

# Hodgson's turn to strut his stuff

By Jim Jamieson, The Province January 21, 2011

Canucks prospect Cody Hodgson can begin showing he deserves a shot with the NHL club on Wednesday.

That's the day that's been targeted for Hodgson's return to the AHL Manitoba Moose lineup.

It's three days later than Hodgson hoped, but considering the 20-year-old centre has been out six weeks since suffering cracked orbital bones in a practice drill, it's prudent for the Moose to give him a little extra time to get his conditioning and timing up to game speed.

Hodgson, 20, the Canucks first-round pick (10th overall) in 2008, lobbied Moose head coach Claude Noel to get back into game action on Sunday when the Moose host the Abbotsford Heat, but Noel decided he needed a little more time.

"He [Hodgson] went to Claude and asked if he could play Sunday in limited minutes," said Canucks assistant GM Lorne Henning. "They talked it over and decided it would be better for him to practise a little more and continue to get his timing back."

After a slow start, Hodgson -- who missed most of last season with back ailments -- was playing very well for the Moose. He led the team in goal scoring and was their best forward before the practice injury put him on the sidelines. He has 10-6-16 in 24 games.

Hodgson's return -- assuming he can pick up somewhere near where he left off -- will create intrigue about a possible call up.

When he was ripping up the AHL, the Canucks had no injury issues. But the shoulder injury to fourth-line centre Alex Bolduc has opened the door and Hodgson's Moose teammate Sergei Shirokov walked right through it and scored his first NHL goal in his first game after the recall on Tuesday in Colorado.

In the meantime, the Canucks are playing wingers in the fourth-line centre spot -- Mason Raymond, Jeff Tambellini, Tanner Glass -- while a healthy Hodgson might be worth a look there.

How much consideration might Hodgson get?

"The way he was trending, we were very happy with his play," said Henning of Hodgson, before the injury. "Definitely, when someone is playing well you want to reward him. Of course it depends on what's happening here. But we just rewarded Sergei Shirokov . . ."

NOTES: Prospect Jordan Schroeder will get back in the Moose lineup on Friday against visiting Abbotsford after missing six weeks with a high ankle sprain.

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# Season flat without trades

## Halfway point: Absence of wheeling and dealing leaves NHL fans disappointed

By Ed Willes, The Province January 21, 2011

With the NHL season now past the halfway pole, conditions would seem to be ripe for the opening of trading season.

There are half a dozen teams who've played their way out of playoff contention and another half dozen who've separated themselves from the pack. True, the majority of teams are clustered around playoff spots, which tends to impede movement, but there would seem to be enough hoppers and no-hoppers around to spark some wheeling and dealing.

There's just one thing.

"There's nothing going on," said one NHL executive who requested anonymity. "Nothing. The CBA was good for our business in a lot of ways. This is one area where it's been bad for business."

Evidently.

With the Feb. 28 trade deadline now six weeks away, there is an acute lack of activity and trade intel around the league and little reason to think that's going to change. Oh sure, there are deals, some 19 since the start of the season. But most of those have involved depth players.

The big deals -- the trades which can alter the direction of a franchise, the trades which capture the fans' imaginations -- have all but disappeared and the game has lost something as a result.

"There are so many variables," said Canucks GM Mike Gillis. "There's contract length, the dollars. And that's before you get to the hockey considerations. There are a lot of impediments to finding the right match."

"It's do-able," said Sharks GM Doug Wilson. "But there are a lot more things that have to be in place."

The Sharks, in fact, have pulled off three major trades in the last five years, acquiring Joe Thornton, Dan Boyle and Dany Heatley in transactions which qualify as blockbusters.

They've also struggled this season, sitting in 10th in the West before Thursday night's game with the Canucks, which, in another time, might have occasioned another big deal to shake up their team.

Their response? They picked up Kyle Wellwood on waivers and added Ben Eager for a fifth-round draft pick.

Now, as Wilson said, the big trade might still be out there. But there are so many forces working against those kind of deals, you wonder when it will come.

