

# Schneider undaunted on big stage

By Ben Kuzma, The Province January 14, 2011

Cory Schneider is a Boston guy.

All this hype about the Big Apple and Madison Square Garden doesn't really resonate with the former Boston College star and huge Red Sox fan. But the Vancouver Canucks goaltender understood that his debut on the legendary NHL stage was significant and it's why friends and family ventured here to watch the Marblehead, Mass., native Thursday against the Rangers.

"I had to buy eight tickets -- that's not bad," he said. "If it was Boston, I'd have to get a suite.

"I was never a huge Rangers fan growing up, so it's not as big a deal for me, I guess. The old [Boston] Garden would have been a big deal, but you hear a lot about this building and how fun it is to play here. So, it's exciting regardless of where you're from."

Oh, it was exciting.

Even though the Canucks fell 1-0 on the second stop of a five-game road trip, Schneider made 34 saves and stopped Marian Gaborik on a third-period breakthrough.

"I hate losing, so it doesn't really matter to me that I made that many saves," said Schneider, who lost for the first time in regulation (8-1-2). "I'd rather win, so it's frustrating."

And that's what the Canucks love about Schneider. If not for him, the Canucks could have been out of it early. Schneider didn't look like a guy caught in the glare of the big-city lights. In fact, it was a Gaborik shot off the post that bounced into the crease and allowed Wojtek Wolski to sweep home a power-play goal at 7:18 of the second period. That was it.

"It went right off the post and the scramble was on and he [Wolski] got his stick on it and put it in," shrugged Schneider. "It was kind of a bad-luck goal to hop right to their guy like that and they just outnumbered us at the net. I'm pushing hard to that side and then I couldn't recover in time and they were just whacking away."

In losing in regulation for the first time since a 3-2 loss to St. Louis on Dec. 5 at Rogers Arena, the Canucks had to ponder what could have been through 60 minutes. They had only a handful of scoring chances -- four really good ones, in fact -- but not the in-tight, tic-tactoe efforts they were getting on a regular basis during an 18-1-3 run. But they got the goaltending from Schneider once again. He just didn't get the support.

"That save on Gaborik in the third," said Canucks captain Henrik Sedin. "That's when you really want to come back and score to help him. We had the puck in their end most of the time in third, but we made some poor decisions."

Schneider kept making the right ones on Gaborik. The speedy winger, who hadn't scored in five games, now has 32 points in 38 career games against the Canucks. He twice tested Schneider with wrist shots destined for the top corner and broke away easily on his breakaway.

"He's got a great release and shoots in stride and it's really hard to pick up," said Schneider.

"I thought we did a good job getting sticks on him and not letting him freewheel. But he had the good [breakaway] chance and he got it up pretty good on the blocker side."

Schneider, who then made a point-blank save off Artem Anisimov, was busy from the outset. He got a right pad on a Mats Zuccarello spin-around move in the crease early to show that it was going to take something special, or fortunate, to beat him.

"It's the first year I've felt as comfortable and like I belong here," he said. "Mentally, I'm more stable and more confident and not as rattled. I'm just trying to stay composed and I'm pretty lucky to have the team in front of me that I do have. When I make a mistake, a lot of times they can cover it up or get it back for me. It's as much having confidence in your team as yourself."

## **Salo speculation swirls**

### **Canucks GM Gillis mum on whether to pass or play**

By Ben Kuzma, The Province January 14, 2011 7:36 AM

Sami Salo's presence was felt Thursday.

No sooner did the Canucks finish a game-day skate than Raffi Torres was amid speculation he could become a roster casualty to eventually fit the Finnish defenceman under constraints of the \$59.4-million-US salary cap ceiling.

This would mean finding \$1.8 million in salaries when Salo returns from an offseason Achilles rupture.

Torres makes \$1 million. Aaron Rome makes \$750,000. Mikael Samuelsson makes \$2.5 million. The math might be simple, but the situation isn't.

An Achilles injury is the great unknown in the sporting world and there's no guarantee Salo will return to full form. There's also a chance that general manager Mike Gillis may not want to tinker with a winning team and could opt for a trade if Salo waives his no-trade clause.

But the Canucks would have to first clear cap space to even get Salo on the roster.

Then again, a healthy Salo might be in the plans.

