks took him one spot ahead of Fantilli going to the Blue Jackets. Sunday’s matchup was the first time they’ve faced each other after the Ducks “rested” Carlsson last season at Nationwide Arena and Fantilli missed the game in Anaheim with a calf laceration.

Fantilli, who moved from center of the second line to left wing on the top unit, didn’t collect a point while logging the second-highest ice time (21:39) of his career. He made a nice play on Kirill Marchenko’s goal in the third period, but it wasn’t credited with an assist.

Carlsson skated 15:44 centering the Ducks’ third line and scored the winning goal, putting Anaheim up 3-1 midway through the third. It was his only shot, while Fantilli finished without a shot on five attempts. The next time they’re slated to square off is Dec. 14 in Columbus to conclude the season series.

The Athletic / Blue Jackets Monday Gathering: Adding Dante Fabbro will have interesting ripple effect

By Aaron Portzline – November 12, 2024

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

Item No. 1: Fabbro impact

The Blue Jackets' waiver claim on Sunday of Dante Fabbro is plenty interesting on its own merits. In Fabbro, 26, the Jackets have added a much-needed right-shot defenseman who GM Don Waddell believes could fit well — even in a top-four capacity — in coach Dean Evason's system.

"We have good reports on him, and we have people in the organization (assistant coach Scott Ford) who have coached him and know him really well on and off the ice," Waddell told The Athletic. "When he went on waivers (Saturday) we all met to talk about him, and he checked all the boxes."

Now, the ripple effect of Fabbro's acquisition bears watching.

Blue Jackets claim defenseman Dante Fabbro off waivers from Nashville

Waddell said the Blue Jackets will carry eight defensemen through Tuesday's road trip finale in Seattle, then decide how to proceed. As much as coaches like having eight blueliners for practice, it's a luxury most clubs live without due to payroll, the need for players to play and develop, etc.

So who goes?

The two obvious choices are David Jiricek and Jordan Harris, who have both played sparingly even after the long-term injury to Erik Gudbranson last month.

Jiricek, the No. 6 pick in 2022, has played in only five of the Blue Jackets' first 14 games. He was a healthy scratch in Sunday's 4-2 loss in Anaheim after dressing in the three previous games — losses to Washington, San Jose and Los Angeles.

The Blue Jackets coaching staff would never say this, but it's clear they don't have a lot of trust in Jiricek. His ice time in his three previous games went the wrong direction, from 17:05 vs. the Capitals to 9:15 vs. the Sharks and 8:50 vs. the Kings.

In five games, he has zero goals, one assist and a minus-2 rating, while averaging 11:47 per game.

"We have to think about what's best for (Jiricek) right now," Waddell said. "Obviously playing 8-10 minutes isn't ideal. He's 20 years old, and he still makes a 20-year-old's mistakes.

"We'll sit down (later this week) and talk about it, but we're not going to make any decisions until we get home."

Jiricek bristled last season when the Blue Jackets sent him to AHL Cleveland, so one can only wonder how he'd handle a demotion one year later.

In fairness, the Jackets have given Jiricek every chance to claim a top-four job on the right side from the beginning of training camp, but he hasn't grabbed it. It's possible — not likely, but possible — that Jiricek would prefer playing heavy minutes in the AHL vs. barely playing in the NHL.

Waddell, a veteran GM, isn't likely to be swayed by how a player or his agent would handle an assignment to the AHL.

Still, it would be preferable to keep the peace with one of the franchise's top prospects, a player who is projected as a top-pairing defender with a big power-play role. But Jiricek has not bloomed into that player yet in the NHL, only the AHL.

The other possible move would be to send Harris to the minors, but he would need to clear waivers before he could join AHL Cleveland. Harris, acquired over the summer in the Patrik Laine trade to Montreal, has played in only eight games (no points) for the Jackets.

Beyond taking somebody's spot in the lineup, the addition of Fabbro is likely to scramble the Blue Jackets pairs, if not immediately then eventually.

After playing all season with Zach Werenski and Ivan Provorov on the top pair, Evason made a change on Sunday, moving Damon Severson up from the second pair to take Provorov's spot on the right side. Provorov played on the second pair with Jake Christiansen.

Waddell said multiple times on Sunday that Fabbro's "best years (in Nashville) were playing with (Roman) Josi." On that surface, that seems like a rather "duh" comment, because Josi — who won the Norris Trophy in 2020 and has been a finalist three other times — is among the NHL's best defensemen.

But Waddell thinks he can pair well with an offensive defenseman, perhaps even Werenski on the top pair.

"He's a good defender," Waddell said. "Not a lot of points, but we did all of the analytics on him and have watched him closely. He plays well with an offensive-leaning player. He's fine to sit back and defend, and I think he'll fit in very well with our guys."

The Blue Jackets bought out Adam Boqvist's contract over the summer and let Nick Blankenburg depart as a free agent. Late last season, they traded Andrew Peeke to Boston for a minor-league player and a third-round pick in 2027.

There's no sense that the Blue Jackets or Waddell regret any of those moves, but it changed the roster from one that had too many right-side defenders to one that was heavy on the left. The injury to Gudbranson and Jiricek's inability to grab a spot has made the right side an even bigger challenge.

Fabbro's arrival could allow Provorov to move back to the left side, his natural side.

Item No. 2: Be quick, don't hurry

Last week on the "Ray & Dregs Hockey Podcast," hosted by former NHL player-turned-broadcaster Ray Ferraro and TSN's Darren Dreger, Evason was asked by Dreger if there was one player on the Blue Jackets roster that had opened his eyes since his arrival this summer.

Evason didn't hesitate.

"I'll probably say a guy who's not even in our lineup right now (due to injury), and it's Kent Johnson," Evason said. "He started the season just absolutely fantastic. I didn't know him. I would have probably said (Adam) Fantilli, but I did get to meet him at the World Championships last summer in Prague.

"Kent Johnson was driving our offense, and off the ice ... everybody talks about Johnny Gaudreau being a rink rat, wanting to be at the rink every day, well, Kent Johnson is the same way. He's still there every day. He was killing penalties for us, playing on the power play, he was doing everything for us.

"As soon as we can get all three injured guys back, but him in particular, that would be fantastic."

It's incredible to juxtapose Johnson's standing within the organization now versus just one year ago.

At this point last season, Johnson was playing for AHL Cleveland and many were starting to question his future as an impact player in the NHL.

Now he's seen as an indispensable part of the club, perhaps the key to getting the Blue Jackets out of their current offensive funk.

The Blue Jackets have struggled to find a second-line fit with Fantilli, who has 3-4-7 in 14 games but hasn't been able to really show his offensive wares. On Sunday, Evason pulled Mikael Pyyhtiä off Fantilli's line and replaced him with big Dmitri Voronkov.

But Johnson is the best playmaker on the roster.

The good news is that Johnson, who suffered a shoulder injury versus Buffalo on Oct. 17, is expected to return before the end of November, a team official told The Athletic. It could be sooner than that, too.

Waddell stressed there is no timeline for Johnson's return and that they'll show an abundance of patience before he's cleared to play.

And yet it can't be soon enough.

"He was by far our best player," Waddell said, wistfully.

Item No. 3: Snacks

- Waddell was among the GMs who had trade talks with Nashville GM Barry Trotz regarding Fabbro in recent weeks, but he wasn't willing to pay the price, likely a prospect or draft pick. He waited a couple of weeks and claimed him on waivers. "I go back to what I've probably said 100 times: I don't think we're in a position to give up assets right now," Waddell said. "If it's a guy who's going to go with us for a long time, for multiple years, then I don't mind giving up a reasonable asset." Fabbro, who is making \$2.5 million this season, can be an unrestricted free agent on July 1, 2025.
- For the first month of the season, the waiver selection order is set by the previous year's overall standings, going from worst to first. But at the start of November, this season's standings (in inverse order) determines the waiver order. The Blue Jackets were 15th in the pecking order for Fabbro.
- Here's Fabbro on how he handled being on waivers Saturday into Sunday, not knowing if he was heading to the minor leagues for the first time in his career or heading to a new organization: "I was trying to prepare myself for both situations. Whatever was thrown my way, I knew I had to roll with it. If that's playing in the AHL, I would have gone with a good attitude, ready to work hard, get my game back to how I know I can play. No matter what, I was going to have a positive attitude and try to be a leader, show what my work ethic's like."
- Fabbro was asked if, after almost a decade in the Nashville organization, he was ready for a change. "I did think that, yeah," he said. "This is my sixth season (with the Predators). Sometimes change is good. In my case, I think it is good. A fresh start with a new team and a new organization and a bunch of new faces. I think it's great for me. I'm extremely excited to meet the team and get back in the swing of things."
- The Blue Jackets went 0-2-1 on this season's swing through California, with an overtime loss in San Jose last Tuesday and back-to-back losses to Los Angeles and Anaheim over the weekend. It marked the fifth time in franchise history, and the second time since the 2021-22 season, that the Jackets have gone 0-for-California on a single road trip. The other seasons: 2003-04, 2005-06 and 2008-09, the first time Columbus qualified for the postseason.
- Quite an honor for former Blue Jackets GM Jarmo Kekäläinen, who on Saturday was inducted into Finland's Hockey Hall of Fame as an influencer. Kekäläinen became the first European-born GM in NHL

history when the Blue Jackets hired him in 2012. He led Columbus to five playoff berths and a 410-362-97 record (.528) during his tenure. Others joining him in Finland's Hall this weekend were Nashville goaltender Pekka Rinne and longtime NHL forward Jussi Jokinen, who played 14 games with the Blue Jackets during the 2017-18 season.

