



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

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NHL extends Buffalo's agreement to host combine through 2022

By John Wawrow

Associated Press

January 13, 2020

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — The NHL's top prospects will continue making their pre-draft stops in Buffalo for at least another three years.

The league on Monday announced an extension of its agreement to hold its annual scouting combine in Buffalo at the Sabres downtown practice facility, LECOM Harborcenter, through 2022. The announcement coincided with NHL Central Scouting releasing its mid-season rankings of draft-eligible prospects, with Quebec-born left wing Alexis Lafrenière topping the list of North American skaters.

Buffalo has hosted the combine since 2015, after the weeklong event spent the previous 20-plus years being held at various locations around Toronto.

"I'm very excited about it," said Kevyn Adams, former NHL player and Sabres senior vice president of business administration. "It's an incredible opportunity for us as an organization and city to host such a great event for the last number of years, and now that it's moving forward."

Each year, Central Scouting invites more than 100 of its top-ranked prospects to the combine, where they undergo physical and medical testing, and also meet with team executives. It's considered the final major step in their pre-draft process, and traditionally held about three weeks before the draft.

The move from Toronto was prompted by the construction of the Sabres' \$200 million practice complex which includes two rinks, a hotel, restaurant and workout facility, all connected to the team's arena.

Though the combine does not include on-ice testing, the floor of Harborcenter's main rink provides plenty of room for prospect testing to be conducted, while also allowing team executives to watch from the stands.

Those are considered upgrades from when the combine took place inside carpeted convention centers and hotel ballrooms in suburban Toronto.

In Buffalo, teams also have the advantage of going across the street to hold in-person meetings with prospects in arena suites. That's a switch from Toronto, where prospects had to be shuttled to various hotels, depending on where each team was based.

"It just seems to be a pretty good fit, and I do think the three-year term is indicative of that," Adams said. "In Toronto, it was spread out a little bit and just the logistics of it. When the the players and team management get here, it's all here."

Central Scouting director Dan Marr referred to the setup in Buffalo as ideal and featuring a venue that meets all needs.

"The NHL's annual scouting combine is one of the most valuable experiences in a young prospects' draft year, and we are thrilled to continue utilizing the Sabres best-in-class facilities," Marr said.

Lafrenière continues making a case for being the No. 1 pick in showing no signs of slowing a season after being name the Canadian Hockey League player of the year. In his third season with Rimouski, he leads the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League with 49 assists and 73 points in 34 games. He was also named the world junior championship tournament's MVP after helping Canada to a gold-medal victory earlier this month.

U.S. Developmental team defenseman Jake Sanderson, of Whitefish, Montana, is the top-ranked American-born prospect, coming in at 11th. Forward Tim Stuetzle, who plays for Mannheim in his native Germany's pro league, is the top-ranked European prospect.

This year's combine was already on the NHL calendar, and scheduled to take place June 1-6.

The combine is also a boon to Buffalo by annually attracting some 250 NHL executives, scouts and media to the city and its redeveloped waterfront.

"This is exciting news for the Sabres, downtown Buffalo and our great hockey fans in the region," Mayor Byron Brown said. "The three-year extension is the hat-trick of extensions and will allow so many visitors during the NHL combine to experience our fabulous Canalside area, waterfront development and downtown development for years to come."

Sabres Mailbag: Will Jason Botterill make a significant trade?

By Lance Lysowski

The Buffalo News

January 13, 2020

Jason Botterill made his first significant moves of the season by trading Marco Scandella to the Montreal Canadiens and acquiring Michael Frolik from the Calgary Flames for a fourth-round draft pick.

Is the Buffalo Sabres general manager done trading? The Sabres (20-19-7) need help at forward, especially with Jeff Skinner and Victor Olofsson recovering from injuries. Zach Bogosian and Evan Rodrigues reportedly requested to be traded, however, Buffalo is unlikely to get much in return for either player.

What will it take for the Sabres to land a marquee forward? Is a significant in-season move possible? Let's start there with my latest mailbag, which features questions submitted by readers through Twitter and email.

Garry Marr: Is it likely this is a holding year for the Sabres, with no major moves coming?

LL: The Sabres are stuck. Botterill currently has no cap space and will have a difficult time trading Bogosian or Rodrigues. Memo to players: leaking to reporters that you requested a trade will only make it more difficult for your team to move you. The only realistic way to potentially add an impact forward this season is by trading Rasmus Ristolainen or Brandon Montour. Botterill is unlikely to part with either player, unless the return is massive.