Gillis is in no rush as Salo hasn't been medically cleared to play and needs a 20 per cent improvement in conditioning. The GM didn't discount trying to get Salo back on the roster before the Feb. 28 trade deadline:

"We have a lot of options ... and we're going to be patient. But I haven't discussed any of our players with any team and it [speculation] is unfair and I don't like it."

Gillis vowed to make his bottom-six mix more playoff-ready, and he has this in Torres, Manny Malhotra and Mikael Samuelsson. Torres has been to a Stanley Cup final and Samuelsson has a ring.

Maybe that's why Torres was surprised by the speculation.

"A little bit," he said. "That [playoff pedigree] is the reason they got us here."

But the grinding winger, traded from Columbus to Buffalo last season, knows anything can happen. Not that it's easy.

"It's part of the game, but you've just got to go out and play," said Torres, who has 20 points (11-9) in 43 games.

"If I start worrying about that my game is going to go south. All that stuff ... I hear it every year about being dealt, but you just have to block it out. It's hard, but what are you going to do?"

Salo was doing his best to stick-handle around the situation:

"It hasn't affected me at all. I've had other pressures on my mind, more than worrying about coming back.

"It's about getting back to being healthy as a human being, not just a pro athlete, but everyday life. It's a devastating injury for any athlete."

Salo looks good in practice.

"You can't really say tomorrow or a month from now," he said. "I have to take a lot of different things [into consideration] before I can say or pinpoint a day when I'll be ready. I've had three really good practices and I'm going in the right direction. I think I've made some progress."

The NHL surely hopes so. Sooner or later the fact he's practising while on long-term injury relief is going to raise eyebrows.

Gillis must prove the player still isn't fit for duty after the trade deadline.

For now, don't expect anything. But stay tuned.

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# Andersson set to play in KHL — end of story

By Jim Jamieson, The Province January 14, 2011

Winger Jonas Andersson, it turns out, was a better story than he was a prospect.

Acquired by the Canucks before the start of the season along with Ryan Parent from Nashville in exchange for Shane O'Brien and winger Dan Gendur, the Swede has left the Manitoba Moose and is aiming to return to the Kontinental Hockey League -- reportedly with AK Bars Kazan.

He received a lot of attention when he was called up by the Canucks earlier this season for his first NHL action since the 2001-02 season when he played five games for Nashville, who drafted him in 1999.

Since then, he'd played for the Predators' farm club in Milwaukee, then in Sweden and Finland. And, last season, for Dynamo Minsk of the KHL. He'd signed a one-way, \$675,000 deal with Nashville last summer to come back to the NHL after seven seasons away.

Moose coach Claude Noel told the Winnipeg Free Press on Thursday that Andersson had an agreement when he signed with Nashville that he would not play in the minors, something that didn't transfer when the Preds traded him to Vancouver.

Andersson got a shot with the Canucks early in December but the call-up lasted just four games. He had no points, no PIMs, one shot on goal and was a plus-one in a fourth-line role this year in Vancouver.

Noel said it was better to move on if his heart wasn't in playing for the Moose.

"You need your players engaged," said Noel on Thursday, before his team met the Milwaukee Admirals. "I completely understand. It was a deal he was in a position to get when he came here. I understand how it goes."

Andersson was put on waivers by the Canucks. If not picked up by another NHL club he was to be released by 9 a.m. today.

He had 5-6-11 in 20 games for the Moose. Andersson has suffered two concussions this season, most recently last week.

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## Canucks can't find a way to beat shot-blocking Rangers

By Ben Kuzma, The Province January 13, 2011

NEW YORK — John Tortorella was wrong.

"We're going to need some goals tonight," spat the outspoken New York Rangers coach. "We're not going to win a hockey game 1-0."

Well, they did. And what the Vancouver Canucks didn't do in the process Thursday of seeing their nine-game road unbeaten streak end was find a way to penetrate a team that quickly regroups in its own end and willingly falls in front of pucks. The 22 shots that the Rangers blocked were as impressive as the 34 saves that Cory Schneider made in his Madison Square Garden debut.

But the number that really stood out was a big, fat zero. It was the deciding digit that ended the Canucks' run of 17 straight games without a regulation loss. And it ended a string of futility for the Rangers, who hadn't beaten the Canucks since Feb. 2, 2004.