- Blue Jackets Monday Gathering trivia question: The NHL celebrated this year's Hockey Hall of Fame class over the weekend with two Nashville legends — GM David Poile and defenseman Shea Weber — joining together. Who is the only enshrined member of the Hall of Fame to have played for the Blue Jackets?
- Mathieu Olivier's second-period fight with Los Angeles' Andreas Englund on Saturday was the Blue Jackets' first fight of the season in the club's 13th game. When the Blue Jackets joined the league in 2000-01, an opening-night fight was pretty much a guarantee. We wondered if the Jackets had ever gone 13 games into a season before registering their first fighting major, so we asked the NHL's stats department. The answer? Yes. In 2018-19, the Blue Jackets also made it 13 games into the season before their first fight. On Nov. 3, 2018, in Los Angeles, Columbus captain Nick Foligno dropped the gloves with Kings defenseman Dion Phaneuf.
- It was quite a night for milestones on Sunday. Werenski became the 10th Blue Jackets player to dress in 500 games. Jack Johnson, meanwhile, played the 1,200th NHL game of his career. Among active players, only Ryan Suter (1,459), Brent Burns (1,428) and Marc-Edouard Vlasic (1,296) have played in more games. Finally, Blue Jackets assistant athletic trainer Naoto "Nates" Goto worked his 1,500th NHL game. He spent seven years with the New York Islanders before joining the Jackets in 2012.
- Every time Alex Ovechkin scores another goal, we're reminded that the Blue Jackets and Capitals have a late-season back-to-back (April 12 in Columbus, April 13 in Washington) that could be the backdrop for a historic moment. Ovechkin (863 goals) now trails all-time NHL goal leader Wayne Gretzky (894) by 31 goals after scoring 10 goals in his first 14 games this season.
- The Blue Jackets are planning to stay in Seattle after Tuesday's game (a 10 p.m. ET start) and fly back to Columbus on Wednesday. They'll have Thursday to practice and acclimate before hosting the Pittsburgh Penguins on Friday.
- Trivia answer: Sergei Fedorov, who was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame with the 2015 class, played with the Blue Jackets for parts of three seasons beginning in 2005-06.
- AHL Cleveland's Roman Ahcan went to training camp with AHL Charlotte this fall, hoping to catch on with the Florida Panthers after three seasons with Cleveland. With no contract offer forthcoming, Ahcan took a PTO with Cleveland before the start of the season, one that guaranteed him 25 games with the Monsters and paid him a \$90,000 prorated salary, per a league official. That contract was torn up last week in favor of a permanent deal, one that Ahcan truly deserves. Ahcan, 25, is eighth in the AHL and tops among Cleveland players with seven goals in only 11 games this season. His career high is nine goals, set in 52 games last season.

[BlueJackets.com / Blue Jackets end Cali swing with loss to Ducks](#)

By Dan Arritt – November 12, 2024

ANAHEIM -- John Gibson made 38 saves in his season debut for the Anaheim Ducks, a 4-2 win against the Columbus Blue Jackets at Honda Center on Sunday.

Gibson was unavailable the first 12 games after undergoing an emergency appendectomy on Sept. 25.

"I give credit to the guys," Gibson said of his teammates. "There's guys coming in early (to practice), staying after, shooting on me, helping me get the work to prepare to get back to game speed, so I felt pretty good as the game went on and it was a good team effort."

Brett Leason, Jackson LaCombe, Leo Carlsson and Isac Lundestrom scored for the Ducks (5-7-2), who ended a four-game losing streak (0-3-1).

Yegor Chinakhov and Kirill Marchenko scored, and Daniil Tarasov made 26 saves for the Blue Jackets (5-7-2), who have lost five in a row (0-4-1).

"It's unacceptable," Columbus defenseman Zach Werenski said. "Enough with the moral victories. We've played well enough in a lot of games this year to win and we end up losing them, and that's on us. We have to look ourselves in the mirror and find a way to win hockey games. I don't care if we outshoot them 50-20 or we get outshot 50-20. At the end of the day, we have to find a way to get points in this League and win hockey games and we haven't done it."

The fourth line for the Ducks combined to score the first goal of the game.

Tarasov made a save on a wrist shot from above the right circle by Ross Johnston, but the rebound went to the side of the net, and Cutter Gauthier made a backhanded centering pass to Leason, who swept the puck between the pads of Tarasov for a 1-0 lead at 3:13 of the first period.

Chinakhov tied it 1-1 at 16:16 with a one-timer from above the right circle that squeezed through Gibson's pads.

LaCombe put the Ducks ahead 2-1 at 4:22 of the second, chipping in the rebound of Radko Gudas' one-timer from the point at the top of the crease.

"Guddy' had a great shot and it ended up in front and I just happened to be there," LaCombe said. "I think, for our game, it's just important to stay aggressive."

Carlsson made it 3-1 at 10:20 of the third period on a one-timer from the slot off a short pass from Brian Dumoulin.

Marchenko scored from the slot at 16:57 to cut it to 3-2.

Lundestrom scored an empty-net goal for the 4-2 final with 1:40 remaining.

The Blue Jackets finished with 42 shots on goal, 15 others that missed the net and had 21 blocked.

"Goal-scoring is funny, it goes in streaks," Columbus coach Dean Evason said. "A few weeks back, we couldn't miss and the pucks were finding their way in and we were getting some bounces and good stuff. And now it's gone the other way a little bit, but there's nothing we can do about it now except move forward and keep doing those things to get those opportunities."

NOTES: The Blue Jackets killed both penalties by the Ducks and have not allowed a power-play goal to Anaheim in their past 16 meetings, killing 41 straight penalties. ... Werenski played in his 500th NHL

game, becoming the fourth defenseman in team history to reach the milestone. ... Blue Jackets defenseman Jack Johnson played in his 1,200th NHL game, joining Anze Kopitar, Marc Edouard Vlasic, Andrew Cogliano and Sidney Crosby as the fifth player from the 2005 NHL Draft class to reach the milestone. ... The Blue Jackets claimed defenseman Dante Fabbro on waivers from the Nashville Predators on Sunday. Fabbro will join the Blue Jackets for their next game at the Seattle Kraken on Tuesday. ... The Ducks have won nine of their past 11 against the Blue Jackets (9-2-0). ... Carlsson tallied his third game-winning goal of the season, tied for second in the NHL. ... Leason, who had been a healthy scratch the previous three games, entered the lineup in place of Mason McTavish, who was a game-time decision with an undisclosed injury. ... Ducks defenseman Cam Fowler skated in pre-game warmups, but missed his second straight game with an upper-body injury.

[BlueJackets.com / Columbus police officer is no stranger to Nationwide Arena](#)

By Garrison McDaniel – November 12, 2024

During the last home game, the Blue Jackets honored first responders in the central Ohio community for the brave work they do for the people of Columbus.

Among those recognized was Dani Renza, a familiar face within the Blue Jackets organization and at Nationwide Arena.

Renza can now often be seen as an on-site police officer for CBJ home games, but before that, she spent multiple seasons on the Performance Columbus Ice Crew at games.

Both jobs have provided an up-close and personal view of the sport of hockey, one she's spent a major portion of her life around.

"Now I see a different side of things with the missing kids, or if a child wanders away, or someone who has a medical emergency, or anything like that," Renza said. "That's incredibly rewarding to get that person the assistance they need. You were that safe face that someone saw."

