

## OUTSTANDING SEASON BY DRAISAITL, BUT NOT MVP

Most valuable? Or most outstanding?

The National Hockey league recently announced its three finalists for the Hart Trophy, awarded annually to the league's Most Valuable Player. One of the finalists was Leon Draisaitl of the Edmonton Oilers, who had an outstanding season but probably isn't even the most valuable player on his team.

Ask all 30 coaches in the NHL who they would choose if both Draisaitl and Connor McDavid suddenly became available in a trade and it says here that all 30 would choose McDavid, who, as Reggie Jackson used to say about his status on the Yankees, is the "straw that stirs the drink."

True, Draisaitl won the NHL scoring derby with 110 points. McDavid, in seven fewer games, finished second with 97 points. It's safe to argue that Draisaitl had a more outstanding 2019-20 season than McDavid. But most valuable? Oilers' fans cry real tears when McDavid gets injured and is out of the lineup for a few games. If Draisaitl got hurt, there would be great concern, but most fans would say, "well, at least it's not Connor."

The Canadian Football League is the only pro loop to eschew the 'most valuable' definition in favour of 'most outstanding.' There are no arguments in the CFL when the league's most outstanding player is named because it's usually obvious. In the NHL this year, Draisaitl would be a worthy choice for most outstanding player, but most valuable? No. The award is supposed to go to the player whose removal from his team would have the largest negative impact.

The other two Hart Trophy finalists, Nathan MacKinnon of Colorado Avalanche and Artemi Panarin of New York Rangers are more worthy candidates, as strictly defined by the term 'most valuable'. Both of those players are singular stars on decent teams, but their departures would have more significantly negative impacts than the situation in Edmonton with Draisaitl.

Hopefully, the voters will get it right, and not name Draisaitl the MVP. And maybe the powers that be in the NHL will in the future define the Hart Trophy recipient as that season's best player instead of the vague and debatable 'most valuable.'

- **Dwight Perry** of the Seattle Times: "With the push to rename teams with controversial mascots comes a suggestion that Cleveland drop Indians and replace it with its 19th-century MLB predecessor, the Spiders. Hey, don't laugh: Who better for spinning web gems and catching flies?"
  - **Dwight Perry** again: "**Lindsay Whalen**, the Minnesota women's basketball coach, says she'll buy a hot dog for the first 500 fans at the Gophers 'home opener this season, the St. Paul Pioneer Press reported. In a related story, **Joey Chestnut** just bought 75 tickets."
  - **Greg Cote** of the Miami Herald: "The Buffalo Bills' stadium needs a new name sponsor, and a bidet company called Tushy is bidding. Decorum prevents us from noting that **Tushy Stadium** sounds like a pretty crappy name."
  - Yahoo.com, on Sharkweek: "**Mike Tyson**'s going to fight a shark. It's 2020, this makes perfect sense."
  - New York Post columnist **Steve Serby**, after the Mets and Yankees played a poorly executed exhibition game in front of cardboard cutout 'fans': "Is that the cardboard cutouts booing already?"
  - Another one from Perry, on Facebook: "Seattle Kraken? The marketing department is going to make hay with the 'Not In Our Krak House' slogan."
  - Baseball writer **Buster Olney** of ESPN, on **Dr. Anthony Fauci**'s wild ceremonial first pitch to start the MLB season: "A socially distant first pitch."
  - Comedy writer **Jerry Perisho** on Twitter: "Fauci was throwing heat at the cardboard cutout of **Donald Trump**."
  - Comedy writer **Brad Dickson** of Omaha: "It's a national tragedy that no one saw coming. It's an embarrassment to the entire nation and indicative of failed leadership. This should never have been allowed to happen. I'm talking about **Dr. Anthony Fauci**'s first pitch at the National game."
  - **Gary Bachman**, via Facebook, before **Dr. Anthony Fauci** threw out the ceremonial first pitch at the Nats 'season opener: "If he wants to hit the catcher's mitt, he needs to work on flattening the curve."
  - Comedy writer **Alex Kaseberg**: "The Washington Redskins will now be called the Washington Football Team. And the New York Knicks will now be known as the New York Not Quite A Basketball Team."
  - Kaseberg again: "Effective immediately, Washington will call itself the Washington Football Team. Apparently the name 'We Can't Think of Anything Else' was already taken."
  - **RJ Currie** of [sportsdeke.com](https://sportsdeke.com): "Ex-Laker **Pau Gasol** reportedly wanted out of L.A. when he joined Chicago. Not the first Spaniard to want to run with the bulls."
  - ESPN.com headline: "In what would have been thrilling news in 1995, Mike Tyson and Roy Jones Junior are set to fight September 12"
  - From WEEI [radio.com](https://radio.com): "Dodgers place \$350,000,000 in Betts"
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