On a critical 5-on-3 advantage for 47 seconds in the second period, the Canucks mustered one Daniel Sedin backhander from the slot that Henrik Lundqvist easily smothered for his sixth shutout of the season and first win in four career meetings with the league-leaders. Brian Boyle blocked two shots during the sequence which took the Canucks out of their power-play rhythm and gave the Rangers more momentum. For the league's top-rated power play and second-leading offence to be held off the scoresheet was significant. It gave the Canucks a sniff of what postseason play is going to be like because time and space are at a premium and special teams must be potent.

"We should have scored," Henrik Sedin said of the 5-on-3 advantage. "That's where games are decided and if we score there, we're back in the game and we've got the momentum. Shots are always good, but not always the best. They came out hard at our guys and if we would have given it to the open guy, we would have been able to score, but they blocked a lot of shots."

That was a problem. On a night where Schneider was only beaten when the recently acquired Wojtek Wolski swept home a second period Marian Gaborik power-play shot that rang off the post and bounced into the crease, there should have been more push back. Especially when Schneider stopped Gaborik on a third-period breakaway and especially when the 31 shots the Canucks collected were misleading. The six that Gaborik had tested Schneider.\

"Every shot we got was from the outside and it was a little playoff character [test]," said Canucks winger Mikael Samuelsson, a former Ranger who was stopped by Lundqvist on the shift after Wolski scored. "You had to fight for the inside and get there and we did a decent job, but not a great job."

"They played tight and blocked a lot of shots. They have a different team. They had superstars who did their own thing and now they play as a team."

It wasn't that the Canucks didn't have their chances. Mason Raymond, who had five shots, sent a backhander over the net from the top of the crease in the first period when he went eye-to-eye

with Lundqvist. Ryan Kesler couldn't quite deflect home a power play shot from the slot in the second period. Other chances came from too far out and from too many distant angles.

"I don't know if he [Lundqvist] got a piece of it or not," said Raymond, who hasn't scored in six games. "It seems that scoring a goal is a tough thing to come by right now. I had some chances the last little while — Edmonton, Detroit and the last few games too — but I can't find a way. We got into some penalty trouble in the second period and it set us back on our heels. And they really came at us and were clogging the neutral zone."

The Canucks had the struggling Jeff Tambellini — no goals in eight games — centring the fourth line between Tanner Glass and Aaron Volpatti. Jannik Hansen moved up to the second line while Alex Bolduc sat. Aaron Rome paired with Keith Ballard on the back end in place of Andrew Alberts.

**OF NOTE** — The Canucks have waived minor-league winger Jonas Andersson, 29, who intends to return to Sweden. He was pointless in four games with the Canucks and had 11 points (5-6) in 20 games with the Manitoba Moose. "We felt we had other options," said Canucks general manager Mike Gillis.

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## Luongo has owned Ovechkin

By Botchford Fri, Jan 14 2011

It doesn't quite have the same weight it used to, but Roberto Luongo has enjoyed a decided advantage in his career against Alex Ovechkin and his teams.

Luongo is a decisive 10-1 against games in which he's played Ovie. In those games he has a .935 save percentage, and has stopped Ovechkin on all three shootout attempts and two breakaways. Ovechkin has four goals against Luongo on 49 shots.

And that doesn't even include the Olympics win Luongo and Team Canada enjoyed over the hapless Russians.

You could say Luongo is in Ovie's head, but with the way Ovechkin is playing it seems obvious the only thing in his head is saving himself for the playoffs.

Here is every game the two have played against each other:

Ovechkin vs. Luongo (every game they've played. Luongo is 10-1. Today, however, is different)

Florida 3, Washington 2

Oct. 20, 2005

Ovechkin - 10 shots on net, 2 goals

Luongon 31 shots, 29 saves

Memorable: Ovechkin scores on just his second shift ever against Luongo

Florida 3, Washington 2

Dec. 1, 2005

Ovechkin - no points, 4 shots on net

Luongo 37 saves on 39 shots

Memorable: Luongo made a sensational glove save of a wrist shot by Ovechkin with 23 seconds left.

Florida 3, Washington 2

Dec. 18, 2005

Ovechkin 5 shots on net, no points

Luongo 53 saves on 55 shots

Memorable: Luongo made his biggest save with 6 minutes left, stopping then-rookie Ovechkin on a breakaway

Florida 4, Washington 3 (shootout)

Jan. 8, 2006

Luongo 36 shots, 33 saves

Ovechkin no goals, two assists, five shots

Memorable: Ovechkin went second in the shootout and the Russian sensation went left and then watched Luongo make a big save with his leg.