Originally a native of Vermont, she grew up feeling somewhat detached from the sport in a state with no pro teams, but after joining the ice crew – which is responsible for in-game maintenance of the playing surface, including shoveling snow during media timeouts – she was given an opportunity to be a part of the organization.

"The experience has been pretty incredible," she said. "Growing up in Vermont, I didn't have access to a lot of NHL teams. Everything was super far away, so I had never really gotten that exposure that I think people in Columbus have access to. Not only being at the games, but seeing them on such a cool level, on that ground level at ice level, was pretty next level."

Renza, who was on the ice crew for five years after starting in 2019, was also in the police academy during that time.

"(The Blue Jackets) were very understanding and flexible with supporting me and my goal, and that's not always common," Renza said.

Although her schedule was constantly full between the two jobs, she said that type of environment is something she loves.

"You almost thrive in that busy environment. When you take it away, it feels like you're missing something," Renza said, who is now a member of the Columbus Division of Police. "I'm very lucky to be able to continue being involved in uniform."

On top of being on duty for the First Responders Night game Nov. 2, she also played in a hockey game between Columbus police and fire officers and CBJ alumni earlier in the day. The contest featured such CBJ legends as Rick Nash, R.J. Umberger and Jean-Luc Grand-Pierre, which provided a unique experience for the first responders.

"I think sometimes we get starstruck a little bit," Renza said. "The amount of skill that they have is pretty dumbfounding sometimes. I think Rick Nash dangled me one or two times. I wasn't even mad."

The Hockey News / Blue Jackets Drop Fifth Straight With 4-2 Loss To The Anaheim Ducks

By Jason Newland – November 12, 2024

Yegor Chinakhov(4) and Kirill Marchenko(6) scored the goals for Columbus, and Daniil Tarasov stopped 25 of 28 Ducks shots in the loss.

The Blue Jackets dominated the game in every fashion and deserved to win, they just can't seem to put the puck in the net anymore. The two goals they scored on Sunday night marked the 6th game straight scoring two or fewer goals.

Per NaturalStatTrick.com, the Jackets had 32 scoring chances to the Ducks' 21, and 13 high danger scoring chances to the Ducks' 9. It just wasn't in the cards for the CBJ.

The Jackets have lost five straight games overall, and are 0-3-1 on the current five-game road trip.

"It's unacceptable, to be honest. Enough of the moral victories. We've played well enough in a lot of games this year to win and we end up losing them. That's on us. We have to look ourselves in the mirror and find a way to win." - Zach Werenski.

Players Stats

- Yegor Chinakhov scored his 4th of the season and had 7 shots on goal.
- Zach Werenski tallied his 7th assist and had 8 shots on goal. He also had 18 shot attempts.
- Kirill Marchenko scored his 6th goal and recorded his 9th assist. He also had 5 shots on goal.
- Daniil Tarasov made 25 saves.

Team Stats

- The CBJ power play went 1/2 on the night.
- The Jackets PK went 2/2 allowing zero power plays goals to Anaheim since February of 2016.
- The Jackets won 55% of the faceoffs.

What's Next - The Blue Jackets go to Seattle to take on the Kraken on Tuesday in the final game of a long road trip.

The Hockey News / Using NHL EDGE To Analyze Blue Jackets Goals For Vs. Ducks

By Jason Newland – November 12, 2024

This power play goal involved constant puck movement and the three best players on the ice. Zach Werenski and Yegor Chinakhov touched the puck a few times each before Chinakhov launched a missile that John Gibson couldn't absorb. Although this power play didn't last long, it's exactly what you want to see - Puck movement and ripping one-timers.

Goal #2 - 3-2 Ducks Lead - Kirill Marchenko scores his 6th of the season

The unassisted Marchenko goal started as Ivan Provorov had a shot blocked by a Duck defender that saw the puck come right back to him. Instead of just shooting the puck again, he skates toward the center of the ice and then gets a shot off. Adam Fantilli gathers the rebound and slings the puck toward the net because Yegor Chinakhov was lurking on Gibson's left side. The puck was deflected to Marchenko who was in a perfect spot and let a shot rip to beat Gibson.

These would be the only shots that would beat Gibson last night. The Jackets had 40 shots on goal and had an expected goal number of 3.63. They just couldn't beat John Gibson.

What's Next - The Blue Jackets go to Seattle to take on the Kraken on Tuesday in the final game of a long road trip.

What do you think? Please share your thoughts on our forum.

The Hockey News / Getting To Know The Newest Blue Jacket: Dante Fabbro

By Spencer Lazary – November 12, 2024

Yesterday, the Columbus Blue Jackets claimed Dante Fabbro off waivers from the Nashville Predators.

Fabbro appeared in five games with the Predators and registered zero points. Unfortunately, the once promising blue-liner time has come to an end with the team that drafted him back in the 2016 NHL Draft.

The British Columbia native appeared in 315 games for the Nashville Predators over the last seven seasons, while scoring 16 goals and 72 points.

Fabbro, 26, will be given a new opportunity to play important minutes with the Blue Jackets, which is something that a player of his age and caliber is likely more than excited about.

Interestingly enough, Fabbro recorded his first NHL goal against no other than the Columbus Blue Jackets back on April 9, 2019.

1st Ohio Battery / Three Things: Anything For A Little Offense, Milestone Night, Streaking (In Wrong Direction)

By Will Chase – November 12, 2024

0-for-California.

The Anaheim Ducks beat the Columbus Blue Jackets 4-2 on Sunday night at Honda Center, extending the Jackets' winless streak to five games.

Brett Leason, Jackson LaComb, Leo Carlsson, and Isac Lundestrom scored for Anaheim.

Yegor Chinakhov scored on the power play and Kirill Marchenko scored for Columbus.

Anything For A Little Offense

Head Coach Dean Evason tinkered with the lines prior to Sunday's tilt hoping to rejuvenate the offense. Adam Fantilli was bumped up to the first line with Sean Monahan and Kirill Marchenko.

In spite of the changes, the Jackets were not able to match goals with Anaheim. Yegor Chinakhov (PPG - 16:16, 1st period) and Kirill Marchenko (16:57, 3rd period) were able to break through John Gibson, who made his season debut after emergency appendectomy surgery in September. Gibson made 38 saves.

A look at Chinakhov's fourth.

And Marchenko's sixth.

Milestone Night

It was a milestone night for the Blue Jackets as Werenski played in his 500th career game, Jack Johnson played in his 1,200th game, and trainer Nates Goto celebrated his 1,500th game.

Werenski is one of four Blue Jackets defensemen to play 500 career games joining David Savard (597), Fedor Tyutin (553), and Rostislav Klesla (515).

He also led the game with eight shots on goal and 27:57 time on ice.

Streaking (In Wrong Direction)

Similar to Tuesday's 2-1 overtime loss to the San Jose Sharks, Columbus heavily outshot their opponent and had to come from behind.

Brett Leason's first goal of the season started the game's scoring at 3:13 of the first period. Even though Chinakhov was able to match Anaheim in the first period, they were not able to find the scoring down the stretch, even while outshooting the Ducks 40-30.

The Jackets have now dropped five in a row and are 0-4-1 in the month of November. The last time the Jackets were swept in California was the 2021-22 season.

Daniil Tarasov made 26 saves.

Road Trip Finale

The Blue Jackets conclude their five-game road trip on Tuesday, Nov. 12 when they take on the Seattle Kraken at 10:00 p.m. ET.

The Athletic / Weekend NHL rankings: Canucks, Predators and 5 way-too-early offseason lessons

By Sean McIndoe – November 12, 2024

We're a month into the season, which seems like more than enough time to look back at the offseason and use the benefit of hindsight to completely shift our opinions of everything that happened.

You remember the offseason, right? The Predators were the big winners, the Jets were huge losers, the goalie carousel ended up with everyone in exactly the right spot and a few teams would pay the price after chickening out on making big trades. After watching each team play a dozen games or so, we now know that we were completely wrong. We're so much smarter now.

Will we be completely wrong again, in slightly different ways, a few weeks from now? Almost definitely. But for now, let's take a look back at the best and worst of what did (and didn't) happen.

Bonus five: Way-too-early conclusions about the offseason

5. The Predators' spending spree was a bust — We'll start with the easy one. More on the Predators down below, but yeah, they may not want to hang that "Offseason Champions" banner quite yet. And Nashville ends up directly related to our next entry ...

