

HURRICANE WARNING

Vol. 9, No. 6

The official newsletter of the Carolina Hurricanes Booster Club

April 2006

Hurricanes take 3rd Southeast Division crown

In 1999, the Canes clinched their first Southeast Division title and we were happy to get our first playoff hockey in North Carolina. In 2002, the Canes clinched their second Southeast Division crown and we were happy to be along for an extended and unexpected ride to the Stanley Cup Finals. In 2006, the Hurricanes clinched their third Southeast Division title and we expect them to win the Stanley Cup!

It has been four long years since the last time the Canes made the playoffs and made NHL history as an unlikely representative for the Eastern Conference. In 2002, expectations were very low and the team overachieved to playoff greatness with a work ethic that went seemingly unchallenged until the Detroit Red Wings were able to defeat the Canes in five games. With four years gone, an almost complete roster makeover, and a rejuvenated fan base, the Canes are poised to make another run at the Stanley Cup and this time they come in as a favorite because of their domination in winning the Southeast Division title.

"It's a great feeling," said Bret Hedican after defeating the Florida Panthers to clinch the Southeast. "That says a lot about our team and it says a lot about how hard we've worked all year long. It's something to be proud of."

As it turns out, the rejuvenated fan base has responded in kind. The season ticketholders are purchasing additional tickets in record numbers when compared to the sale of the first two rounds in the 2002 playoffs.

"Our season-ticket holders have taken full advantage of their playoff priority in purchasing playoff strips," said Matt West, Vice President of Business Operations for the Carolina Hurricanes. "We may have fewer than 3,000 tickets per game available to the general public."

The Canes' 3-2 win over Florida on March 31st marked the accomplishment of the second of three goals for the regular season: 1) Make the playoffs, 2) Win the Division, and 3) Win the Eastern Conference. With the prospect of playing the Ottawa Senators in the Conference finals, goal number three is more important than ever.

"It was nice to do it at home, in front of our fans and not have anybody else do it for us," said Hurricanes Head Coach Peter Laviolette. "It's an accomplishment and the guys should be proud of that. They've worked hard to get to this point, but trust me it's not the ultimate goal." Winning the Stanley Cup is the ultimate goal.

---John Gallagher, CHBC Member



Hurricanes goaltender Martin Gerber stops a shot by Florida's Serge Payer in Carolina's 4-3 win over the Panthers that clinched the division

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Next CHBC Meeting – Wednesday, April 19th at 7pm – RBC Ctr

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Newsletter deadline:

May 1st for the

May 2006 Issue

President's Message / Brian Williamson

Hello fellow Boosters!

SOUTH EAST DIVISION CHAMPIONS.... Sure does have a nice ring to it doesn't it? The guys have made it official against the defending Florida Panthers this past March 31st and we are going to the playoffs. Now it's time to get guys healthy and primed for the cup run. It seems like every day one of our injured returns to the line up. Hopefully, the canes can make a run at first place in the conference, not that I'm greedy or anything (smirk). The end of March hasn't been the kindest to the Canes but they are pushing through, no thanks to the scheduling department.

It looks like Mark Recchi is settling in to with the team and starting to get going. As of this writing Josef Vasicek is back into the line up, and Erik Cole's recovery will not require surgery which is very good news. Overall things are going ok for the guys and I look forward to seeing a very late spring game at the RBC Center.

Thank you to all who came out to the UNC Telethon this past month. We had 15 folks help answer the phones and I think everyone had a good time. The Erik Cole fundraiser for the Oswego Library in New York is doing very well and hopefully we can try to make up for the shortfall. We are in the process of getting a committee together to plan our summer picnic on July 16th at Umstead Park if you're interested in helping please send me An email at president@hurricanesboosters.org

On a personal note, thank you all for the kind words and the cards on the passing of my Grandmother. That meant a lot to me and my family and it is greatly appreciated. It makes me feel very grateful to have wonderful folks like you around.