Florida 5, Washington 0

Feb. 7, 2006

Ovechkin, no points, 10 shots on net

Luongo 44 shots, 44 saves

Memorable: Ovechkin had a flurry of chances. His best was a wrist shot snagged by Luongo. "I just tried to weather the storm," Luongo said. "And the storm kept coming."

Florida 4, Washington 3 (shootout)

March 18, 2006

Ovechkin no goals, 2 assists, eight shots on net

Luongo 40 shots, 37 saves and one assist

Memorable: Ovechkin was brilliant but shot wide in the shootout, during which Luongo made all three stops

Florida 3, Washington 2

Marc 22, 2006

Luongo 30 shots, 28 saves

Ovechkin no goals, one assist, three shots

Memorable "It was one of the most exciting games I think I've ever been part of," Luongo said at the time.

Vancouver 3, Washington 2 (shootout)

Oct. 27, 2006

Luongo 21 shots, 19 saves

Ovechkin one goal, one assist, two shots

Memorable: Again, Ovechkin can't beat Luongo in the shootout. He hit the post. "I think he's one of the best goalies in the league and the best goalie I've played against," Ovechkin said at the time.

Vancouver 3, Washington 2

Oct. 26, 2007

Ovechkin one goal, one assist four shots

Luongo 28 shots, 26 saves

Memorable: Assessing Ovechkin, Alain Vigneault said, at the time: "It was one of the most impressive individual performances I've ever seen. For that seven or eight minutes there, he was phenomenal. It was tough to watch from our bench but I'm sure it was really exciting to watch from the stands."

Assessing Ovechkin, Luongo said: "I was a bit surprised because he had a few chances and he decided to pass it off instead of shoot it. I don't know if I'm in his head or what. Maybe you guys can ask him when you get over there."

Washington 5, Vancouver 1

Oct. 13, 2008

Luongo 25 shots, 20 saves

Ovechkin no goals, no assists, 3 shots

Memorable: Ovechkin didn't score but he did launch himself like he was shot out of a cannon to slam Kyle Wellwood, who crumbled to the ice.

Luongo: "I don't have any answers for what happened tonight,"

Vancouver 3 Washington 2

Dec. 18, 2009

Luongo 27 shots 25 saves

Ovechkin no points, 3 shots, a -1

Memorable: "I just didn't have the puck," Ovechkin said.

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## **Playoffs in January, Canucks learn lesson in loss to Rangers**

By benkuzma Fri, Jan 14 2011



NEW YORK — It had all the makings of an NHL postseason struggle.

There was a lot of great goaltending and only one goal. Space was at such a premium that Alex Burrows and Marc Staal did more than shove each other in the second period of a 1-0 victory by the New York Rangers. While Staal got a tripping minor in the crease clash, he may have also got some of the Vancouver Canucks winger's stick in a tender area.

The Rangers not only blocked 22 shots, they denied the Canucks a clear path to goalie Henrik Lundqvist. It was frustrating.

"It's a good thing," said Canucks forward Jeff Tambellini, pressed into a fourth-line grinding role Thursday. "It pushes our team to play the right way. There are things we want to instill in our group and the hard work way we need to play down the stretch."

It's not just the battle level the Rangers showed in outhitting the Canucks, it was the way they played in their own end. Playoff style. In January.

"They try to outnumber you down low very quickly," said Canucks coach Alain Vigneault. "What you have to do is use your points and get some shots through. The combination of outnumbering and blocking shots is a good defensive weapon. Add their goalie and we played a very solid team. You have to get the lead and get them to open up and we weren't able to do that."

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## **A lone Ranger makes visitors bite the bullet**

### **Wolski's power-play goal spoils Schneider's starring role on Broadway as two streaks end with loss**

By Brad Ziemer, Vancouver Sun January 14, 2011

The Vancouver Canucks finally lost a game in regulation -- and so did goalie Cory Schneider.

One of them deserved a much better fate Thursday night.

Here in the city that never sleeps, a second-period nap proved costly for the Canucks, who blew an outstanding performance by Schneider and dropped a 1-0 decision to the New York Rangers at Madison Square Garden.