4. Being heartless can pay off — The Golden Knights let several key players walk. The Lightning saw the most popular player in franchise history leave with what sure looked like a footprint on his back. We all shook our heads and mumbled about how there's just no loyalty these days, and how both teams would surely pay a price for losing their heart and souls. Then both teams shrugged and got off to great starts. The lesson: Loyalty is bad! Except when it isn't, which leads to our next point.

3. Sometimes, not making the big trade is the right move — We went into the summer thinking several names on expiring contracts would have to be moved. Two of the biggest were Martin Nečas and Nikolaj Ehlers, but neither ended up being dealt. Carolina re-signed Nečas while Winnipeg still has to figure out the long-term plan for Ehlers, but for now, both teams are sitting near the top of the standings and have to feel like they made the right call. The jury's still out on Mitch Marner and the core in Toronto, but you could make a case the status quo is working there, too.

2. Offer sheets aren't the end of the world — Dylan Holloway has been fine and Philip Broberg was good before getting hurt. Far more importantly, the hockey gods have not seen fit to smite Doug Armstrong and the Blues, and the league has yet to rescind the franchise. And while the Oilers aren't off to a great start, they were at least able to find the strength to keep playing, as opposed to insisting on rejoining the WHA. Maybe we could try a few of these next summer, too?

1. Goalies are just weird — If you have any ability at all to predict goaltending, please report to the nearest NHL front office to receive your blank check. So far, the biggest offseason goalie moves have yielded very mixed results. Jacob Markström has been fine, while Linus Ullmark has just been "good enough" and Darcy Kuemper has been OK, but none (so far) have transformed their franchise. Big extensions for Jeremy Swayman and Juuse Saros aren't paying off early, although Jake Oettinger looks great. Meanwhile, the biggest offseason goalie story of the summer was Igor Shesterkin, and we never did get a resolution there.

So what have we learned? Nothing, really, because it's the NHL. On to this week's rankings ...

Road to the Cup

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

Anthony Stolarz has been single-handedly keeping the Maple Leafs in games lately. Literally, on Friday night.

5. Dallas Stars (8-5-0, +6 true goals differential*) — They got an early prove-it matchup with the Jets on Saturday, and all they proved was that Winnipeg is the division's best team right now. In more encouraging news, they've apparently emerged as the clear Cup favorite among The Athletic's hockey crew (or at least they were when voting took place earlier in the week).

4. New York Rangers (9-3-1, +19) — Kevin Weekes sure seemed to be hinting that a Shesterkin deal was close last week, but so far, nothing official. It's possible they're still nailing down the final details. It's also possible "he gets shelled by the Sabres and then his backup gets a shutout" doesn't feel like the right moment to announce a record-breaking contract. Either way, you'll notice this is the first time this season the Rangers aren't our top-ranked team in the Metro, so I'll remind you that the difference between third and fourth on a list like this isn't all that huge.

3. Carolina Hurricanes (10-3-0, +20) — They probably should have been in last week's rankings. There isn't much doubt about this week, even with the Avs snapping their eight-game win streak. The Hurricanes are in, the Golden Knights are out and those two teams happen to meet tonight in Vegas to figure it all out. And in case you're wondering, the first Rangers/Hurricanes game of the season doesn't arrive until the end of the month.

2. Winnipeg Jets (14-1-0, +36) — They now own the best start in NHL history through 15 games, which is kind of an arbitrary endpoint but still impressive. Far more importantly, the chant game is on point.

This is great.

This week brings another chance to silence any doubters, with the Rangers and Lightning and then a Panthers back-to-back showdown on the slate.

1. Florida Panthers (11-3-1, +11) — They've won seven straight on two continents, and now get the Devils in a fun back-to-back. But the main event starts on the weekend with that pair against the Jets. By the way, would this be a good time to remind everyone that none of you believed in Sam Reinhart?

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

Not ranked: Vancouver Canucks — What a weird season so far.

If you were the sort of person who never watched this team and was only vaguely aware of them based on occasional snippets you overheard — which is to say, an Eastern-based sportswriter, am I right Vancouver? — then you'd probably think they were a disaster.

Thatcher Demko is hurt and still hasn't played. Elias Pettersson has struggled through the first month of a \$93 million extension. Brock Boeser just got knocked out of the lineup by a cheap shot. They started 0-3, got steamrolled by the Devils on home ice a few weeks ago and got smoked by the Oilers over the weekend. What a mess!

Also, they're 7-3-3 and comfortably holding down a playoff spot.

So sure, a weird year, and I'm not completely sure what to make of it. There's certainly room for optimism, with Quinn Hughes picking up where he left off last year and Demko now practicing and seemingly on his way back. Even Pettersson has looked better lately, and scored a nice goal on Saturday.

The optimist's view, if there is such a thing among Canucks fans, is that they've had plenty go wrong and their record is still pretty good. The pessimist might look a little closer and point out that their wins have

mostly come against some very bad teams, including the Hawks, Flyers, Penguins, Ducks and Sharks. Then again, they also beat the Panthers, so who knows?

No really, who knows? For now, we're talking about them in the top section, so that's good. But I'm genuinely curious where Canucks fans are at right now. Please meet me in the comments and let me know how you feel about the first month. Is this a good team that survived some serious hurdles? A paper tiger that pads its win total against the league's weaklings? Something in between? Help me out, Vancouver fans.

The bottom five

The five teams that are headed toward dead last and the best lottery odds for James Hagens, or maybe someone else.

Are you looking for a terrible play or a brilliant one? How about both ...

(Please do not ask a Blues fan what the final score ended up being.)

5. Philadelphia Flyers (5-8-2, -16) — It took a whole month, but we finally got the Matvei Michkov benching drama we were all waiting for. Good old John Tortorella, blowing his stack over some minor mistake and fracturing the relationship with the franchise's most important young player. Or maybe not, as Kevin explains, but never let reality get in the way of a good narrative.

4. Anaheim Ducks (5-7-2, -12) — John Gibson is back, starting last night's win over Columbus and looking sharp. That could eventually lead to some version of a goaltending controversy given how good Lukáš Dostál has looked, but for now, it gives the Ducks a boost.

3. Chicago Blackhawks (6-9-1, -10) — Something I didn't realize until I read Mark and Scott's latest: Connor Bedard went into the weekend ranked second in the league in five-on-five scoring chances, trailing only Auston Matthews. My only reasonable conclusion from this number is that scoring chances do not help players score goals.

2. Montreal Canadiens (4-9-2, -22) — I thought any talk of even hovering around the playoff race was overly optimistic, but I'll admit I didn't see it getting "right there with the Sharks" bad. Arpon's column will be a tough read for Habs fans, but it's a clear-eyed take that's worth your time.

1. San Jose Sharks (5-9-2, -18) — Mackenzie Blackwood revenge game! Every now and then, you'll see a 1-0 game that's more exciting than a high-scoring shootout. Last night was, uh, not that game. But if you're the rebuilding Sharks, you'll take a shutout win over a Cup contender any day. And as for Blackwood shutting out his former teammates with 44 saves in an upset nobody could have seen coming, well, see point No. 1 from this week's Bonus Five.

Not ranked: Nashville Predators — We featured the Predators in this section a few weeks ago, when they shared the slot with the struggling Red Wings. Typically, I don't like to bring teams back to the land of the "not ranked" — I'd prefer to use these spots to tour around the league and hit as many teams as possible. But I'm not sure I have a choice when it comes to the Predators, because what we assumed was a slow start is becoming something much more, and much worse.

So let's just drop the question here: Is the season already lost in Nashville?

They're sitting at just 5-9-1 after Saturday's win over Utah, leaving them last in the Central. And while it's hardly their biggest concern right now, a team that had thoughts of making a push for a division title is already 17 points back of top spot. In early November.

What's gone wrong? A better question might be what hasn't. Pretty much anything that would have generated preseason optimism has turned out to be a dud. Steven Stamkos and Jonathan Marchessault

are both having slow starts after getting nearly \$60 million as UFAs. Newly extended Juuse Saros hasn't been the problem but also hasn't looked like the Vezina candidate you're hoping for when you commit \$62 million and trade your blue-chip goalie of the future. Andrew Brunette doesn't seem to have any answers. They're 24th in goals scored and 29th in goals against, which adds up to a differential in Sharks/Habs territory.

It's a disaster. Or is it?

It's not all bad. Unlike a lot of struggling teams, the special teams have been fine. They're reasonably healthy, which is better than the alternative even as it removes an excuse. The underlying numbers are OK, and if you remember your 2014 analytics arguments you know their 94.8 PDO means they're better than you think. They looked good against Utah. And the schedule has been tough, serving up playoff contenders almost every night.

