

## OILERS WASTING McDAVID'S BRILLIANCE

The pressure is starting to build on Connor McDavid to add a Stanley Cup to his resumé, one of the most star-studded in hockey.

Already established as the world's best player after only four years in the NHL, the Edmonton Oilers centre knows that history won't be kind to him if he doesn't have a Cup or two on his list of career accomplishments.

Perish the thought, but a couple of early injuries in McDavid's career brings to mind the abrupt end to the career of Bobby Orr — who revolutionized the game but played only eight full seasons and parts of three others because of wonky knees — when hockey fans the world over couldn't get enough of his brilliance.

McDavid missed half of his rookie season when he suffered a broken collarbone in November when he was upended by Flyers' Brandon Manning and crashed into the boards while going full speed. Fans across the world winced when he was helped off the ice late in the Oilers' final regular-season game last spring after crashing awkwardly into the Flames' net. Though four seasons, McDavid eclipsed the 100-point mark three times, two scoring titles and an MVP trophy, but has played only 13 Stanley Cup playoff games, all in 2016-17 when Edmonton lost out in the second round.

Off-season rehab has McDavid ready for this week's start of the 2019-20 season, but are the Oilers' ready to take the necessary steps towards McDavid's first Stanley Cup?

New general manager Ken Holland, whose resumé shines after two decades at the helm of Detroit Red Wings, was brought in over the summer to guide the Oilers' fortunes. Beyond forwards McDavid, Leon Draisaitl and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and defenceman Darnell Nurse, the roster is thin. Holland will have to work his magic, and rather quickly, to get the Oilers into contention before McDavid's best days are behind him.

There isn't a generational player of note who failed to win a Stanley Cup. Gordie Howe was on four Cup-winning teams with the Wings. Orr won twice. Wayne Gretzky's name is on the Cup four times. Sidney Crosby has won three. Alex Ovechkin checked off a career requirement by guiding the Capitals to the Stanley Cup two years ago.

McDavid will undoubtedly have a couple of trophy cases filled by the time he's finished as an NHLer. Scoring titles and MVP awards will likely be plentiful, and he may get the chance to win an Olympic gold medal or two. But he won't experience career fulfillment unless he wins a Stanley Cup. The pressure is on Holland and new coach Dave Tippett to make it happen.

- Humour writer **Brad Dickson** of Omaha, urging Nebraska football fans to make more noise and to quit being so nice to the opposition, but not to go too far: "We don't want to be, say, Missouri where drunk, shirtless, sometimes pants-less, toothless, classless fans with mold growing in their ears have been known to projectile vomit on the visiting marching band."
- Another one from Dickson, on the same subject: "We don't need to go all Oakland Raiders here, a team whose fans have a tradition of waving their electronic ankle monitoring devices in the air after touchdowns."
- **RJ Currie** of [sportsdeke.com](http://sportsdeke.com): "A runaway cow in Austria wandered into a sporting-goods store and chewed through two sports bras and a T-shirt. That's odd; you'd think she'd go for a jersey."
- **Jack Finarelli**, at the [sportscurmudgeon.com](http://sportscurmudgeon.com), on **Antonio Brown**: "(The NFL) has the PUP List – the Physically Unable to Perform List; how about establishing the MUC List – the Mentally Unable to Conform List?"
- Comedy writer **Jim Barach**: "**Antonio Brown** is suggesting he isn't done with the NFL, saying 'I'm the best, why stop now?' Apparently he figures he only burned bridges with three teams, so he still has 29 left to go."
- Comedy writer **Alex Kaseberg**: "On NBC there was an all-new 'Chicago Med', 'Chicago Fire' and 'Chicago PD.' And, thanks to the Cubs, there is also an all-new 'Chicago Gag.'"
- One more from Kaseberg: "**Antonio Brown** was cut by the New England Patriots. Brown claims he quit to spend more time with the voices in his head."
- Headline at TheOnion.com: "Overwhelmed Dolphins GM asks players to please use automated email form when making trade requests."
- **Dwight Perry** of the Seattle Times: "Steelers, Raiders, Patriots, Nike, Pepsi, Pizza Hut ... **Antonio Brown** has played only one game this season, and that's already six drops."
- Another one from Barach, after Seahawks coach **Pete Carroll** needed stitches after an errant throw hit him in the nose before a game: "Turns out he would have been better off calling for a run on that play, too."
- **Patti Dawn Swansson**, aka the River City Renegade, on the Blue Bombers' defence: "In the past five quarters of football, the Bombers D has looked about as Grey Cup ready as **Gwyneth Paltrow** looks fat."

Care to comment? Email [brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca](mailto:brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca)