

NHL TEAMS MUST CONSIDER EXPANSION DRAFT IN OFFSEASON PLANS

LAS VEGAS: Brad Treiving saw the rules for the expansion draft and immediately was in an advantageous position. The Calgary Flames' general manager needed a goaltender, and with Las Vegas set to harvest the NHL for two of them in a year, his colleagues had incentive to make a move.

The Flames got Brian Elliott from the St. Louis Blues for a second-round pick. A full year before the Las Vegas expansion draft, GMs must plan for the inevitability of losing a player to a team that the league wants to be good out of the gate. Already the impact of the impending expansion draft has been felt with the Flames acquiring Elliott and the Toronto Maple Leafs getting goalie Frederik Andersen from the Anaheim Ducks.

The Ducks knew they wouldn't be able to keep Andersen and John Gibson forever, and the expansion draft expedited a move. "After starting to hear what the expansion

rules could be, you just knew you weren't going to be signing both of them," GM Bob Murray said. "You're going to come out looking pretty stupid if you did that."

No one wants to look stupid, and that's the challenge over the next 12 months. Teams will only be able to protect one goalie, so the Tampa Bay Lightning will likely have to trade Ben Bishop and the Stanley Cup-champion Pittsburgh Penguins have to decide what to do with Marc-Andre Fleury before the yet-to-be-named Las Vegas team picks its first 30 players on June 20, 2017.

With the unrestricted free agent market opening Friday and trade winds gusting, teams have to consider the expansion draft as part of their offseason maneuvers. "Everything will be affected by that," Columbus Blue Jackets GM Jarmo Kekalainen said. "In every decision, we'll have to take into consideration what the

rules are and how that might affect our outlook for the expansion draft and ahead of that." Each team will be able to protect seven forwards, three defensemen and one goaltender or eight skaters and one goaltender. Any player with a no-movement clause in his contract must be protected, and each team will lose one player.

BLOATED CONTRACTS

Players with bloated contracts or who are past their prime will be exposed, but teams could take a serious hit because young and cheap talent will be plentiful.

That's a danger for a team like the Chicago Blackhawks, who have won the Stanley Cup three times in seven years but are locked into long-term deals with their core players. GM Stan Bowman, who has taken Chicago from the brink of cap purgatory back to the Cup, isn't worried about losing someone. "I think sometimes you

can get too worked up about it," Bowman said. "It's a little bit early to be making moves strictly for an expansion draft that's going to happen in about 12 months from now." Win-now teams shouldn't get worked up. Penguins GM Jim Rutherford plans to keep Fleury and Cup-winning goalie Matt Murray for now and worry about it later, and making moves for the future alone won't help anyone capture a title next season. "It's tough to take a player you like out of your lineup right now before the season starts, especially if you want to compete for a championship," Washington Capitals GM Brian MacLellan said. "You try and find that perfect situation where you're protected in an expansion draft."

Expect some movement once teams have a grip on which players they might protect or have in danger of exposing for the NHL's Las Vegas venture. The Blackhawks have eight players with no-

move clauses and the Blue Jackets six, which could necessitate buyouts this week or deals over the next year.

"Nobody could really prepare before they knew what the rules were," Kekalainen said. "Some teams are in better positions just by accident or by luck or whatever." Edmonton Oilers GM Peter Chiarelli, who can relax with Connor McDavid exempt because he'll only have two years of pro experience, said teams will have to think differently if they face the potential of losing a significant player. No doubt that's a reality for some, but Treiving doesn't see that flooding the market.

"That idea that now that there's expansion everybody's going to be dying to just give you players, that's not quite the case," Treiving said. "There is obviously a knowledge of what may happen, so people are trying to see if they can be aggressive or if that's going to be something in a year." — AP



OMAHA: Maya DiRado of the United States celebrates after finishing first in the final heat for the Women's 400 Meter Individual Medley during Day One of the 2016 US Olympic Team Swimming Trials at CenturyLink Center on Sunday in Omaha, Nebraska. — AFP

BOUDIA, COOK TAKE HARD PATH TO EARNING OLYMPIC DIVING SPOTS

INDIANAPOLIS: David Boudia and Cassidy Cook couldn't wait to share their Olympic moments Sunday. So Boudia walked calmly to the stands and grabbed his toddler daughter from his wife, holding her up so she could celebrate with him. Cook hugged everyone in sight. Now the defending Olympic champion in men's 10-meter and America's comeback kid in women's 3-meter will head to Rio as teammates after winning the final events at this year's US Olympic diving trials.