It starts with the salary cap. There are currently 13 teams within \$1 million of the ceiling and a team like the Canucks would have to do some creative accounting before they can entertain thoughts of a trade. But there are four teams within a couple million of the floor -- the Islanders, Thrashers, Oilers and, yikes, Avalanche -- and they are just as limited in their trading prospects.

The ceiling and the floor aren't the only problems. The market for restricted and unrestricted free agents has also dried up and that's had an impact on the trade market. For a couple of years now, the league's prevailing business practice has been to sign good players to extravagant long-term deals and the effect is two-fold. One, it means very few desirable commodities make it to free agency and, two, it's created a class of untradeable players.

Even if Wilson wanted to shake up his team with a mega-trade, where is he going to find someone to take Thornton's contract (three more years at \$7 million per) or Heatley's (three more at \$7.5 million)? Every team wants young and cheap but, unless Mike Milbury gets another job, no GM trades those kind of players.

Gillis, for his part, said the Canucks have been designed with the new reality in mind.

"We try to build the team in the summer because there's no guarantee what you're looking for will be available during the season," he said.

And given the current climate, that's a prudent position. But, like it or not, trading has always been a part of the NHL landscape and part of its story. It creates fan and media interest. It keeps the NHL in the news.

It also dangles something tantalizing in front of both losing and winning teams. For the former, it's hope that the right deal can change their franchise. For the latter, it's the hope the right deal can lead them to a championship.

At least that used to be the case.

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## **Henrik needs more eye-popping, Katy Perry-like shots on goal**

The Province January 21, 2011

The stat jumped out like a zit on Katy Perry: Henrik Sedin, five first-period shots.

One of them was a goal, a beautiful one-handed deke. Sedin has been shooting more, even going to the extreme (for him) of trying one-time slappers the previous two games.

OK, he fell down when trying it at Colorado, looking like Steve Bernier, but the point is he realizes his brother and Ryan Kesler can't take all the shots among Canucks forwards.

Before his seven shots on Thursday, Henrik had taken 90 shots, averaging just under two a game. That had him tied for 166th leaguwide; among centres he cracks the top 50 -- just. Joe Thornton has taken even fewer, but he has three more goals than Henrik's 10.

The Canucks need more balanced scoring, mostly from other lines than the Sedin unit, but it wouldn't hurt the cause if the captain chipped in more, too. Henrik's previous season-high was five shots at Buffalo on Nov. 15, when his line combined for 15.

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## **Questions raised, not answered**

### **San Jose 2 Vancouver 1; The issues: Are Canucks improving as a team? Will they be ready for playoff intensity?**

**By Ben Kuzma, The Province January 21, 2011**

Maybe it's because the competitive bar has been raised. Maybe it's because despite all the winning, there's a nagging sense that not all is quite right with the Vancouver Canucks.

Despite leading the Western Conference, owning the league's best home-ice record, being ranked second on the power play and third in offence, it was a concerned Mikael Samuelsson who wondered aloud how strong the team's pulse really is.

And when the Canucks didn't answer the query in a 2-1 shootout loss to the San Jose Sharks on Thursday at Rogers Arena, the fourth loss in the last five games exposed too many warts

Too many odd-man rushes given up, too many shots surrendered -- 25 in the second period alone -- and a penchant to be too cute in the offensive zone and not crash the crease enough.

When Joe Pavelski settled the issue in the skills show with a wrister, it did invite a question or two.

"If the playoffs come tomorrow, are we ready for it?," asked Samuelsson before stretching his goalless funk to 13 games and taking the club off the power play late in the third period.

"I don't know. If you ask guys around the locker room if they feel good about themselves, it's maybe half the team.

"We have to improve as a team like that. We have to believe in each other and to know what to do in all situations. That's how I look at. We've been winning a lot of games, but have we been improving as a team? That's what we've got to ask ourselves."

Going 0-for-5 on the power play didn't help. Neither did that second-period barrage of shots.

"I'm not sure what happened in the second period," said Canucks coach Alain Vigneault. "I've never been a part of giving the opposition 25 shots in one period."

You couldn't have asked Roberto Luongo to play better in a sparkling 44-save effort that stretched his regulation unbeaten streak dating back to Dec. 5.