The Canucks, who were the better team in the first period, came out flat in the middle frame, took a couple of penalties and lost what momentum they had. The Rangers got a goal -- the game's only goal, it turned out -- and the Canucks couldn't generate much in the way of Grade A scoring chances as they suffered their first defeat in regulation time since Dec. 5.

It had to happen sometime. Too bad it was on Broadway. The Canucks had arrived in the Big Apple to considerable press trumpeting them as the best team in the NHL. In the world's most famous arena, they certainly didn't bring the house down.

Schneider almost did. He turned aside 34 of 35 shots and made a number of huge saves, including a blocker stop on a Marian Gaborik breakaway with 7:30 left in the third period. It wasn't enough as he lost in regulation for the first time this season as his record dropped to 8-1-2.

"He played great," said Canuck captain Henrik Sedin. "The save he makes on Gaborik is one where you really want to come back and score to help him."

The Canucks had gone 14-0-3 since dropping a 3-2 decision in regulation to the St. Louis Blues way back on Dec. 5. Asked how it felt to lose a game and not at least pick up a point, Sedin paused and said: "Strange, different."

"We knew it was going to happen sooner or later," he said. "You are not going through an NHL season without losing for a long period of time. It was going to come, but I still thought we battled hard tonight and that's what we have to bring [tonight]."

The Canuck road trip continues tonight in the U.S. capital with a game against Alexander Ovechkin and the Washington Capitals.

Thursday's game didn't go the way some expected, especially Rangers' coach John Tortorella.

"We're going to need some goals tonight," Tortorella said before the game. "We're not going to win a hockey game 1-0 tonight."

The Amazing Kreskin he is not.

Ranger goalie Henrik Lundqvist was solid as he made 31 saves to record his sixth shutout of the season. But he got a lot of help from his team and the Canucks, who couldn't seem to get close to his net. Many of Vancouver's shots came from the outside and a bunch of them, 24, were blocked by Ranger defenders.

"They played tight, they blocked a lot of shots," said Vancouver winger Mikael Samuelsson.

"Every shot we got was from the outside. This was a real playoff character [game] that way. You had to fight for the inside. We did a decent job, but not a great job."

The Rangers got the game's only goal at 7:18 of the second on a power play, with Canuck centre Manny Malhotra serving a hooking penalty. It came right after a faceoff when newly acquired Wojtek Wolski put a rebound past Schneider after Gaborik had rattled a shot off the right post.

"It kind of bounced right to their guy off the faceoff," Schneider said.

"He [Gaborik] hit it off the post and the scramble was on. They kind of got a stick on it and put it in. It was just a bad-luck goal to hop right through a guy like that."

The goal came at a time when the Rangers had seemed to tilt the ice in their favour. They were peppering Schneider with shots and the Canucks weren't generating much of anything at the other end.

"We got in some penalty trouble and that kind of set us back on our heels," winger Mason Raymond said of the second period. "They really came at us. Their D started pinching and they were clogging that neutral zone."

Raymond had one of the few blue-chip scoring opportunities for Vancouver late in the first period when he broke into the slot with speed. But his backhand shot from in close sailed over the net.

"It seems to score a goal is a tough thing to come by right now," said Raymond, who has gone six games without scoring.

The Canucks did bounce back and play a better third period, when they put 11 shots on Lundqvist. And when Schneider made his save on Gaborik's breakaway, you got the feeling Vancouver might rally to tie the game.

"That is kind of one where you think, OK, now we're going to get a break here because he stood on his head tonight," said Canuck forward Jeff Tambellini. "That was a heck of a game for him and it's too bad he played that well and didn't get a win."

Schneider did not want to dwell on his performance.

"I hate losing so it really doesn't matter to me that I made that many saves," he said.

"I'd rather win than have something like that, so it is frustrating."

ICE CHIPS: The Canucks made a couple of lineup changes for the game. Aaron Volpatti drew back on the fourth line, where he skated with Tambellini and Tanner Glass. Alex Bolduc was a healthy scratch. On defence, Aaron Rome replaced Andrew Alberts ... The loss dropped the Canucks' record to 28-9-6. They are now 13-6-3 on the road. The Rangers improved to 26-16-3.

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## **Salo plays coy with return**

### **Recovering blue-liner claims he'll be back 'sometime in 2011'**

By Brad Ziemer, Vancouver Sun January 14, 2011

Sami Salo feels like he is making progress toward his return from a ruptured Achilles tendon, but the Vancouver Canucks defenceman isn't offering any real clue on when he might be ready to play.