But the Predators are supposed to be playoff contenders, too, at the very least. They're not close to that now, and as we all know, it gets late early in the NHL. So what does Barry Trotz do now? You don't sign a bunch of 30-somethings to long-term contracts and trade away your best prospect because you're willing to shrug off a lost season.

A coaching change feels like a panic move given Brunette is only in Year 2. But with a two-time Jack Adams winner in the front office ready to take over, even if only as a short-term fact-finding mission, it feels plausible. Maybe Trotz can find a significant trade, even as we're told that's impossible in today's league. Maybe he really does try to scrap the whole thing and rebuild, which is the path he suggested in a controversial radio spot this week (although Elliotte Friedman makes a good case that that's not really an option).

Or maybe you just wait and hope. With Colorado and Edmonton up next to kick off a five-game road trip, things could get even further out of hand quickly in Nashville. If things don't turn around quickly, the next time we talk about them in the Bottom Five section, it won't be as a "not ranked" team.

Finally, let's end this week's column with a shoutout to a pair of sportswriting legends: Scott Burnside, honored by the Hockey Hall of Fame with the Elmer Ferguson Memorial Award, and Eric Duhatschek, who announced his retirement in a farewell column. Two great writers, and two great guys, especially when it came to helping out younger writers. Thanks for everything, gentlemen, and enjoy those well-earned accolades.

The Athletic / Why isn't Alexander Mogilny in the Hockey Hall of Fame? There are clues

By Tim Graham – November 12, 2024

Alexander Mogilny won't be inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame on Monday night. He has been eligible for 15 years, with cries from critics intensifying upon each rejection.

Rebukes are delivered with indignation. The Athletic has called his exclusion "inexcusable." The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette has labeled it "a disgrace," Sportsnet "almost laughable" and the Toronto Star "nothing less than a crime."

For the record, I believe Mogilny deserves induction. He produced one of the NHL's most magical seasons, recorded wonderful career statistics and won a few awards along the way. His origin story is exhilarating; he was a true trailblazer, brazenly defecting from the Soviet Union to join the Buffalo Sabres. The Athletic two years ago ranked him the 89th greatest player in NHL history.

My problem, however, is with the annual assertion that the reasons behind Mogilny's exclusion are some great mystery.

It is true the Hockey Hall of Fame Selection Committee's clandestine process means we'll likely never know precisely why Mogilny has not been enshrined — or even if he has been so much as nominated. But the rationale has never been difficult to glean. Unmistakable clues have been chronicled for decades.

Mogilny's personality is almost always described through such vague adjectives as "mercurial," "enigmatic," "quirky" or "mysterious." What drove owners, general managers, coaches, teammates and fans bananas weren't mere eccentricities. During his playing days, he was described as selfish, lazy, unreliable, a quitter and a passenger. Sporting sins, all.

As terrific as he was, Mogilny too often treated the sport as though it were beneath his ultimate effort and dedication. Those who played with him or watched him play — including Hall of Fame selection committees — could be excused for feeling cheated: awed by his otherworldly talents, but ultimately denied the joy of witnessing the heights of what he might have been.

"If they had a championship for quitters, this man would wear the heavyweight crown," Buffalo News columnist Jim Kelley wrote of Mogilny in May 1995. Three months later, Mogilny's antics forced the Sabres to trade him.

Keep in mind that, at the time, Mogilny had delivered the best hockey of his career. His 1992-93 season was seismic. Mogilny amassed 76 goals and 127 points on a line with center Pat LaFontaine and left wing Dave Andreychuk, two future Hall of Famers.

A preponderance of weight is placed on that single season when the case is made for Mogilny's induction. But just two years later, the Sabres couldn't cope with him anymore.

You hear plenty from Mogilny associates who insist he deserves a spot in the Hall of Fame. Rarely do you hear a luminary from any sport declare on the record that a superstar doesn't belong in the Hall of Fame. Those already inducted never want to come off as selfish or curmudgeonly about their blessing; the more the merrier. And when was the last time we heard LaFontaine utter a negative word about anyone?

Still, praise about Mogilny from former teammates and team leaders is often delivered with caveats.

Hall of Famers Martin Brodeur and Lou Lamoriello have stated Mogilny belongs in the Hall of Fame. But in the autobiography "Brodeur: Beyond the Crease," a few pointed passages appear about Mogilny's troubling lack of desire: "After several games of trying Mogilny on the (power-play) point, Lamoriello waived him, insisting the move, 'was about ridding the team of passengers.' I always felt 'Almo' was a good player on a good team, but on a struggling team he was exposed for his tendencies and habits."

There are a bunch of Mogilny references in Hall of Fame center Mats Sundin's book, "Home and Away." Mogilny amused the Maple Leafs captain during their three seasons together. By that late stage of Mogilny's career, his infamous aversion to injury rehabilitation was accepted as part of the package. Sundin wrote that after multiple surgeries on Mogilny's arthritic left hip, Sundin urged him to work out with strength coach Matt Nichol for just 10 minutes a day to prolong his linemate's career for 10 more years.

"Why the f— would I want to do that?" Sundin recalled Mogilny's reply.

"He was arguably the most talented guy any of us had ever played with," Sundin wrote, "but he was not interested in training off-ice with us."

That, in a nutshell, illustrates how Mogilny was viewed among many of the boys. He was jovial and quick-witted, good for a laugh in the dressing room or on the road. But a refusal to push himself could make teammates want to repeatedly bash their Jofas into the half-wall.

Former teammates, of course, aren't the ones deciding Mogilny's fate at the Hall of Fame. That's where the Hockey Hall of Fame Selection Committee comes in. They are the gatekeepers, tasked to protect the game's most hallowed principles — whether we agree or not.

Several of Mogilny's close hockey acquaintances have served on the revolving, 18-member Selection Committee, which needs 14 members to confer induction. The current group has included Brian Burke (his Vancouver Canucks GM) since 2012, Igor Larionov (his Central Red Army teammate) since 2011 and Ron Francis (his Toronto Maple Leafs teammate) since 2016. Canucks executive/coach and Maple Leafs coach Pat Quinn served five years of Mogilny's eligibility, while New Jersey Devils broadcaster Mike Emrick served seven years.

Hockey Hall of Fame selectors are sworn to secrecy, but some wrote books before they committed. What's interesting in reading these memoirs is what isn't said about Mogilny's impact. Burke's autobiography, "Burke's Law," mentions Mogilny just once in regard to Vancouver signing countryman Pavel Bure away from the Soviet Union. Mogilny won the Stanley Cup with New Jersey in 2000, but Emrick's autobiography, "Off Mike: How a Kid from Basketball-Crazy Indiana Became America's NHL Voice," doesn't mention the right wing. Quinn's posthumous biography, "Quinn: The Life of a Hockey Legend" by The Athletic's Dan Robson, provides zero quotes, anecdotes or words about Mogilny.

There are various reasons why Mogilny might not receive credit in these books. A lack of mentions doesn't necessarily reveal the authors' feelings about Mogilny's exclusion from the Hall of Fame. Collectively, however, the omissions are telling. Wouldn't a surefire Hall of Fame teammate make an enduring impression on the luminaries around him? Shouldn't he influence their reflections of excellence?

Current Hall of Fame selector and journalist Scott Morrison has written many books, including "By the Numbers: From 00 to 99," which is about the greatest players to wear each number. Mogilny was the obvious choice for No. 89, with Morrison writing, "While always a terrific player and a dangerous scorer, Mogilny only once came close to those (1992-93) numbers again, always being very good, but not always great."

Mogilny's bullet-point resume looks Hall of Fame-reasonable on paper. In addition to the stats and his dramatic origin story, he won a Stanley Cup, Olympic and IIHF World Championship gold medals to become a member of the Triple Gold Club, a Lady Byng, and is frequently (and erroneously) credited as the NHL's first Russian-born captain.

But all his accomplishments come with qualifiers. He never was voted first-team All-Star — although he did make a pair of second-teams — and finished among the top 10 in goals thrice and points twice in his 15 seasons.

Not even Mogilny's singular campaign is unassailable. Bernie Nicholls scored 70 goals in a season, scored two more career goals than Mogilny and recorded 117 more points in 137 more games. Yet Nicholls is not in the Hall of Fame either.