The Prez,
Brian Williamson



ARE YOU READY?

Are you ready for playoff hockey?

Time flies when you're having fun, and though the Carolina Hurricanes have been stuck in .500 hockey mode since Erik Cole went down about a month ago with a broken neck, this season can clearly be defined as fun.

Best home record in franchise history. Best point total in franchise history. The Canes have posted a record among the top three or four teams in the entire NHL for the bulk of the season, wrapping up a playoff spot before the evening chill disappears from the North Carolina nights. Eric Staal is climbing ever nearer to the top of the franchise list for highest single season scoring totals. This has been a heck of a ride.

The reward for such a great season? That's right – the Bataan death march that is the NHL playoffs. At this time it appears that Carolina has all but secured the second seed in the Eastern Conference, although at press time first place is still possible. That's great, but all it really means is a guarantee of home ice advantage in the first two rounds. Playoff tickets went on sale to the general public on Saturday April 8, and I hope you were not one of those stuck in a position of having to purchase them in that manner. Hopefully many of you avoided the crush by virtue of your status as full or partial season ticket holders. Otherwise you have my sympathies.

The real question isn't so much are the fans ready for the post season, but rather are the Canes ready? Cole's availability looks doubtful, but GM Jim Rutherford acquired veteran winger Mark Recchi for depth and insurance at the trade deadline. The Canes' injury woes have continued unabated, but the return of Josef Vasicek and Andrew Hutchinson to active duty means the roster is more complete than at many times in the 2005-06 season. With Vasicek rejoining Rod Brind'Amour and Justin Williams on the primary checking line and Ray Whitney, Recchi and Doug Weight forming perhaps the most veteran third line in the NHL, Carolina's forward lines are balanced and dangerous throughout. Goalie Martin Gerber has played at a consistently high level since returning from the Turin Olympic Games, although the team has fought through a few rough spots of late especially on the power play. Hopefully some games with real meaning will be enough to get the team back on track and get the RBC Center rocking like it's 2002.

Hot Streaks

As the playoffs approach, let's take a look around the league to see which teams are hitting their stride at just the right time. There's no guarantee that teams can keep their head of steam once we switch gears to playoff hockey, but coming into post season play with a ton of confidence never hurts. Look out for the Red Wings and Mighty Ducks in the West. The Wings' vaunted special teams are rolling and they have maintained a very high level of play after the Olympic break. Anaheim went through a mid-season roster

shakeup, and have emerged a much more mobile and determined bunch of Ducks. Teemu Selanne leads the scoring as he continues to turn back the clock in the more open NHL of the modern era, but the real key to the Ducks' success has been Scott Niedermayer. The savvy, mobile blue liner stabilizes pretty much every situation he encounters on the ice and the Ducks have been rocketing up the Western standings of late.

While the Eastern Conference has more 100-plus point teams than the West, there's a curious lack of hot

teams as we enter the last few weeks of the regular season. More curious still is the situation in Montreal where the Canadiens are the only Eastern team playing better than their season record so far in April.

Going into the 2005-06 season, it was a widely held belief that the Habs would go as far as franchise goalie Jose Theodore could carry them. That prediction worked out about as well as those that pegged the Carolina Hurricanes as the 28th best team in the NHL. Theodore struggled to find his form right from the start of the campaign, eventually succumbed to injury and was traded at the deadline to Colorado for Swiss net minder David Aebischer. He's not the one backstopping the Canadiens to this surge though, as that distinction belongs to Frenchman Cristobal Huet. No – not French Canadian - French. Hey, it's a world game these days. The more the merrier I guess. Hopefully Huet's countrymen can tear themselves away from World Cup 2006 preparations long enough to check out his post season efforts via satellite.

So, here's to the playoffs! The NHL has the best and most intense post season of any professional sports league and your team has a box seat and a high seed. Enjoy.