You couldn't have asked Henrik Sedin to do much more than score a highlight-reel goal in the first period in which the Canucks captain had five shots. It was Dan Hamhuis winning a puck battle with Dany Heatley and springing Daniel Sedin loose.

The winger then sent a sweet saucer pass to his brother and the centre used a one-handed backhand drag move to slip the puck to the far side past goalie Antti Niemi. It will certainly make the highlight reels, but the team effort won't.

"We were better for two periods and overtime, but the middle period we gave up 20 scoring chances and that's not the way we want to play," said Henrik Sedin. "That hurt us tonight."

You could also question where the Bagel Boys have gone. Aside from Samuelsson, Jeff Tambellini and Manny Malhotra haven't scored in 12 games, Raffi Torres has been blanked in 11, Mason Raymond in 10 and Jannik Hansen nine games.

Raymond got some second-line time, Malhotra had a scoring chance and Tambellini couldn't convert a rebound in the crease off a Raymond blast. But Tambellini and Sergei Shirokov were also benched in the third period.

However, just like the playoffs, the Canucks got the kind of goaltending that could carry them a very long way. The only effort that beat Luongo had a lot to do with Christian Ehrhoff trying to stickhandle past Logan Couture in the slot. The Calder Trophy favourite stripped the blue-liner and Luongo got his glove on the initial shot before the winger slipped the rebound home on the backhand.

"I thought I could beat him and he got a stick on the puck," said Ehrhoff. "Obviously, a bad turnover. We had a really bad second period and they just outworked us and had a lot more energy. We didn't get it done."

Luongo got a glove on an overtime shot by Joe Thornton to force the shootout and looked as good as he has all season. In the third period, Luongo got a glove on another Thornton wriester off a breakaway. In the second period, he got a right pad on a Heatley power-play chance, stopped Pavelski in tight and foiled Patrick Marleau when he wired a slapper off a 2-on-1 break. Marleau and Thornton had six shots apiece.

"I felt pretty good and had a pretty good first period," said Luongo. "I don't know what happened in the second, but I was able to get in a good comfort zone and track the puck well."

One of the bigger curiosities was how former Canucks centre Kyle Wellwood would fare on the Sharks' third line with Ben Eager and Benn Ferriero. Wellwood and Eager were acquired Tuesday, Wellwood off re-entry waivers from St. Louis and Eager from Atlanta in a trade.

Wellwood might be a bit of a reach for the Sharks after a failed foray into the Kontinental Hockey League; he did draw a penalty, but was getting eaten up in the circle before going 8-for-15.

The Canucks had their way with the Sharks in earlier meetings, winning 4-3 at San Jose on Jan. 3 and 6-1 at Rogers Arena on Nov. 26. Now they need to find their way again when Calgary visits on Saturday. And they had better tighten up their game in the middle frame.

"That's not something we can tolerate," summed up Daniel Sedin.

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## **Sami's blanking out the what-ifs**

### **Comeback: His hopes are high and rehab's been going well, but he's not there yet**

**By Ben Kuzma, The Province January 21, 2011**

Sami Salo has always been hopeful that he'll return from a ruptured Achilles in 2011. But will that be in the spring or in the fall?

"I haven't made that decision yet," the Vancouver Canucks defenceman said Thursday. "I don't know which one it's going to be. It [not playing] is not out of the question, for sure. But I'm on the right track and I'm confident that eventually I will get there. Right now, the situation is I'm not there.

"All I can do is sweat and work out every day and try to find some little positive things to keep you going."

One positive is that Salo hasn't had any setbacks in his rehab routine. But the uncertainty of overcoming an injury he suffered while playing floorball in Finland on July 22 has far-reaching consequences for the Canucks.

To eventually get a healthy Salo back on the roster, the Canucks need to clear \$1.8 million US in salary cap space, as long as other lengthy injuries don't play into balancing the cap mix. And if the Canucks wanted to convince Salo to waive his no-trade clause, they would first have to get

him back on the roster for that scenario to play out. Then again, at a proper price point, a healthy Salo might be a roster option next season.

Maybe that's why Canucks general manager Mike Gillis told a Toronto radio station on Thursday that there's a possibility Salo may not play at all this season. He has to consider all options.