Mogilny won his Stanley Cup as a trade-deadline acquisition. He skated on the Devils' third line, adding four goals and three assists in 23 postseason games. Sports Illustrated legend Michael Farber (a Hall of Fame selector until two years ago) wrote during the Final series against the Dallas Stars how Mogilny "skated in alone on a breakaway and took the most pedestrian of shots, a wrister from 25 feet. It was thigh-high, right at (Ed) Belfour's glove, an effort worthy of an optional morning skate in January and not a potential Cup-winning goal in June. ... The game turned on Mogilny's middling effort, which seemed to energize Dallas."

Over his career, Mogilny's postseason scoring average plummeted to 0.69 points a game after averaging 1.04 points in the regular season.

"He's so concerned with his sticks and skates I think he drives himself nuts, as well as us," Devils coach Larry Robinson said during a 2001 postseason stretch in which Mogilny scored one goal over 19 games. "He's thinking about it all the time. And you know in this business some of the best thinking you do is the thinking you don't do."

Regarding the Triple Gold Club and its requisite IIHF World Championships gold medal, that tournament never has carried any great degree of import to a player's legacy, as it's comprised of players not in the NHL postseason. Of the 30 Triple Gold Club members, 22 are Hall-eligible yet only 10 have been admitted.

The Lady Byng is far from a clincher. Eighteen winners are not in the Hall of Fame despite being eligible. Mogilny's propensity to avoid contact and defense helped minimize his penalty minutes. Even so, he was suspended 10 games in January 1992 for slapping linesman Dan Schachte upside the head after being called for a slashing major and game misconduct.

Mogilny's captaincy is regularly cited as leadership confirmation. Not nearly. Sabres coach John Muckler put the interim "C" on Mogilny's sweater in November 1993 while LaFontaine was sidelined by a knee injury. The promotion was considered a ploy.

"Either Muckler thought it would motivate him to get back to form or owner Seymour Knox thought it would be a cool idea to have the first Russian captain," Vancouver Province columnist Tony Gallagher wrote. "When informed some other Russian had been a captain ... Knox went snakey."

True enough, the New York Americans named Russian-born forward Sweeney Schriner their captain in the 1930s, further muddling another Hall of Fame talking point.

"The experiment of captain was a failure," Kelley wrote. "Mogilny is many things, including a complex and mysterious personality, but he is not a leader."

It should be noted Kelley, Gallagher and Farber are Elmer Ferguson Memorial Award recipients. That's the Hockey Hall of Fame's lifetime honor for print journalists. Washington Times reporter Dave Fay also won it, and he summed Mogilny this way: "a brilliant wing when properly motivated, a hand grenade missing its pin most other times."

Among the misguided Mogilny narratives is how injuries robbed him of reaching the coveted 1,000-game milestone, but he needed just 10 more. The shortfall could have been overcome without his contract squabbles or distaste for working out. After breaking his leg in the 1993 playoffs, Mogilny eschewed injury rehabilitation and spent his offseason playing golf, delaying his return by as much as a month. He missed 16 games the next season.

"He rehabbed on the golf course. The Sabres were so steamed at his consistent failure to attend physio that Muckler and then-general manager Gerry Meehan read him the riot act, which went in one ear and out the other," Gallagher wrote. "He was weeks late back into the lineup."

Mogilny skipped the Canucks' first 16 games of 1997-98 because of a holdout. By the time he reported, the Canucks were 3-11-2 and deep into a 10-game losing skid, had fired Quinn as president/GM and would fire coach Tom Renney three games later.

"While Mogilny remains a popular figure in the dressing room, and his brilliant abilities unquestioned," wrote Vancouver Sun columnist Gary Mason in January 1998, "his play this season has become a joke among some players. He has played with little passion or commitment since re-signing with the team. He seems resigned to the fact he's being traded and is playing like it, going through the motions while cashing his checks."

The Buffalo News has speculated Mogilny is being stiff-armed by Hockey Hall of Fame gatekeepers who, wary of Mogilny's decision not to collect his 2003 Lady Byng or attend his 2016 Greater Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame induction, fear he would embarrass the Hall of Fame by declining to show up.

The newspaper's hypothesis, however, fails to recognize Kelley's scrutiny. "Jim Kelley Way," designated when he died in 2010, is the stretch of Washington Avenue between the Buffalo News' former offices and KeyBank Center, where the Sabres play. A year later, Kelley was inducted into the Sabres Hall of Fame along with Mogilny, who did show up — in a tuxedo, no less.

It seems clear, rightly or wrongly, the reasons Mogilny hasn't gotten into the Hockey Hall of Fame are related to hockey violations that enough gatekeepers have deemed unforgivable. He's viewed through the lens of how majestic his career could have been, if only he'd applied himself to the fullest.

Kelley acknowledged Mogilny was "the greatest goal scorer the Buffalo Sabres have ever known," better than even Gilbert Perreault.

But for the man who covered Mogilny's entire professional arc — up close at Mogilny's best — character flaws eclipsed on-ice contributions. In hockey, that matters, and it certainly matters to the guardians of the game's glory.

"You could never call him a team player, and you couldn't count on him to always show up, let alone lead," Kelley wrote after the Sabres traded Mogilny to the Canucks. "Mogilny's history is one of a player and a person who never was much for sticking out tough times in the hopes of making things better. He was, and I suspect still is, a cut-and-run kind of guy."

Seventy-six goals are incredible. They've been scored inside one campaign only six other times, with Wayne Gretzky doing it twice. Brett Hull, Mario Lemieux, Phil Esposito and Teemu Selanne are in the Hall of Fame, too, but those extraordinary seasons aren't why. The Hall of Fame problem for Mogilny has been that throughout his career he provided too many reasons why not.

Mogilny possessed sublime talents that helped him statistically eclipse many Hall of Famers — and it should be noted that not all inductees were flawless, hard-working teammates and employees. On top of his skill and accomplishments on the ice, Mogilny's willingness to escape the Soviet Union expedited an NHL transformation.

One of these years, he deserves induction. But let's stop pretending we have no idea why it hasn't happened.

The Athletic / How wearable tracking devices are changing the way NHL players practice and return from injuries

By Jesse Granger – November 12, 2024

After every Edmonton Oilers practice, head strength and conditioning coach Chad Drummond makes a lap around the dressing room. As players shed their equipment, Drummond walks around collecting a small electronic device from each of their shoulder pads.

Inside the small device is a 3D accelerometer, gyroscope and magnetometer. Simply put, it's tracking every movement a player makes on the ice. Every skating stride. Every crossover. The one inside goaltender Calvin Pickard's chest protector is even keeping track of every time he drops into the butterfly.

Drummond takes the devices and plugs them into a docking station, where the data is collected and contextualized. Within minutes, he has access to every player's workload for that practice, with metrics as precise as the force exerted by each skating stride. Some players aren't as interested in the numbers. Some can't wait to see their report for the day.

Pickard makes a point to show up to Rogers Place a little early on every game day so he can go over his numbers from that morning's skate with Drummond. His playing time is less regular as a backup goalie, so maintaining consistent workloads, regardless of how often he's playing, is key. In a typical practice, he drops to the ice roughly 200 times, so he likes to monitor how close he comes to that number on a daily basis, as well as how often he's pushing to his left and right to keep the workload similar for both legs.

More than 80 percent of NHL and AHL teams are using the equipment, produced by a company called Catapult. The technology has been used by some NHL teams for 25 years, but with the recent rise of popularity for tracking technology in sports, it's becoming a must-have for almost all clubs. The information gathered by these devices has fundamentally changed the way NHL teams approach and plan practice schedules, as well as how they rehabilitate players from injury.

"It has kind of turned into a little bit of an arms race the past six or seven years," Drummond said. "There's all of this technology and I feel like everyone is trying to dive in and get their hands on everything possible."

Founded in 2006, Catapult is being used by more than 4,000 teams across more than 40 sports, from football to basketball, handball and even motorsports. The company uses these small tracking devices that are worn by the players during practice to monitor a handful of metrics. Those numbers can be used in a multitude of ways, but the simplest form measures a player's workload.

They measure a player's change in acceleration in any direction (up, down, forward, backward and side to side), then boil all of that data down to a single number, which they call "workload."

A typical game for an NHL player produces a workload between 200 and 250. That can obviously vary based on the player's role and ice time, but it works as a nice baseline metric for strength coaches to monitor.

As a general rule of thumb, most teams aim for players to reach approximately 4.5 games worth of workload in a week during the season. That's approximately 1,000 player load, just as a floor.