"The job's not done yet," Cook said shortly after making her first Olympic team after missing the team by 0.42 points in 2012. "This is just the first step. Now it's time to go to Rio and kick some butt there."

Boudia can advise the 21-year-old Texan about what to expect - and what it will take to win gold on diving's biggest stage. And at age 27, he looks every bit as good as he did 2012. The synchro 10-meter team of Boudia and Steele Johnson qualified together on Thursday. Then after finishing second in the individual 10-meter prelims, behind Johnson, Boudia took the lead in the semifinals and pulled away in the finals by scoring at least 83 points on four of his six dives to finish with a score of 1,534.4.

Johnson earned the second spot in the event by finishing with 1,475.15 points, exactly 12 more than David Dinsmore in what was the best duel in the pool all week. Johnson spent most of the night in second place but surrendered that spot briefly to Dinsmore after Round 3. Dinsmore wound up with a 61.05 on his next dive, opening the door for Johnson who scored a 99.9 and retook second. Dinsmore rallied for scores of 96.9 and 102.6 on his final two dives, but Johnson got an 88.4 and an 86.4 - just enough to bring Johnson to his knees and Dinsmore to tears. "I honestly thought Dinsmore was ahead of me," Johnson said. "I thought I needed a 95 to go ahead of him, but it turned out 86 was good enough - by 12 points."

Boudia celebrated his win differently. He cuddled his daughter, Dakota, in his arms and repeatedly hugged and kissed her as she pointed to the fans and raised her arm as if she was

acknowledging the applause for her dad. When Boudia handed his daughter back, he gave his wife, Sonnie, a kiss. The next stop is Rio where Boudia will try to join Greg Louganis, Samuel Lee and Bob Webster as the only American men to win back-to-back Olympic golds in platform. "What's funny is that after this competition was over, I wasn't exactly happy with it," Boudia said. "I know it's not going to cut it in Rio. So while I'm happy, I've still got a lot of work to do." For Cook, the stakes were even higher.

After missing out on London, injuries cost her most of the next three years of training. That left Cook with less than 18 months to regain Olympic form - knowing she could be setting herself up for more heartbreak.

She didn't allow it to happen. Cook took a solid lead into the finals and continued to pad it. She finished with a score 1,003.65, well ahead of her good friend Abby Johnston, who was part of the synchro 3-meter team that knocked Cook out of the Olympics four years earlier. Johnston, who attends medical school, claimed the second Olympic spot with 949.3 points. Laura Reedy was third at 898.8. When it ended, all that emotion rushed out in one quick burst. The ecstatic Cook sprinted to Johnston and gave her a hug. Coach Ken Armstrong was next in line for a hug, and then Cook sprinted up the steps to the judge's stand, hopped over the railing and into the crowd where she began hugging a large contingent of family and friends. "I'm at a loss for words because it all happened so fast," Cook said, speaking with the pace of an auctioneer. "It's still all a blur right now but it was amazing." Johnston, a silver medalist in London, was every bit as excited for her friend as she was about making her second Olympic team and her first in an individual event. She even added to the diving tradition by awarding Cook her Olympic ring.

"She deserves it. It was so hard four years ago because we are such good friends, and to be the one who narrowly edged her out, it really weighed on me to see someone I cared so much about so sad," Johnston said. "I know she is going to kick butt in Rio, and I'm going to be right there with her." — AFP

POWER HOLDS OFF KANAAN TO WIN INDYCAR RACE AT ROAD AMERICA

ELKHART LAKE: Healthy again following an early-season illness, Will Power is feeling much better about his chances of contending for another IndyCar championship. After starting from the pole, Power led all but four laps and held off Tony Kanaan's last-lap surge to take the 202-mile Kohler Grand Prix by 0.74 seconds on Sunday at Road America. It was Power's second series victory of the year for Team Penske, both coming in June. Power also won on June 5 at Detroit, ending a frustrating three-race stretch in which he didn't finish higher than 10th.