Montreal goalie Cristobal Huet: he stole the show from Jose Theodore

■ Your Turn

What was your "this team is for real" moment this season? At what point did you know the Hurricanes were really one of the best teams in the league?

The second nine-game win streak, or was it 10 games?

Bill & Teresa Simchera

I think I knew this team was for real when after we had our first nine-game winning streak, Atlanta comes in and blows us out of the water. The boys turn right around by beating Ottawa. That showed what this team is made of.

Donna Scanlon

I started to get the inkling that it wasn't a fluke when we beat undefeated Ottawa. But when Philadelphia scored six goals in our building and we still beat them was when I knew we were for real.

Annette Hutchens

This team proved it was for real in the October 28th home game against the Flyers. Eric Staal got his first hat trick and the team stayed in the game at every turn. They matched the Flyers goal-for-goal. They showed a resiliency that would dominate the division race throughout the rest of the year. It was the first real test to see what this team was made of against a legitimate playoff contender.

Both teams kept coming back, but the Canes prevailed 8-6 with Cam Ward getting a huge win for a rookie. The Flyers were built to win the Cup while the Canes at that time were considered a pretender.

Dave Droschak's article from that game really hit on all the themes of this season and ended with a Oleg Tverdovsky quote: "Hey, we've got a fast team. The sky is the limit." That is still the case.

John Gallagher

I believed that we had a great team before the season started. So what if we didn't have any "big name" players? My "this team is for real" moment, based on actual games played, came sometime the evening of Friday, October 28.

The previous Monday we eked out a win over Ottawa (first in the conference and previously unbeaten) after falling behind by two goals. That Wednesday we beat Boston in overtime after falling behind by two goals. Then, on October 28, came the game against the Flyers when the Canes came back from a two-goal deficit not once, but twice in one

game, and then went on to win by two goals. After living through the 2002-03 and 2003-04 seasons, that was one awesome week!

Seeing the perseverance and stick-to-it-tiveness of the team convinced me I better start saving for playoff tickets.

Edith Creasy

To be honest, I think we all quietly figured out we were better than the "experts" thought during training camp, when you watched those practices and figured out the skill and speed this team possessed. But the first time I knew the Canes were for real was during the Dad's Weekend, October 28-29.

The game Friday night was remarkable, with a huge crowd rocking the RBC Center as the Canes rallied from a pair of two-goal deficits to beat the Flyers, one of the favorites in the East as usual. The next night they did it again, coming from two down to win in Pittsburgh, another of the pre-season favorites. It was our fourth consecutive comeback from two goals down to win, and accomplished during a weekend in which most of the players fathers were along for the ride. The combination of that type of family atmosphere and that never-say-die attitude is what makes this team what it is, and we all knew that weekend that we were dealing with something very special.

Mike Sundheim

For me, there were two occasions: the late November and early December west coast road trip was the first. They came back with positive points. The second was posting the best January on record.

Richard Shell

CanePoll

Which team do you want to see the Canes face in the first round of the 2006 Stanley Cup playoffs?

Montreal (3 votes)

Also receiving votes: New Jersey, Pittsburgh, "Anybody but Ottawa," Florida and Atlanta

Which team do you NOT want to see the Canes face in the first round of the 2006 Stanley Cup playoffs?

Tampa Bay and Ottawa (tied with two votes)

Also receiving votes: Philadelphia, Atlanta, New Jersey

So, we'll see the Marlies, eh?

Last month, I took a trip to Toronto the weekend of February 18th to visit my daughter and the Marlies were playing home in Ricoh Coliseum. I did the Ticketmaster thing from home to ensure tickets would be at Will Call, but I had to guess as to what Premium, Platinum, and Endzone meant. The seating diagram didn't indicate two levels, but there was this space... After splurging (albeit in CDN dollars) on platinum, we ended up four seats from the visitors end of their bench in the second row.