"It's a devastating injury and I'm still unsure," said Gillis. "It isn't simplistic. It's a really long rehab period and is accentuated that he's not a young guy. He's 36 and he's got a long life to live."

A week ago, Salo said he still needed to see a 20-per-cent improvement to be anywhere near game ready. With three more games before the All-Star Game break, mid-February may be his earliest return. Or not.

His booming slapshot would certainly aid an already potent Canucks' power play, especially the second unit, and if he can stay healthy, Salo would give the club an enviable mix on the back end. That's what drives him.

"Coming back from the trip, I'm more comfortable out there," said Salo.

"I'm a little quicker with my turns and my starts and stops. I didn't know what to expect when I jumped on the ice the first time. I felt surprisingly good and have been lucky enough to not have any setbacks."

Salo won't allow himself to think of the whatifs. Clearing cap space or wondering how the pending unrestricted free agent may fit into future plans here is too distracting.

"I haven't been able to think about that stuff because it takes away from my mental preparation, where I have to be every day to get back," stressed Salo.

"It's been mentally draining, but I can't think about other things that aren't really important for me right now."

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## **Luongo faces 25 shots in second period against Sharks**

**By Tony Gallagher, The Province January 21, 2011**

You would think the legion of people in this town who seem to mean mouth Roberto Luongo for any perceived mistake largely because he happens to make a lot of money would be in hiding Friday morning, at least for 48 hours.

But even though Luongo was so good Thursday night the play by play broadcasters nearly went hoarse mentioning his name and the Canucks didn't get a goal in the shootout, they'll be in full whine despite the fact he and he alone was responsible for the Canucks getting a point at Rogers Arena Wednesday night. The rest of the roster either looked exhausted after the first period or suffered a serious aversion to shooting the puck.

The Sedins in fact seemed to have the most energy of anyone on the Canucks but their control of the puck resulted in just the one spectacular goal even though they spent huge periods of time in the offensive zone.

In the overtime power play, the over passing reached it's pinnacle, the Canucks blowing a golden opportunity to win it, unable to finish a 4 on 3 for a full two minutes.

“I thought we had a couple of real good chances on that one but they were either bad shots or he (Sharks goalie Antti Niemi) was there,” said Henrik Sedin, who opened the scoring with a tremendous goal in the first period. “You always go through a stretch of five or six games in a season when the power play isn't working.”

Ryan Kesler carried his line on his back as he's been doing much of the season and made the occasional foray into the offensive zone on the evening but after that it was Luongo kicking and flailing as the Sharks peppered him like it was the same teams playing three years ago.

While the Canucks could have gotten the puck to the net much more than they did, the Sharks were getting arm weary flailing away at Luongo, particularly in the second period when they had 25 shots and had the Vancouver roster looking like they'd just returned from a 20-game road trip.

“You don't see 25 shots in a period very often do you,” said Tanner Glass. “It was just one of those things where they were coming, we weren't pushing back and not getting in the lanes. They were shooting and everything was getting through.”

“Both teams had great goatending tonight,” said Vancouver coach Alain Vigneault. “Most of these guys have gone through times in their career when they've scored and other times when it's been a little more challenging and we have some guys in that second phase right now. With the right attitude and right work ethic things usually come around.”

The Canucks' defence, usually the strength of this team, allowed 44 regulation shots in this one and then a perfect opportunity for Joe Thornton in the first minute of overtime but Luongo was able to get his body in front of all but one from Logan Couture in the second period.

If he plays this way when the post season begins, the Canucks should be pretty difficult to beat although that would be a tall order for any goalie.

And while there is no shootout in the playoffs, that's a good thing for two reasons. It saves the Canucks and Luongo from having to go through it and saves Vigneault from having to question his own selection of shooters.

Really, Daniel Sedin may be the team's top goal scorer but how many times does he have to go through a shootout to demonstrate to the coach's satisfaction he's not particularly good at it.

"I was in a comfort zone and tracking the puck well," said Luongo, who added it's hard to assess his own performance after a loss despite the fact it was one of his best showings of the season. "I don't know what happened there in the second period. There's no reason why we should be tired."