The slump was uncharacteristic for the 2014 series champion and annual contender. "I got my normal engine back, and perform like I normally do, and that's the difference," said Power, referring to his health. Power said he was dealing with food allergies in the offseason. He missed the season opener in March at St. Petersburg after being diagnosed with an inner ear infection. "Finally back to my normal fitness level, just the way I do things," Power said. He had the stamina to hold off Kanaan at the end by 0.7429 seconds as Chevrolet finished 12 and took three of the top five spots.

Kanaan shaved about a half-second off the gap with Power after the white flag flew. But he couldn't catch up as the cars winded their way toward the end of the final lap on the 14-turn track. Those extra "push-to-pass" fuel boosts that Power had saved came in handy late in the race. It made for an exciting finish in IndyCar's

first race at the rural Wisconsin road course since 2007. "This is the type of places we want to race. If you ask any driver about this road course, it's one of their favorites by far, and the fans, too," Kanaan said. Track officials said the race weekend broke an attendance record but they did not yet have a specific number. "We can't wait to come back next year and do it again," IndyCar president Jay Frye said.

WHO'S HOT: Power won with a speed of 121.426 mph and cruised from the front for much of the afternoon, leading 46 of the 50 laps. Kanaan said Power benefited from a fast start from the pole.

Power has a fast car, "but I don't think he was like anywhere stronger," Kanaan said. "We closed the gap any time we needed to, but he just had that little advantage every time because he was in the lead."

WHO'S NOT: With Power in front, the race reset with six laps to go following the only caution flag of the afternoon, stunting the momentum of points leader Simon Pagenaud, who was then in second place.

But Pagenaud, whose car seemed to improve through the middle of the race, fell back in a surprise at the restart He finished in 13th place. "I just lost power. Similar to the problem we had at Indy in the Indianapolis 500. We just lost power and you're not going anywhere," Pagenaud said. "You've just got to hang on and get the best result you can." — AP

LYDIA KO WINS LPGA TOUR'S NW ARKANSAS CHAMPIONSHIP

ROGERS: Lydia Ko began the final round of the NW Arkansas Championship in a tie for the lead. Much like the rest of her young career, the 19-year-old New Zealander turned her walk around Pinnacle Country Club into a coronation of sorts Sunday.

Sparked by a stretch of four birdies in her first five holes, Ko opened an early four-shot lead and was rarely challenged while closing with a 3-under 68 for her third LPGA Tour victory of the year. She finished a tournament-record 17-under overall, and the three-stroke victory was her 13th since first winning an event as a 15-year-old amateur in 2012. Ko has set any number of records since taking the LPGA Tour by storm, everything from being the first amateur to win two events to becoming the youngest two-time major winner at the ANA Inspiration this year.

By those standards, Sunday's victory - Ko's 13th in 79 career events and the third time in three years she's won at least three times - seemed almost commonplace for the teenager who has spent the last 35 weeks atop the world ranking.

Her game, however, once again proved anything but common as she left a talent-laden field in her wake. "It's gone by so much faster that I could have ever dreamt of or ever imagined," Ko said. "... I feel very lucky with what has happened. I'm going to enjoy it."

Morgan Pressel, tied for the lead with Ko at 14 under entering Sunday, shot a 71 to tie for second with Candie Kung (69). Pressel was the clubhouse leader by two shots Saturday afternoon before Ko shot a back-nine 28 and tied her at 14 under with an eagle on the par-5 18th.

The New Zealander wasted little time in taking control after teeing off on Sunday, breaking the previous tournament record by two strokes and earning \$300,000. Playing in the final pairing with Pressel, Ko birdied four of her first five holes - only settling for a par once in the five-hole stretch when narrowly missing a short birdie putt on the par-3 third. After Pressel bogeyed the par-5 second, Ko went from even to three shots clear of the field after only two holes. And that was just the start of Ko's final-round romp on a 6,330-yard course she's tamed in each of her four tournament appearances while finishing no lower than sixth. Ko has shot below 70 in 11 of her 12 rounds at Pinnacle, including matching the course record with her 9-under 62 on Saturday.

