

NHL trades: For better or worse

The National Hockey League's trade deadline has come and gone, and most teams got what they wanted — the good teams improved; the poorer teams with their eyes focused on Connor Bedard got worse.

As if they needed a boost, the Boston Bruins, in the midst of an historic season that will almost certainly see them finish with a record-setting team point total, picked up three players in exchange for draft picks. Grinding forward Garnet Hathaway and offensive-minded defenceman Dmitry Orlov came over from Washington, while Tyler Bertuzzi, a goal-scoring forward with more grit than Z's in his name, was acquired from Detroit.

The Bruins not winning the Stanley Cup this year would almost be a shock. Coach Jim Montgomery's team has lost only nine regulation-time games this season, and they needed only 15 wins in their final 19 games to surpass the current single-season record of 132, set in 1976-77 by the Montreal Canadiens.

Carolina Hurricanes, one of the few teams within shouting distance of the Bruins, picked up a spare part, Jesse Puljujarvi, from the Oilers, and top-four defenceman, Shayne Gostisbehere from Arizona.

The Coyotes, thick in the hunt for the big draft prize that is Bedard, a 17-year-old Regina Pats superstar, also dumped their best defenceman, Jacob Chychrun, who went to the Ottawa Senators. Other bottom-dwellers in the standings, Chicago Blackhawks and San Jose Sharks, were also showing their eagerness to improve their chances of getting the No. 1 draft pick. The Hawks traded four players away, including their top two scorers, Max Domi and veteran superstar Patrick Kane. The Sharks sent their top scorer, Timo Meier, to New Jersey Devils.

The trading frenzy certainly improved the playoff hopes of the Bruins, the Devils and Dallas Stars. Canadian teams were fairly quiet, making a couple of deals, none of which could be called earth-shattering. Struggling Winnipeg picked up Nino Niederreiter from Nashville and Vladislav Namestnikov from San Jose, Toronto acquired Ryan O'Reilly from the Blues, and the Oilers acquired Nick Bjugstad

From the 'odd' file comes the deal between Arizona and Calgary Flames, who swapped four players — two of whom were the Ritchie brothers. Brett Ritchie was dispatched to Arizona while his brother Nick went north to Calgary.

In the next two-plus months, hockey fans will find out the winners of the two big prizes up for grabs: Stanley and Connor.

- **Steve Simmons** of Sunmedia, on the Winnipeg Jets activity at the NHL's trade deadline: "The Jets went conservative and picked up **Nino Niederreiter** and **Vladislav Namestnikov** at the deadline. The team is no better on the ice but they are harder to spell."
- **Joel Beall** of Golf Digest: "Every (**Jordan Spieth**) post-shot reaction seems like he's just been told his identity's been hacked and he's gonna have to cancel all his credit cards."
- Comedy guy **Torben Rolfsen** of Vancouver on defenceman Jacob Chychrun being traded from Arizona to Ottawa: "He's truly experiencing climate change."
- **Bob Molinaro** of pilotonline.com (Hampton, Va.): "The actual March Madness is the Giants giving a four-year \$160 million deal to **Daniel Jones**, who threw only 15 touchdown passes last season. Who were the Giants bidding against?"
- **Mike Bianchi** of the Orlando Sentinel: "**Gov. Ron DeSantis** is calling for **President Biden** to allow tennis superstar **Novak Djokovic** into the U.S. to play in the upcoming Miami Open even though he's unvaccinated. Republican response: Wouldn't it be easier if Djokovic just went to Mexico and walked across the border?"
- Comedy writer **Alex Kaseberg**: "Is anyone else sick of hair-bun boy, **Aaron Rodgers's** annual 'Golly, I don't know who I am going to play for' drama? Rodgers is like the high school flirt who has told about 10 guys she is thinking about going to the prom with them. Just pick somebody and shut up."
- **Jack Finarelli** of sportscurmudgeon.com, thought a CBS headline about a top swimmer was not exactly accurate: "**Katie Ledecky's** nine-year winning streak on U.S. soil snapped by **Summer McIntosh.**"
- **RJ Currie** of sportsdeke.com: "In honour of the Brier (the Canadian men's curling championship), the top eight Beatles curling hits: 8. Hello, good lie; 7. Tick It to Right; 6. Please Freeze Me; 5. Paperback Slider; 4. A Guard Day's Night; 3. Hack in the USSR; 2. You're Going to Lose That Curl; 1. I Should Have Thrown Better."
- Headline at fark.com: "Workers watching NCAA tournament cost businesses \$14 billion, says study put out by Centre for Pulling Numbers Out of (the air)."
- Former **Tiger Woods'** mistress **Rachel Uchitel**, who hosts a podcast, asking more recent Woods' girlfriend **Erica Herman** to appear as a guest. Both were required by Woods to sign Non-Disclosure Agreements: "We can both sit in silence for 30 minutes courtesy of **Tiger Woods.**"

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