It was hard to tell whether Salo was being coy or serious when he told reporters following Thursday morning's skate at Madison Square Garden that "sometime in 2011" was as specific as he could be about when he'd be back.

"It is obviously a little bit better," Salo said.

"We are kind of on that schedule where we said after Christmas that I would be returning sometime in 2011.

"I think that is more realistic, just the year. I can't really say if it's tomorrow, a month from now. I have to take in a lot of different things before I can pinpoint a day when I will be ready."

Salo has been skating with the team for the past couple of weeks, but the Canucks are in a hectic part of their schedule and that hasn't allowed for much practise time.

"I have probably had three really good practices so that's not a lot," Salo said.

"But in the meantime, I think I have made some progress on the ice. That is a good way of knowing that at least you are going in the right direction."

In an interview after the first period of Thursday night's game, Canuck general manager Mike Gillis indicated that Salo's return is far from imminent.

"He hasn't been cleared to play, he won't be cleared for some time, he's still about 20 per cent deficient in strength and there is some other stuff," Gillis said.

Salo said he is not concerned about the fact the Canucks will have to make a significant roster move to clear salary cap space for him when he is ready to play.

"It hasn't affected me at all," he said.

"I think I have had other pressures on my mind than just worrying about coming back. It's more about getting back to being healthy, not just as a professional athlete, but everyday life."

Salo suffered the injury in late July while playing floorball in his native Finland.

"It's a devastating injury for any kind of athlete but over the summer I had some chances to discuss it with a lot of people, so I think that helped reassure myself that if I go through the rehab process properly, that I would be able to do everything that I want later on in my life."

Salo said regaining full strength in the tendon is the main issue he now faces.

"Just a little bit of strength, [there's] not a lot else physically, really," he said.

Winger Raffi Torres, whose name has been mentioned as a possible player the Canucks might move to clear cap space, said Thursday he's trying not to think about it.

"If I start worrying about that, then my game is going to go south and I won't be able to help these guys do what we do."

Asked how difficult it was to block out the rumours, Torres said: "It's hard, but what can you do?"

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## Canucks Try to Bounce Back Vs Capitals

(Sports Network) - The Vancouver Canucks will try to bounce back from their first regulation loss in over a month when they visit the Washington Capitals in tonight's showdown at Verizon Center.

The Canucks posted a 14-0-3 record from Dec. 8-Jan. 11 before getting dealt a 1-0 decision by the host New York Rangers on Thursday. It marked Vancouver's first regulation setback since losing to St. Louis, 3-2, on Dec. 5.

Vancouver still enters tonight as the top team in the NHL with 62 points. The club had also won five straight on the road before Thursday's loss in NYC and the Canucks, who are playing the third test of a five-game road trip tonight, are 13-6-3 as the visiting team this season.

Wojtek Wolski scored his first goal in a Rangers uniform and Henrik Lundqvist recorded his sixth shutout of the season with 31 saves to lead New York to the 1-0 victory over the Canucks.

Cory Schneider suffered the loss despite stopping 34-of-35 shots for the Canucks, who were shut out for just the second time this season. Vancouver was last blanked at Montreal on Nov. 9.

Roberto Luongo is expected to resume his starting role in net tonight. He is 16-10-0 with three ties and a 2.26 goals-against average in 31 career games against Washington.

The Capitals, meanwhile, will try to avoid a third straight loss when they host the Canucks tonight. Washington is coming off consecutive road losses to Florida and Tampa Bay, giving the Caps back-to-back defeats for the first time since an eight-game skid from Dec. 2-18.

Washington, which trails Tampa Bay by two points for the Southeast Division lead, was dealt a shutout loss by the Lightning on Wednesday at St. Pete Times Forum.

Dwayne Roloson made 23 saves as the Bolts recorded the 3-0 victory over Washington. It marked the second time Roloson has shut out the Caps since the veteran came to Tampa Bay in a trade with the New York Islanders a few weeks ago. The 41-year-old also blanked the Capitals in his Lightning debut on January 4, 1-0 in Washington.

Semyon Varlamov stopped 35 shots for the Capitals, who failed to collect at least a point for the first time since December 18. They had gone 6-0-3 in their previous nine games.

"I thought we came out with a lot of emotion and were ready to play," said Washington head coach Bruce Boudreau. "Even after their second goal, I thought there was a lot of life on the bench."