"People in hockey always think, 'Oh you're just going to tell me that I need to rest guys more,'" said Patrick Love, senior customer success specialist at Catapult and former assistant strength coach for the

Oilers. “It’s actually trying to get them to work more, safely, especially guys who are the low-minute players.”

The data is being used to stabilize workload throughout a season, not minimize it. Higher workload doesn’t necessarily equal an increased risk of injury, but a wide-ranging workload from week to week can. In many cases — especially for players further down the lineup — practice workload actually needs to be increased.

“There are all of these things you inherently know about the sport if you’ve played it, coached it or been around it, but when we started to get our hands on the data that Catapult provided, all of a sudden there was this huge bright light shown on things we didn’t understand or know,” said Matt Price, director of strength and performance science for the Los Angeles Kings.

Managing separate workloads for 23 different players on the roster throughout a long season can be incredibly challenging for coaches, but having hard data to lean on helps tremendously.

“I think what coaches do really well, by feel, is they manage the team, but they would sort of manage it as if they’re all in the top-six or top-four pairing,” Price explained. “At the time here, (former coach) Darryl Sutter would make his decisions based on what Anze Kopitar and Drew Doughty did, and for guys who were playing with those players, that worked. What it really did is, it highlighted the need that we needed to address the individual, because the large majority of players don’t play 24-28 minutes a night, and maybe they didn’t need a day off, or a quick skate.”

Now, coaches have precise data on things as specific as the average workload for an individual drill. That gives them a library of drills with a corresponding workload, allowing them to construct practice schedules by mixing and matching drills to achieve a specific workload.

Drafted by the Kings with the No. 11 overall pick in 2005, Kopitar has seen the approach change dramatically over his nearly two decades in the NHL.

“It’s different, right?” Kopitar said. “We’re talking 18 years ago, when the science was non-existent and the coaches were a touch more old school. They had the beat of the team, and they did whatever they thought was needed. They didn’t have any numbers to look at or rely on. If we were playing well, we would get some easy days. If you’re not playing well, even if you’re tired, you aren’t getting any easy days.”

Many players were hesitant when the technology was first introduced.

“When Catapult first came into the building in Edmonton, players were very resistant to using it,” said Jeremy Coupal, who served as the Oilers’ video coach from 2016 to 2023 and is now a hockey product manager for Catapult. “There was a player who was like, ‘I’m not wearing this thing. Don’t put it in my shoulder pads. No chance.’ Then (five years later) he gets injured, sees how the data is being used to help him, and then he’s coming to me asking if he can wear it in a game.”

There are still reservations on the players’ side. In order for players to wear the Catapult devices in practice, they must sign off on a waiver. To wear them in a game, they must contact the NHL Players Association.

“The use of wearable technology remains completely voluntary,” NHLPA spokesperson Jonathan Weatherdon said, “and players have the right to share their wearable data with their club and to request that their club delete their data at any time. The NHLPA remains focused on ensuring that players understand their rights to their own data.”

There also seems to be a bit of a generational divide on this subject. Younger players are more accustomed to being monitored as they've grown up with technology even in junior hockey.

"This generation is trying to gamify everything," Love said. "You're coming up and using it in college, and the American (Hockey) League. It's just something you do."

Some veterans aren't as interested in the numbers.

"I'm old school, you know?" Minnesota Wild goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury said. "I never look at (the metrics). I know when I'm tired. I know when I'm feeling good, or when I need to push more. Some days after a game, going to bed at 3 o'clock because I couldn't sleep, then the kids get me up early, I know I'm not feeling great. Maybe because I've done this a long time, so I know my body, but I still think the information can be good for the team."

"Sometimes I look at the numbers, but most times I just ask how my numbers are, they say 'good,' and that's good enough for me," Vegas forward Tomas Hertl said.

"I'm not a big numbers guy first and foremost, but I've found that once you get a little bit older, like I am now, it's actually beneficial," Kopitar said. "You can tell if the body needs a rest, or if you need a little kick in the butt to get going again."

Perhaps the most powerful utilization of this data is how it assists returning players from an injury.

"In Bakersfield two seasons ago I sprained my ankle, and we were targeting a goalie workload basically on a daily basis once I started skating," Pickard explained. "We wanted to be around 300, then when we really kicked it into gear we wanted to be over 500, which is a hard practice. When I came back I felt ready to go, so it's definitely a good tool."

Even the players who aren't overly interested in the data on a daily basis agree that it can be helpful when tracking progress in recovery. Having concrete checkpoints that go beyond how many practice reps a player does, or how they're feeling, can be valuable for the coaches and trainers.

"If you want to return a player back to playing, and you know what they look like in a game, then there's your end point," Price said. "As you work through the return to play program, you can easily start to expose them to elements of the game, or portions. You can say, 'Today is going to be a one-period workload day.'"

The data quantifies a player's physical exertion on a typical week during the season, and allows the team to slowly build up to that when returning from injury. The concept isn't groundbreaking, but having proof that shows the player progressing from a 250 workload week, to 500, to 750 and eventually the full 1,000 is a powerful tool.

Perhaps even more valuable, in certain situations the data can also show how close a player is to being back to full strength physically. One of the metrics recorded by Catapult is the force a player exerts with each skating stride (which is also broken down to left versus right strides). With that, the team and its doctors can use concrete data to see where a player actually is.

"You (used to) have this out-of-left-field, shoot-from-the-hip, semi-medically guided strategy of 'we can try this, then we can try that,'" Price said. "You're kind of feeling your way through the dark a little bit, asking the player how they feel."

This newfound data can empower the doctors and trainers. When coaches ask about a player, they now have subjective data that shows a player is either ready to return, or he isn't.

“It makes me more confident than I’ve ever been as a practitioner,” Dallas Stars physical therapist Nick Andreas said. “There’s always a gray area when returning a guy back to sport, but I feel like the risk has gone down by having the data.”

The players get a confidence boost as well.

“We have a handful of metrics that we want them to show that they can achieve without any sort of set back,” Price said. “As they see those numbers start to pop up, it’s amazing to see them lighten up and smile. There’s this palpable confidence that they exude.”

If there was one consensus opinion among the players, it was that they love the return-to-play application of the technology. Either way, the technology used to monitor sports performance will continue to grow, as will its uses.

“We can show them in real time that they’re getting back into game shape,” Price said. “We can tell them, ‘When you get to this value, you’re going to feel incredible.’ The confidence that they take out of that is pretty incredible.”

[Sportsnet.ca / 'Grateful': Roenick's emotional speech highlights Hockey Hall of Fame induction ceremony](#)

By Kristina Rutherford – November 12, 2024

Jeremy Roenick's eyes were welled up with tears and he was sniffing as he got settled behind the microphone, the last of the seven members of the Hockey Hall of Fame's class of 2024 to speak during the induction ceremony on Monday night in Toronto.

Ever the showman, JR delivered.

"Wow!" he said, grinning, as he looked over the crowd, before doling out thank yous and apologies (to Tony Amonte and Bill Wirtz) and I love yous (to "Iron Mike" Keenan), and spinning tales of car rides to and from hockey games spent combatting his dad's cigarette smoke from the front seat and the "nasty aroma" in the back seat due to an earlier stop at Taco Bell.

To start what would be a 20-year NHL career with five different teams, an 18-year-old Roenick, who'd just been drafted by the Chicago Blackhawks, recalls finding himself next to coach Mike Keenan at a urinal. Roenick swears Keenan asked him: "Do you have any balls, kid?" And he replied: "Enough to play for you."

"Thank goodness he didn't look over the divider," Roenick added, with a grin, getting the crowd laughing. "I might not have been their first pick that year."

A nine-time NHL All-star who ranks third all-time among American goal-scorers in NHL history, Roenick is joined in the 2024 class by fellow players Pavel Datsyuk, Natalie Darwitz, Shea Weber and Krissy Wendell, while Colin Campbell and David Poile — who joins his late father, Bud, in Hall enshrinement — were inducted as builders.

Roenick thanked the fans in all five cities he played in, and apologized to L.A. fans because he says he was "terrible" when he played for the Kings. He lauded teammates like Keith Tkachuk, who he called "the most intimidating, confident and vocal person I've ever met — well, other than myself, I guess."

One of Roenick's biggest thank-yous was reserved for Doug Wilson. In the summer of 2007, Roenick was four goals shy of a career 500, but no team wanted him. "Depression and heavy drinking had set in," he said, when finally the call came in from Wilson, who was then the GM of the San Jose Sharks.