The Marlies are coached by former Hurricanes Head Coach **Paul Maurice**. **Bates Battaglia** currently plays left wing for the Marlies and former Hurricanes backup netminder **Jean-Marc Pelletier** was in goal for the Marlies' opponent, the Rochester Americans.



Former Hurricanes left winger Bates Battaglia ranks second in scoring for the Toronto Marlies with 57 points (17g, 40a) in 69 games.

Note: Ricoh's entire arena would be the equivalent to our lower bowl. There was not a bad seat anywhere from the looks of it (and I could've saved about \$20 per ticket). Here are some other comparisons should you decide to go:

Category	RBC Center	Ricoh Coliseum
Ooh-la-la seats	Club section	about 20 boxes, sitting a little higher than our club seats
Transport:	Car; \$7 to park	\$2 streetcar token, dropped at door
Food & Drink	snacks, burgers, burritos, Bud on tap, \$7.50	same, plus Asian "take away", Molson on tap, \$8 CDN
Souvenirs	several Eye outlets	one counter with jerseys & shirts, mini-sticks, pucks, etc.
Cheerleaders & Shovel Crew	Storm Squad and RBC Center Ice Crew	2 completely covered young women who ran out with shovels to clear snow from the crease 2-3 times
Between-period entertainment	Puck shuffle, video game entertainment shootout, mighty mites	Voice-activated video race for the section who made their monkey run fastest; puck shuffle; t-shirt brought out by Duke (see next item)
Mascot	Stormy, the ice hog	Duke the dog. (Marlies blue is close to Duke Blue) I believe he's named Duke in honor of the Duke of Marlborough (the reason for "Marlies")

Game Highlights:

Yay for Bates Battaglia who scored the game winner! He still wears #13, but it's weird to see blue rather than red. Overall the game was entertaining, but not incredibly energizing. It was 10 minutes before the first shot was taken, and it went in the net (for us). There was not much of a physical side to things until a fight at the end of the 2nd period. With 3:17 in the third, Bates scored the eventual game-winner by redirecting teammate Brendan Bell's point shot over Jean-Marc Pelletier's left shoulder! It held up in the ensuing 2 minutes of empty-net time as the Marlies defeated the Rochester Americans by a score of 4-3, and the fans filed out to the requisite *We Will Rock You* by Queen. There were lots of yells and happy whooping as the fans headed home.



Annual UNC-TV Telethon: a great pre-game activity for Boosters

The Carolina Hurricanes Booster Club interrupted their usual pre-game ritual by answering phones and taking pledges for the UNC TV Festival 2006. The telethon is held each year to raise money to support public television and the boosters have taken part in the annual affair since the Booster Club's inception in 1998.

"It's a lot of fun and it's for a great cause," Said long-time booster club member and former board member **Dawn Coe**.

While the telethon goes on, there are several breaks where members get the opportunity to talk hockey and share the excitement of the hockey season. This year's event was even more exciting given the unprecedented team success this season.

"This event is a great way for us to promote the Carolina Hurricanes and the people at UNC television are always so great to us," Said booster club enthusiast **Larry Conrad**.

Event organizer **Lisa Wall**, a former CHBC Vice President, did a great job coordinating the group and making sure everyone had a great time. Lisa also took on the role of spokesperson for the group during a live feed where UNC TV gives groups like the booster club a chance to talk about what they do. Lisa gave a "LET'S GO CANES!" with intensity and conviction to end the spot.

On behalf of the booster club, we thank all those that took part in the event including **Deb Meyers, Larry Conrad, Brian Williamson, Pat**



*Six-year UNC TV veteran **Larry Conrad** talks with a donor during the Booster Club's shift on March 25th*

Rago, Patrick Drollinger, Kate Stewart, Dawn Coe, Michelle Webber, Erik Webber, John Gallagher, Ginny Paisie, Joe Paisie, Suzanne Hagen, Patrick Noonan, and Lisa Wall. We especially want to thank all those that called in to donate pledges to UNC TV.