The Caps have played the last two games without winger Alexander Semin, who is questionable for tonight's test with a lower-body injury. Washington defenseman Tom Poti was forced to leave Wednesday's game with a lower-body injury and is also questionable for tonight.

Tonight marks the first of two straight on home ice for the Capitals, who will also host Ottawa on Sunday. Washington has won three of its last five on home ice and is 15-4-5 at Verizon Center this season.

Vancouver posted a home win over the Caps in the only meeting between the clubs in 2009-10, giving the Canucks their ninth win in the last 12 matchups against Washington. Vancouver has also won four of its last six in D.C.

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## **Wolski Scores, Lundqvist Records Shutout in Win Over Canucks**

Associate press

NEW YORK -- Wojtek Wolski scored his first goal as a Ranger, Henrik Lundqvist made 31 saves and New York beat Vancouver 1-0 on Thursday night to end the Canucks' 17-game unbeaten streak in regulation time.

The NHL-best Canucks (28-9-6) hadn't lost before overtime since Dec. 5. They were 14-0-3 before meeting the Rangers for the only time this season. Lundqvist made a point-blank save on Alexandre Burrows in the closing second to help the Rangers (26-16-3) improve to a season-best 10 games over .500.

Wolski, acquired this week from Phoenix for defenceman Michal Rozsival, knocked in a rebound on the power play at 7:18 of the second period. The left-winger pounced a loose puck in a scrum in front of backup goalie Cory Schneider, who lost for the first time in 11 games this season.

Brandon Dubinsky and Marion Gaborik assisted on Wolski's goal as former Ranger Manny Malhotra was in the penalty box.

The Rangers snapped Vancouver's five-game road winning streak as well as a franchise best 10-game undefeated road streak, smothering the Canucks' NHL-best road power play and shutting out the Canucks for just the second time this season. The victory marked only the second win for

the Rangers over Vancouver since February 1999. The previous victory came Feb. 2, 2004. The Canucks had won nine of the previous 10 meetings.

It was Lundqvist's sixth shutout of the season and 30th of his career. He had a career-best 10 shutouts in 2007-08. This was also his first career win against Vancouver. Lundqvist has 196 career victories.

The Canucks, with a league-high 62 points, suffered their last loss in regulation against St. Louis, a 3-2 defeat at home on Dec. 5. The Rangers won for the fourth time in five games since their three-game winning streak was snapped Tuesday at the hands of the Canadiens, 2-1, at Madison Square Garden. The Rangers improved to 11-9-2 at home.

NOTES: Wolski became the 17th Rangers player credited with at least one game-winning goal, most in the NHL this season. ... The Rangers lead the league in one-goal games with a record of 13-3-3. ... The Rangers were never more than six games over .500 last season when they missed the playoffs for first time since 2004.

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## **Rangers end Canucks' point streak**

By HOSEA CHEUNG, QMI Agency

As the old adage goes, all good things must come to an end.

Unfortunately for the Canucks, who were playing their second game of a five-game road trip, that was the case Thursday as the NHL's best team were blanked 1-0 by Henrik Lundqvist and the New York Rangers at Madison Square Garden.

The loss was Vancouver's first in regulation since Dec. 5, with their point streak ending at 17 games, and snaps their road-winning streak at five games.

While the Canucks second-ranked offence sputtered, goaltender Cory Schneider produced another strong showing despite losing his first game in regulation this season.

The rookie made 34 saves, three more than his counterpart Lundqvist, who recorded his sixth shutout of the season and 30th of his career.

After a scoreless first period – making it 11 straight games where the Canucks have not allowed an opening frame tally – the Rangers finally got on the board more than seven minutes into the second. Wojtek Wolski scored on a rebound after Marian Gaborik's shot went off the post, giving the forward his first goal as a Ranger, having been dealt to the team just three days earlier. That was all the scoring New York needed.

The Canucks had a great opportunity to even things up later in the period with a two-man advantage for 47 seconds, but could not generate a shot on net.

After Schneider had stopped a Gaborik breakaway in the third to keep his team within one, the Canucks stepped up their game.

However, a frantic finish failed to produce a tying tally as the Rangers goaltender shut the door.

### **Up next**

Roberto Luongo gets the start Friday as the Canucks continue their road trip with a matchup against Alex Ovechkin and the Washington Capitals in the U.S. capital.