Trading either defenseman before the deadline could be catastrophic to their blue line, and Botterill won't be in the market for a rental. He has said multiple times he prefers young players with years of control, much like the trade that landed Montour last February.

The Sabres are projected to have more than \$33 million in salary cap space this offseason. Montour and Sam Reinhart will likely receive a chunk of that money, and the Sabres aren't exactly an attractive free-agent destination. In my opinion, Botterill will wait until the summer to make a significant trade to supplement the current core, and the Sabres will count on Dylan Cozens and Casey Mittelstadt to make a big impact in 2020-21.

CStone: Should we be concerned with Rasmus Dahlin's lack of progress defensively?

LL: Dahlin has made significant progress in the defensive zone. Remember, he's only 19 years old. Even the league's top defensemen make mistakes, and you're starting to see how his physical maturation is allowing him to win more battles for loose pucks. I agree with Ralph Krueger's assessment that Dahlin has been much better in that regard since returning from a concussion.

Dahlin, like the Sabres' other defensemen, might be impacted by a lack of continuity with the defense pairs. Communication and chemistry are so important in Krueger's system. Regardless of that challenge, we've seen Dahlin take a significant step in the right direction. It's important to be patient with player development.

Fans shouldn't be concerned about Dahlin.

Jim: Are there any goalies who could be brought in to replace Carter Hutton?

LL: Contenders aren't exactly champing at the bit to trade a good goaltender. The New York Rangers are reportedly shopping Alexandar Georgiev, but they're likely searching for a second- or third-round draft choice. Plus, the Sabres can't move Hutton's contract. They won't place him on waivers with the intent to send him to Rochester.

Hutton is under contract through next season at an average annual value of \$2.75 million. That might sound like a small amount, but many teams are up against the cap and they won't be eager to trade for someone who has lost 11 games in a row.

Jonas Johansson isn't the solution, either. He underwent a season-ending surgery less than 12 months ago, and he played only 14 games in Rochester before this season. The Sabres are wise to be patient with the 24-year-old.

Andrew Hammond hasn't been great for the Amerks, and he hasn't played more than six NHL games in a season since 2015-16. The Sabres will have to move forward with Hutton for now and hope he regains his form. It would also help if his teammates played better in front of him. It's odd how they've been so much worse defensively with Hutton in goal.

John: Do you think Rasmus Ristolainen will be traded before the deadline?

LL: No. Ristolainen is finally realizing his potential. He's been much better in the defensive zone and ignited the power play with his presence at the front of the net. The Sabres shouldn't trade him unless they receive a sizable return. He's under contract for two more years at a reasonable rate of \$5.4 million per season.

Ristolainen is part of the solution. He was tired of losing, much like Ryan O'Reilly, and Ristolainen put in the work to make sure he would return to Buffalo a better player. The Sabres should be building around Ristolainen. I think Botterill should move a significant player on the current roster to bring an impact forward to Buffalo, but Ristolainen is one of five Sabres whom I would refuse to part with. The others are Dahlin, Jack Eichel, Jeff Skinner and Victor Olofsson.

Don: Is Jack Eichel going to request a trade if the Sabres can't eventually find a way to win?

LL: No one can predict what Eichel is going to do in the future. He loves Buffalo and badly wants to win a Stanley Cup here. This has been a difficult few years for him. He puts so much pressure on himself to be successful and wants to win. He wasn't placed in an easy situation, either. It's difficult being a captain in the NHL at any age, and Eichel was given the letter at 21 years old.

It's impressive how Eichel has grown into that role, and the Sabres deserve some credit for starting to surround him with more experienced leaders. Having Marcus Johansson around has been important for Eichel. He no longer has to shoulder all of the leadership burden. There needs to be a sense of urgency to build around Eichel.

He hasn't even entered his prime yet. The same with Dahlin. It's time to surround the superstar with more talent.

David Cappella: When will Krueger solidify who plays on Eichel's wings?

LL: You won't see a consistent first line until Olofsson returns, or someone shows they're capable of keeping up with Eichel and Reinhart. It's important to have at least some continuity for Eichel, which is why Krueger has kept Reinhart there.