Wilson was Roenick's first-ever NHL roommate and asked Roenick to fly out to see him. A day later on the golf course, Wilson asked if Roenick wanted to play for the Sharks, but under three conditions: He'd sign for the league minimum, only do media when asked ("which was very hard," Roenick says) and he wasn't allowed to drink. Roenick swears he dumped the beer he was drinking on the golf course right then and there.

"I scored No. 500 three months later," he said, again through tears. "Thank you Doug Wilson for being a great friend, but more importantly, for being a friend when I needed it the most. I would not be up here — and I don't mean up here — if it wasn't for you. You truly saved my life."

Roenick began his speech by mentioning the tragic loss experienced earlier this year, offering condolences to the families of Johnny and Matthew Gaudreau. Weber, the first inductee to speak on Monday, also started his speech by expressing his deepest sympathies to the Gaudreau family. "Hockey's a brotherhood," Weber said.

Hall of Fame chairman Lanny McDonald commemorated brothers Johnny and Matthew Gaudreau later in the evening.

“Nobody loved the game or played over his weight class like Johnny Gaudreau did,” McDonald said. “He was a joy to be around and everyone in the hockey world will miss him and his brother Matthew. Anyone who knows the game knows Johnny would’ve been here one day.”

Many who couldn’t be there in person to see the events on Monday night were honoured. Datsyuk, the on-ice magician who won a pair of Stanley Cups during his 14-year career with the Detroit Red Wings, dedicated his induction to his late parents. “You taught me the value of hard work and sacrifice,” Datsyuk said. “You live in my heart.”

The 46-year-old Russian had many thank yous to dole out, to teammates, fans, and opponents, who he called “my nightmare,” but a vital contributor to helping him become the player he was. In 2012, Datsyuk was voted both the smartest and most difficult to play against in a player poll. He is the only player to win the Lady Byng and Selke trophy in two seasons — he won the Lady Byng in four straight, and the Selke in three straight seasons.

“As I stand here today, I realize that being inducted into the Hockey Hall Of Fame is a tremendous honour,” said Datsyuk, who represented Russia five times at the Olympics, and won gold in 2018. “An honour I couldn’t even dream of.”

It’s one that came sooner than Weber dreamt of, the 39-year-old defender’s career spanning 16 NHL seasons, but shortened due to injury. The former captain in Nashville and in Montreal played his last game in the 2021 Stanley Cup Final after helping lead Montreal there for the first time since 1993. Weber, a world junior, world and Olympic champion with a booming shot from the point, called Montreal “the most passionate hockey city I think I’ve ever seen.”

Darwitz and Wendell both hail from The Hockey State, and played much of their careers together, Minnesotans who starred for the NCAA’s Golden Gophers and for Team USA on the world and Olympic stages.

Darwitz, a three-time Olympic medallist, was just 15 when she was named to her senior national team after playing much of her early career with and against boys. She thanked her dad, who was teary-eyed in the crowd, for giving her the best advice she could ask for once hitting was introduced to the game: “They can’t hit ya if they can’t catch ya!”

Darwitz began playing girls' hockey in high school, and it was then that she debuted for Team USA. In eight world championship appearances, she won three gold medals and twice led the tournament in goals, including in 2008 when she was named the best forward and served as her team’s captain. Her two young sons, Zak and Joseph were in the crowd, and Joseph had tears in his eyes as he gave his mom a hug after her speech.

She also got a hug from Wendell, who saw many of Darwitz’s biggest moments live, and vice versa. In 2005, Wendell captained Team USA to a first-ever world championship gold medal and was named the tournament’s MVP. She was also captain of Team USA at the 2006 Olympics. In 147 games for Team USA, Wendell scored an incredible 106 goals. She thanked her husband and three daughters, who were in the crowd, along with her parents, and Wendell said she couldn’t look at her dad without crying. He was in tears, too.

Roenick ended his speech with a thank you to his kids and his wife, Tracy, who he called the true hall of famer in his family. Tracy put her hand over her heart.

For Roenick, the call from the Hall came in his 12th year of eligibility, and he wasn't sure it would ever come.

"This was a great way to end this chapter of my life, and I couldn't be more humble or grateful," Roenick said, teary-eyed. "Thank you."

[Sportsnet.ca / Bettman on expanding NHL's international presence, plan for CBA talks](#)

By Sonny Sachdeva – November 12, 2024

TORONTO — NHL commissioner Gary Bettman suggested the NHL could look to play more games overseas in the coming years, as the league aims to continue growing its presence globally.

Speaking at the PrimeTime Sports Management Conference in downtown Toronto on Monday, Bettman said the league could look to build on its NHL Global Series program, which saw the Florida Panthers, Dallas Stars, New Jersey Devils, and Buffalo Sabres suit up for a series of games in Prague, Czechia, and Tampere, Finland, earlier this year.

“Obviously, international growth is something we’re focused on,” Bettman said during a conversation with former NHL executive, and current PWHL Players Association executive director Brian Burke. “We just played, two weeks ago, two games in Finland. Beginning of the season, we played two games in Prague. I think you’re going to see us have more and more of an international presence.”

The league’s Global Series has been active since 2018, taking big-league clubs through Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, Finland and Czechia over the past half-decade. Prior to that, the league had a run of games in Europe between 2007-11, the Los Angeles Kings and Anaheim Ducks kicking things off with the first regular-season NHL games in Europe in 2007.

“The local attraction of these games is very, very high,” Daly said. “So far, we’ve put regular-season games in real hockey markets, who appreciate hockey. We try to bring teams that feature players who are, for the most part, homegrown players, which grows that attraction even further. The goal, in the short-term, is just to build the connectivity between European hockey fans and the National Hockey League. ... Just build the interest, build the affinity, have a presence on the ground in various hockey hotbed countries in Europe. These games have been really successful — they’re all sold out, all the seats are filled. There’s a real appreciation for the quality of play that comes with an NHL game, particularly a regular-season game.

“So, I expect that strategy to continue and maybe even ramp up a little bit over time as we continue to have success in growing the game overseas.”

Key to the growth of the NHL’s international presence is its return to international hockey. With the league’s 4 Nations Face-Off tournament three months out, Bettman spoke Monday about the factors that prompted the league’s return to international best-on-best.

“We believe that the international component of our game is a strength of the game, that it’s important to the growth of the game,” he said. “International competition has been part of the DNA of our game, and our players love representing their countries. Our best-on-best, we think, is as good as anybody’s best-on-best, probably better. ... We got away from it for a little bit. I’m not going to cast blame or make excuses. What we do internationally is done in a joint partnership — and it’s not just a financial partnership, it’s a decision-making partnership — with the Players’ Association.

“With some of the changes and ins and outs of the Players’ Association, we really weren’t able to get it off the ground until now, and that’s a testament, I think, to Marty Walsh’s leadership since he’s taken over the Players’ Association.”

Bettman reiterated the league's plans to return to the 2026 Olympic Games in Italy, and to continue participating in the Games regularly moving forward, with league-controlled World Cup of Hockey tournaments to be held in between.

Beyond this, the most pressing bit of business to be discussed with Walsh and the NHLPA, of course, is the negotiating of a new collective bargaining agreement. The commissioner said both sides remain on track to get underway with discussions in early 2025.

"After the first of the year, we're going to start trying to deal with the collective bargaining agreement with the Players' Association," Bettman said Monday. "We have this season and one more season under the current deal. Marty Walsh and I have discussed that it would be good if we could take care of business sooner rather than later, and we're both optimistic that we can do that."

Central to those discussions is sure to be the question of how the players stand to benefit from the immense growth the league has seen of late. Sportico's recently released annual valuations of the NHL's 32 clubs put the average at \$1.79 billion, with the Toronto Maple Leafs topping the list at \$3.66 billion — a 38-per cent increase from 2023.

How the pie gets divvied up moving forward remains to be seen. But in Bettman's view, it's only going to continue to grow overall.

"We've grown. My first year, in '93, I think revenues were slightly more than \$400 million — for the entire league. I mean, we have clubs now that do that much. This year we'll approach, probably exceed, \$7 billion," the commissioner said. "You had this swap over from Arizona to Utah, that was \$1.2 billion. It was really more than that, because we needed to adjust the price a little more favourably to the Smiths, because they were doing something that had never been done before. The requirements, and the things they had to do and invest in, in a four-to-five-month period, was extraordinary.

"When you look at Sportico, and you see the numbers that are coming out from CNBC and Forbes, the value of franchises has increased dramatically. But I think we're still undervalued."