UNC-TV Festival 2006 ended in March, but UNC TV could still use your help in the effort to bring public television to the region. For more information about UNC-TV or to make a pledge, please visit the UNC TV website at www.unctv.org.

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espn.com's Burnside says: Canes are for real

*espn.com hockey correspondent Scott Burnside visited Raleigh in March to do a feature article on the Hurricanes. It was a unique opportunity to be able to sit down with a nationally recognized sports writer that has been around the game for a long time. Mr. Burnside started his career as a newsman in 1986. He covered the crime beat for the Toronto Sun from 1992 to 1997. His experiences in that genre led to the book, *Deadly Innocence*, which chronicles the true story of Paul Bernardo and Karla Homolka. After a stint with the Sporting News, Scott came to ESPN where he has relished the opportunity to focus on hockey for the past two years.*



See more of Scott Burnside's work on [espn.com's NHL pages](#).

What do you think of the Hurricanes' prospects of winning the Stanley Cup without Erik Cole?

Losing Erik Cole is a very disappointing thing for the Hurricanes. Cole developed into such a versatile NHL player. I think going to the Olympics this year really helped his game. It was unfortunate to see his season cut short because he was having a breakout year.

I don't think this team is a pretender. The Hurricanes are for real. They have a solid defense, good goaltending, and physical players. The team depth should carry them far in the playoffs and the leadership of Rod Brind'amour will really make a difference.

What was your experience of the Olympics in Turin this year?

It was a tough for me because I was at the rink for 18 straight days because I covered the men's and women's hockey.

Scheduling the Olympic break was tough for everyone involved because by the time the lockout had ended the Olympic committee already had their schedules set. It made it difficult to give the players and coaches ample time to prepare for the games.

When the Vancouver games come around in 2010, it may well be the best hockey ever because the players are already here and travel won't be an issue.

Was losing the 04-05 season good for the game?

I would have liked to have seen the parties agree in time to salvage part of the season, but

wiping out the entire 2004-05 season might have been the best thing for the game. It gave the owners and players a chance to revise the game and make the enhancements we are now enjoying. If the 2004-05 season had not been cancelled, we might not have gotten to this level.

Name some of your favorite NHL cities.

I like Montreal because of the rink itself and the atmosphere there. It's a beautiful city and it is very social. It's just a great hockey city.

I also enjoyed my time in Tampa Bay during the 2004 Cup Finals. It's a very good building and their fans really get it now. There were about 50,000 fans in the parking lot outside while the Lightning showed Game 7 on a large screen TV. There's also the Grouper sandwich at Nuke's.

Which NHL players gave you the most memorable interviews?

As a Canadiens fan, I was just excited when Ken Dryden returned my calls.

My top interview is probably Ed Belfour. I sat in a truck one day two years ago while he and his son were at Vladislav Tretiak's School of Goaltending. I wrote a piece on Eddie's relationship with Tretiak and about his son. It was a great story that Eddie really appreciated when he read it.

This past November, I was in Toronto for the Hockey Hall of Fame Induction and wanted another interview with Eddie to talk about passing Terry Sawchuk on the career wins list (Belfour passed Sawchuk on December 20th with his 448th win). Unfortunately, Eddie wouldn't agree to an interview. I asked the media guy to remind Eddie about the prior story I did. He came back out and said, "Eddie won't talk to you. He likes you, but he hates ESPN."

I ended up interviewing Belfour's teammate, Tie Domi. After the interview, Tie led me back to the training room and he got Eddie to come out and sit down with me. Upon learning that I worked for ESPN, Eddie yelled back to Tie, "You said he worked for Sports Illustrated!"

It turned out to be a great interview and an experience I won't soon forget.

Upcoming Events

Next CHBC Meeting
Wednesday, April 19th
7 p.m.

RBC Center
(Please sign in at the VIP entrance)
Special Guest Speaker:
To Be Announced

CHBC Picnic
Sunday, July 16th
Umstead Park

Further event information forthcoming!

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