Sure, Botterill said in June that Reinhart is capable of driving his own line, but the Sabres need to have at least one group that's a consistent threat at 5 on 5. I would prefer to have Skinner play on the left side with Eichel and Reinhart, however, Krueger won't make that change.

Remember, the coaching staff prefers to have a defensive presence playing alongside Eichel and Reinhart. The thinking is a responsible two-way player will free up Eichel and Reinhart to take more risks. Skinner hasn't been consistent enough defensively.

For now, I'm in favor of seeing how Zemgus Girgensons fares with Eichel and Reinhart. Girgensons has earned that opportunity with the way he's become a consistent threat on the forecheck.

John Hollingsworth: Why do the Sabres continue to scratch defenseman Colin Miller?

LL: When asked this question before the game Sunday in Detroit, Krueger told the media that Miller has struggled to adjust to the new system in Buffalo. The example Krueger used was that some defensemen are used to playing strictly man-to-man defense, while the Sabres have different assignments closer to the net. One week earlier, Miller described the situation differently to me.

Miller hasn't felt comfortable having to play with different defense partners. He hoped the Scandella trade would allow the Sabres to settle on one lineup, but that hasn't happened. Miller is a player who needs continuity, so this

isn't a great situation for him. The Sabres will continue to rotate their eight healthy defensemen until Krueger finds the mix he thinks gives them the best chance to win.

The Sabres need to make it work with Miller. He's a talented defenseman under contract for two more seasons at an annual cap hit of \$3.875 million. The Sabres gave up second- and fifth-round draft picks to acquire him from Vegas. That's a pretty significant price tag for a player having a difficult time carving out a role.

It's on Krueger and his assistant coach, Steve Smith, to get the most out of Miller. His physical tools are among the best on the roster.

NHL Scouting Combine to remain in Buffalo through 2022

By Lance Lysowski

The Buffalo News

January 13, 2020

Buffalo will remain the final stop for prospects before the National Hockey League's entry draft.

The league and the Buffalo Sabres announced Monday the two sides signed a three-year contract to continue to hold the combine in KeyBank Center and LECOM Harborcenter through 2022. The week-long event, which includes interviews and off-ice fitness testing, has been held in Buffalo since 2015, bringing more than 100 prospects, league personnel, team employees and media to the city.

The event begins with teams conducting one-on-one interviews with prospects in suites throughout KeyBank Center. The off-ice fitness testing includes measurements of height, wing span, standing long jump, bench press, balance, aerobic fitness and the Wingate Cycle Ergometer Test, which measures agility.

"After a successful first five years of the NHL Scouting Combine in Buffalo, we're thrilled to host the event for another three years," Kevyn Adams, Buffalo Sabres senior vice president of business administration, said in a news release. "Partnering with the NHL to host the Combine has been a wonderful opportunity for our organization and the city of Buffalo. We're excited that the path to the NHL for these young players will continue to run through our city and we look forward to welcoming the hockey world back to Buffalo this spring."

Buffalo presents a unique venue for the NHL given the space available at KeyBank Center and Harborcenter, a remarkable improvement from the Toronto Congress Centre, which hosted the event prior to 2015. KeyBank Center and Harborcenter have hosted a number of events in recent years, including the Frozen Four and IIHF World Junior Championship.

Since 2015, more than 500 draft-eligible players have come to Buffalo for the Scouting Combine, including the Sabres' No. 1 overall pick Rasmus Dahlin (2018) and No. 2 overall pick Jack Eichel (2015), and last year's No. 1 overall pick Jack Hughes (New Jersey Devils).

"The NHL's annual Scouting Combine is one of the most valuable experiences in a young prospects draft year and we are thrilled to continue utilizing the Sabres best-in-class facilities for this important event," Dan Marr, Director NHL Central Scouting, said. "The Buffalo Sabres are gracious hosts and The KeyBank Center, LECOM Harborcenter and the City of Buffalo provide the ideal location and venue requirements for all our needs. Together with our Clubs, we would also like to recognize the Marriott Harborcenter for their continued support of this annual event."

Buffalo to host the NHL Combine through 2022

By Brayton Wilson

WGR 550

January 13, 2020

The NHL Scouting Combine has called the city of Buffalo home since 2015, and it will remain here in western New York for the next few years.

The league and the Buffalo Sabres announced on Monday that the Combine will continue to take place in Buffalo through 2022, as it will continue to be held at KeyBank Center and LECOM Harborcenter.