"I love coming here, and I look forward to coming back," Ko said. Ko fell back to 17 under with a bogey on No. 6, but she stayed two shots clear of Pressel with a 30-foot birdie putt on the par-4 eighth. She then reached as low as 19 under with a birdie on the 246-yard par-4 10th, well on her way to topping the previous tournament low of 15 under - set by Seon Hwa Lee in 2008 and matched by Na Yeon Choi a year ago.

By the time Ko finished with a bogey on the 18th to finish 17 under, she had long ended any



ARKANSAS: Lydia Ko of New Zealand displays the trophy after winning the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship Presented by P&G on Sunday at Pinnacle Country Club in Rogers, Arkansas. — AFP

suspense regarding the outcome. Pressel stayed within two shots of Ko for much of the round, reaching 17 under following a birdie on No. 10. However, her round unraveled with a poor tee shot on the par-3 11th - leading to the first of four straight bogeys that took Pressel, who is still in search of her first victory since

2008, out of contention. "It's just frustrating. I had high hopes, certainly," said Pressel, wiping away tears. "I felt like I played pretty well for nine holes, hung in there. But then I just couldn't keep it going and couldn't keep getting lucky, as I had been getting lucky. And it just wasn't my day." — AP

TIGER SAYS HE MIGHT NOT PLAY AGAIN THIS YEAR

BETHESDA: Tiger Woods said Sunday he might not return to competitive golf this year following back surgery nine months ago, but he's counting on the wait being worthwhile by producing impressive form. The 14-time major champion updated his recovery status after Sunday's final round of the US PGA National at Congressional Country Club, which benefits his charity foundation. "I'm trying to get back as fast as I can," Woods said. "It's frustrating not being able to play, especially at my own event. I miss being out here."

Asked if there was a chance he might not play again this year, Woods said, "I don't know. I want to play. I don't know if I will. But I am trying to... I'm working my tail off." The British Open is only three weeks away and the year's final major, the PGA Championship, is less than five weeks away.

Woods never mentions a specific event when asked about a comeback timetable and he has admitted downplaying his status in comments about past injuries. But he talks time and again about having learned from past attempts to return too quickly from injury and setbacks he has suffered as a result.

"I would like to say next week. But I can't," Woods said. "It's not fun. It's a tough road. I know I'm getting better. I'm progressing, but still I'm just not quite ready to be out here. I can play with these guys. I know I still can."

I just need to get healthy enough where I can do it on a regular basis." That, Woods said, requires getting into golf shape. That means even though he is playing 18 holes now on consecutive days, he must be able to handle all the stresses of tournament play over 72 holes. "I still need to be golf fit, hit ball after ball to have my golf muscles back," Woods said. "I am playing, just I need more time, I

still need to get to get stronger, need to recover faster. Unfortunately it will take time. "I'm older. It takes longer to recover. I want to do it right so I don't have another surgery." South Africa's Ernie Els, a four-time major winner who played in Sunday's final group, made it clear he wants to see Woods return.

"When Ernie walked off, he made a beeline over to me and gave me a big hug and said, 'Get back out here,'" Woods said. "That's awfully special because we've been going to it for such a long time." Woods, 40, was able to show his children Els

and try to explain how they have been rivals for nearly two decades. "I was trying to explain to Sam and Charlie - 'See that big guy over there on the 18th green? I've been battling him for the last 19 years,'" Woods said. "That was really cool." Woods has won 79 US PGA events, three shy of Sam Snead's all-time record, and his major total is four shy of the all-time record 18 won by Jack Nicklaus. But Woods, nagged by back and leg injuries, has not won a major since the 2008 US Open and has not won any title since the 2013 World Golf Championships Bridgestone Invitational. — AFP



BETHESDA: Billy Hurlley III and Tiger Woods look on behind the trophy after the Quicken Loans National at Congressional Country Club on Sunday in Bethesda, Maryland. — AFP