"After a successful first five years of the NHL Scouting Combine in Buffalo, we're thrilled to host the event for another three years," said Sabres senior vice president of business administration Kevyn Adams. "Partnering with the NHL to host the Combine has been a wonderful opportunity for our organization and the city of Buffalo. We're excited that the path to the NHL for these young players will continue to run through our city and we look forward to welcoming the hockey world back to Buffalo this spring."

Since 2015, Buffalo has hosted the NHL Combine that brings most of the league's top prospects for the upcoming NHL Draft into town for interviews, as well as a number of medical testings and physical fitness tests for all 31 teams.

"The NHL's annual Scouting Combine is one of the most valuable experiences in a young prospects Draft year and we are thrilled to continue utilizing the Sabres best-in-class facilities for this important event," said the Director of NHL Central Scouting, Dan Marr. "The Buffalo Sabres are gracious hosts and The KeyBank Center, LECOM Harborcenter and the City of Buffalo provide the ideal location and venue requirements for all our needs. Together with our Clubs, we would also like to recognize the Marriott Harborcenter for their continued support of this annual event."

The 2020 NHL Combine will begin on Monday, June 1 and roll through Saturday, June 6.

Evaluating the limited trade scenarios for Zach Bogosian

By Joe Yerdon

The Athletic

January 13, 2020

Trying to trade a player like Zach Bogosian would be difficult enough to do in a world with a perfect salary cap, so you can imagine how hard it is for the Sabres to do in reality. GM Jason Botterill was likely looking around to find a good fit before reports arose last month that Bogosian wanted to be traded, but trying to move a player coming off a second hip surgery in two years in the final year of a contract is fraught with more peril than an Indiana Jones film.

Worth a bit over \$5 million against the cap and with five points – including a goal against Detroit on Sunday – in 16 games, the question isn't so much "when" Bogosian will be traded as it is "can he be traded at all?" If Botterill didn't know what the possibilities were before the 29 year-old defenseman asked out, he's aware of them by now.

According to CapFriendly.com, there are 10 teams that are using long-term injured reserve to spend above the \$81.5 million salary cap. The next eight in line are within \$1.6 million or less from the cap. The Sabres are one of those teams spending over the salary maximum and although Botterill wants to avoid relying on using LTIR, it's been necessary relief this season. It also makes it difficult to make trades without being creative.

The options don't look great for Botterill to make a deal and for Bogosian to find happiness elsewhere for the rest of the season, with one team executive telling The Athletic's Craig Custance "Good luck" when asked about the possibility, but let's lay them out as they are.

Money in, money out

The quick fix to moving Bogosian is to find a similarly paid player also on an expiring contract that fills a need for both teams. Winnipeg is a team that has needed help on defense all season because of Dustin Byfuglien's up-in-the-air status and the numerous injuries they've sorted through on the blue line.

But if the Sabres are looking to send Bogosian back to the Jets for a reunion for a forward on an expiring deal, they're out of luck. If Botterill is willing to take on a player with another year remaining, maybe he can ask for Mathieu Perreault (\$4.125 million cap hit) in return, but he's got 12 points in 40 games and doesn't shoot a heck of a lot. Would the Sabres be willing to push the salary concerns another year with a player who's 32 and whose production has slipped the past four seasons just to make one player happier and throw another forward into the mix?

That same question can be asked of New Jersey. Before Devils GM Ray Shero was fired, it was reported the Devils were snooping around at Buffalo's defensemen. The Devils don't have cap issues, but they're not just going to take Bogosian on for the heck of it. So do you ask for Travis Zajac, who has another year left on a deal that pays \$5.75 million against the cap? He'd solve a few issues for the Sabres as a center that can win draws and play a strong defensive game, but his point production can be hit or miss.

The Devils likely value him as a leader to two young centers and as a guy who can take the defensive heat off of Jack Hughes and Nico Hischier. If the Devils wanted to move him, how much more would you need to give up to make it work? Bogosian alone won't do it.

As Custance showed in his piece about 27 guys to watch ahead of the trade deadline, it's a buyers' market when it comes to defensemen.

Seeking out other unhappy players

Another way to find a trade for Bogosian would be to find another team with a well-paid veteran with a comparable contract and situation they'd like to get out of. Unfortunately for Buffalo, they've been the biggest source of players displeased with their situation, with forward Evan Rodrigues also seeking a new place to play.

Players being bold enough to make it public they want out is rare enough, but it's the third time it's happened in Buffalo in two seasons. Nathan Beaulieu was kept in press box purgatory until the trade deadline last year, when he was sent to Winnipeg after he asked for a trade in January.

Around the rest of the league, the guys that are unhappy in some way have a lot going on with them. Case in point: Chicago's Brent Seabrook. Before he was knocked out for the season with surgeries to his shoulder and both of his hips, he was a healthy scratch in the Blackhawks lineup on occasion. He also has what's arguably the worst contract in the NHL.

You can address other Sabres issues by moving Bogosian for a high-priced guy who's been unseated from his position like Devils goalie Cory Schneider (two more years left at \$6 million per season). But Schneider has been a .908 save percentage goalie or worse the past four seasons including .852 in six starts this season. And it's not even that Schneider wants out of New Jersey either, so much, as his performance has deteriorated while injuries have mounted.

An unhappy ending for all

What we've sorted through here trying to find a new home for Bogosian is that the options aren't many. Easier ways to make it happen come at a likely long-term cost in picks or future salary hell for the Sabres, which should make it a non-starter.

That leaves the unappealing alternatives: a mutually agreed termination or Bogosian isn't traded at all.

The latter doesn't seem like an option unless there's a change of heart from either Bogosian or Sabres coach Ralph Krueger.

"We will end up here with a group of players that really want to be here," Krueger said. "And we will work with the players that really want to be here and, quite clearly, play the players that want to be here."

We've unfortunately seen the scenario with mutual termination recently in Buffalo when Patrik Berglund went home to Sweden after being unhappy following a trade he wanted no part of. His feelings were hurt and the Sabres were left in a lurch on the roster.

If things with Bogosian got that far and the situation became totally untenable – which by all appearances now does not seem to be the case – both sides would have reasons for pulling the trigger. Buffalo isn't short on defensemen and has played more often this season without Bogosian than with him. The Sabres wouldn't be happy losing a player and getting nothing in return for him, but if there was an impasse that might not bother them.

Bogosian would be free to sign wherever he wanted for whatever amount works best for the place seeking to sign him, although he'd be giving up the rest of his contract this season to make it happen. Again, if the situation was that ugly, giving up the money to go somewhere to play and work towards a new contract over the summer would seem like a blessing.

Usually when a veteran player who has put in their time with a franchise wants out to possibly chase a Stanley Cup elsewhere, the GM will do what it takes to help them along. But in this kind of situation, with a trade request out of the blue and a league that's cap strapped, finding a happy resolution may not be possible.

Sabres at 50: Pierre Turgeon could be Buffalo's next Hall of Famer

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
January 13, 2020

BUFFALO – The gaudy numbers former Sabres star Pierre Turgeon racked up during his prolific NHL career could land him in the Hockey Hall of Fame someday.

A strong argument can be made Turgeon, who retired in 2007, ranks among the best candidates still waiting for the call.

"I hear about it, a lot of people are talking," Turgeon said of the Hall of Fame.

In 1,294 games over 19 seasons, Turgeon scored a whopping 515 goals and 1,327 points. He ranks 38th all-time in goals and 32nd in points.

Everyone ahead of him on the points list has been inducted. The nine eligible players behind him on the points list are in.

Only three retired players who scored more goals than Turgeon – Keith Tkachuk, Marian Hossa and Pat Verbeek – haven't been elected. Turgeon compiled more points than all of them.

The 1.03 points a game Turgeon averaged over his career ranks 27th all-time.

You get the idea. Few players in NHL history have produced more offense than Turgeon.

Of course, voters weigh more than goals and points.

Turgeon never won the Stanley Cup or appeared in the final. He did, however, average at least one point a game during the two postseasons he reached the conference final.

Yes, having started his career in 1987, the slick center spent his first nine or 10 seasons playing in a high-scoring era. Still, as the NHL quickly morphed into a clutch-and-grab, low-scoring league, Turgeon kept producing offense.

In 2000-01, for example, the former first overall pick compiled 30 goals and 82 points as a 31-year-old.

Like two of his Hall of Fame teammates – Dave Andreychuk, who was elected in his ninth year of eligibility despite scoring 640 goals, and Phil Housley, the fourth-leading scorer among defensemen – Turgeon likely must wait.

The affable Turgeon, who always seems to be smiling, doesn't get too wrapped up in whether he makes the Hall of Fame someday.

"It would be an honor, obviously," Turgeon said. "I look back – and I always tell my wife this – I was blessed to do something I love many years. I enjoy the game, I loved it and that would be the icing on the cake."

Turgeon returned to Buffalo earlier this month for "90s Night," one of four decades the Sabres are celebrating during their 50th anniversary season.

For the first time, he participated in Sabres Alumni events, donning his old No. 77 jersey.

While Turgeon played for five other teams – he enjoyed a monster 53-goal, 123-point season with the New York Islanders in 1992-93 and captained the Montreal Canadiens – he quickly grew up and developed into a star with the Sabres.

He said he arrived here as a kid unable to speak a word of English. By 1989-90, he enjoyed his first 100-point season.

During a seven-minute chat Jan. 4 at KeyBank Center, Turgeon expressed gratefulness for his long career and early days in Buffalo.

"It was a great place to start," said Turgeon, who was traded to the Islanders in the blockbuster deal for Pat LaFontaine early in 1991-92. "I love Buffalo, obviously. I was 18 years old, I was so young. I was learning a lot, especially playing with (veterans) Mike Ramsey, Lindy Ruff, Clark Gillies, Mark Napier. I was 18 years old, these guys were 20, 30.

"I always remember Clark Gillies, who had a huge beard, was sitting right beside me. I couldn't speak a word of English and looking at him like, 'Oh my god, I know who you are, don't speak to me.'"

When Turgeon visited here two years ago, his assistant coaching duties with the Los Angeles Kings prevented him from exploring Buffalo.

On this trip – Turgeon resigned from the Kings after one season – he walked around and learned how the city has changed.

"The downtown area's incredible," he said. "It's changing in a great way. I'm so glad that I was able to do this and come back and spend some time checking out the city and spend some time with the players."

The Kings hired Turgeon prior to the 2017-18 season for a unique job. Instead of giving him normal duties, they utilized him as an "offensive coordinator" by having him dissect scoring chances and work closely with the players.

Turgeon enjoyed his brief foray into coaching and being back in the NHL. But the hours became too much.

He wanted to spend time with his family and watch his son, Dominic, a Detroit Red Wings prospect, play.

During his playing career, everything revolved around Turgeon. He did not want that to happen again.

"I loved being around the boys, I loved what I did," he said. "But at the same time, it was taking so much time that it was about me again."

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The Sabres, who host the Vegas Golden Knights on Tuesday, announced Monday the NHL Scouting Combine will remain in Buffalo through 2022.

The team began hosting the event at KeyBank Center and LECOM Harborcenter in 2015.

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The Sabres had Monday off.

NHL Scouting Combine to remain in Buffalo through 2022

By Evan Anstey

WIVB

January 13, 2020

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) — Good news for hockey fans in Buffalo, as the city will continue hosting the NHL Scouting Combine through 2022.

The NHL and the Buffalo Sabres made the announcement on Monday morning.

"After a successful first five years of the NHL Scouting Combine in Buffalo, we're thrilled to host the event for another three years," said Kevyn Adams, Buffalo Sabres senior vice president of business administration.

"Partnering with the NHL to host the Combine has been a wonderful opportunity for our organization and the city of Buffalo. We're excited that the path to the NHL for these young players will continue to run through our city and we look forward to welcoming the hockey world back to Buffalo this spring."

The purpose of the combine is to showcase the top draft-eligible prospects from both North America and Europe before the NHL Draft.

Held in Buffalo since 2015, each of the next three events will be at the KeyBank Center and LECOM Harborcenter.

This year's event will be held from June 1-6.

Rookie watch: Hughes, Makar among power-play point leaders

By Mike G. Morreale

NHL.com

January 13, 2020

The play of several high-profile rookies, including forwards Jack Hughes of the New Jersey Devils and Kaapo Kakko of the New York Rangers, the No. 1 and No. 2 picks of the 2019 NHL Draft, respectively, is one of the major storylines of the 2019-20 season. Each Monday, NHL.com will examine topics related to this season's class in the Rookie Watch.

This week, the top six NHL rookies in power-play points:

1. Quinn Hughes, D, Vancouver Canucks: Hughes leads all NHL rookies with 17 power-play points (three goals, 14 assists) and average ice time on the power-play (3:56). He's third among rookies with 32 points (four goals, 28 assists) and first in average ice time (21:27) in 45 games. The Canucks are fifth in the NHL with a 24.1 percent power-play efficiency (41-for-170) and control 53.5 percent of all shots attempted when Hughes is on the ice 5-on-5.

"He's come a long way in learning how to be a top guy on the power play and move the puck and when to shoot and when to pass," Canucks forward J.T. Miller said. "It's way different than college; way less room and guys are way more responsible in their structure. We told him it's not going to be easy and he's definitely doing a good job kind of hanging out in the middle of the ice and making good decisions."

2. Cale Makar, D, Colorado Avalanche: Makar is tied for second with Buffalo Sabres forward Victor Olofsson among NHL rookies with 14 power-play points (three goals, 11 assists) in 37 games. He's second in power-play time on ice per game (3:38) and sixth in power-play points per 60 minutes (6.24) among rookies with at least 10 games played. Colorado controls 50.5 percent of all shots attempted with Makar on the ice at 5-on-5.

"Cale's got great deception on the blue line and he's a threat to score from the middle of the ice," Avalanche coach Jared Bednar said. "He's been doing a really good job at selecting his shots (on the power play) and knowing when he can get into the middle of the ice and into a scoring position. If we have traffic in front of the net, he's getting pucks down there."

3. Victor Olofsson, F, Buffalo Sabres: Olofsson, who is out the next 4-5 weeks with a lower-body injury, leads all rookies with nine power-play goals and is tied for second with 14 power-play points in 42 games. Olofsson ranks first in average ice time on the power play (3:26) among rookie forwards.

4. Adam Fox, D, New York Rangers: The right-hand shot ranks third among NHL rookies with nine power-play assists and is tied with teammate Kaapo Kakko for third with 10 power-play points. He is third among rookie defensemen in power-play shots on goal (16) and average ice time on the power play (2:14). Fox is tied with Carson Soucy of the Minnesota Wild for second among rookie defensemen in goals (five) and ranks third in assists (19) and points (24) in 43 games. He's the first Rangers rookie defenseman to score at least 24 points through the first 44 games of a season since Brian Leetch in 1988-89 (45 points).

5. Kaapo Kakko, F, New York Rangers: The No. 2 pick in the 2019 NHL Draft is second among rookie forwards with 10 power-play points (two goals, eight assists), first with six power-play primary assists and third with 19 power-play shots in 40 games.

6. Nick Suzuki, F, Montreal Canadiens: Selected by the Vegas Golden Knights with the No. 13 pick in the 2017 NHL Draft and sent to the Canadiens as part of the Max Pacioretty trade Sept. 10, 2018, Suzuki is sixth among NHL rookies with nine power-play points (four goals, five assists). He averages 15:31 in ice time and is fourth among NHL rookies with 27 points (nine goals, 18 assists) in 46 games.

Head to Head comparison

(Games through Jan. 11)

Kakko leads all 18-year-old NHL players with seven goals and is tied for the lead in points (16) with Jack Hughes, who had missed the previous five games with an upper-body injury before getting an assist against the Tampa Bay Lightning on Sunday

Jack Hughes, C, New Jersey Devils

Games: 37

G-A-Pts: 6-11-17

Shots on goal: 79

Avg. ice time: 15:58

Telling stat: The Devils control 48.9 percent of all shots attempted with Hughes on the ice at even strength.

Kaapo Kakko, RW, New York Rangers

Games: 40

G-A-Pts: 7-9-16

Shots on goal: 63

Avg. ice time: 15:05

Telling stat: He is tied for 10th among NHL rookies with Alex Nylander (Chicago Blackhawks), Eric Robinson (Columbus Blue Jackets) and Suzuki with five even-strength goals.

Morreale's Calder Trophy frontrunners

1. Cale Makar, D, Colorado Avalanche: Makar is first among NHL rookie defenseman with 33 points (nine goals, 24 assists) in 37 games.

2. Quinn Hughes, D, Vancouver Canucks: One of four players to win the 2020 NHL All-Star Last Men In presented by adidas fan vote Saturday for the 2020 Honda NHL All-Star Weekend, Hughes is second among NHL rookie defensemen with 31 points (four goals, 27 assists) in 44 games.

3. Victor Olofsson, F, Buffalo Sabres: Olofsson is first among rookies with 35 points, nine power-play goals and 99 shots on goal in 42 games.