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## Twitter-verse suggests Salo may be out? Well, duh

By Iain MacIntyre, Vancouver Sun Columnist January 21, 2011

The Twitter-verse was briefly abuzz Thursday morning after Canuck general manager Mike Gillis told a Toronto radio station that there is a chance injured defenceman Sami Salo may not play this season.

Since Twitter demands brevity, let me just say: "Well, duh."

Gillis has stuck to that message since the day Salo ruptured his Achilles last July, cautioning the veteran's return is a matter of "if" and not "when."

Salo told me the same thing himself in an interview two weeks ago, tempering the seemingly widespread belief that he could soon return to the National Hockey League.

"Nothing has changed," Gillis explained after the Canucks' morning skate ahead of Thursday's game against the San Jose Sharks.

"We're unsure about whether he'll play, but he's making progress. That's completely consistent with everything we've said. This is a devastating injury. It can be a career-ending injury. Sami's at the point where he's not 24 or 25, so this is going to take time."

All this is accurate.

But a significant point that hasn't been made often is just how well Salo's recovery is going.

The 36-year-old was back on the ice sooner than anyone thought. In the three weeks he has been skating and practising with teammates, he has not missed one scheduled workout. Not one.

This is exceptional given the severity of his injury and the duration of inactivity it caused.

"I am a little surprised," Salo said. "I didn't know what to expect when I jumped on the ice the first time. But I felt surprisingly good and I've been lucky enough to not have any setbacks."

"I haven't missed anything. I've been healthy ... and able to do the day-to-day stuff we've planned. I haven't missed any of those, so it's positive from that point of view."

Extremely positive, regardless of the outcome.

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## **Hungry Sharks bite goal- starved Canucks**

### **Luongo kept Vancouver close, but his team's offensive funk made win an impossible mission**

A single-minded team beat a single-line one on Thursday. The Vancouver Canucks, outplayed and outchanced for the final 45 minutes by a San Jose Sharks team desperate for points after falling out of a National Hockey League playoff spot, lost 2-1 in a shootout when Joe Pavelski shot stick-side on goalie Roberto Luongo.

Luongo made 44 saves and was largely responsible for getting the Canucks a point. But Vancouver could have had two had its power play not gone 0-for-5, including a failed, twominute 4-on-3 in overtime.

More disconcerting, the Canucks failed again to get any offence beyond its first line.

Five secondary scorers — Mikael Samuelsson, Mason Raymond, Raffi Torres, Jeff Tambellini and Manny Malhotra — are on individual goal-less droughts totalling 58 games.

Tambellini and Sergei Shirokov, airlifted in from the American Hockey League to boost the sagging attack, didn't even get off the bench in the third period.

The Canucks, whose lead atop the Western Conference shrunk to two points over the Detroit Red Wings, have only one regulation win in seven games and failed for the third time in five games to score enough to give themselves a reasonable chance.

Every NHL team goes through cycles. The Sharks have won three straight after losing six in a row to fall out of playoff position.

But the duration and breadth of the Canucks' scoring problems beyond their first line and power play is a concern.

First-liners Daniel and Henrik Sedin conjured the Canucks' only goal — a beautiful onehanded deke by Henrik in the first period — but the twins became Vancouver's lone scoring threat in the second half of the game.

“ The twins played very well; they created some good opportunities,” Raymond said. “ I think myself and a few others would like to contribute a little more.

“[ San Jose] is a desperate team right now. They came out with a lot of hunger tonight.”

There seemed some justice in the Sharks’ victory, as the Canucks should have been shorthanded for four minutes late in regulation time when Alex Burrows’ careless highstick cut open Joe Thornton. But none of the four on-ice officials saw the foul.

The Sharks outshot the Canucks 35-20 over the final 45 minutes, including 25-9 in the middle period.

But for all the Sharks’ determination, puck-battle wins and scoring chances, it took Vancouver defenceman Christian Ehrhoff’s ghastly giveaway to produce the goal that got San Jose past regulation time.

Ehrhoff tried to stickhandle out of his own zone when Shark rookie Logan Couture poked the puck off the defenceman’s stick about 30 feet in front of the Vancouver net. Luongo made a terrific save on the first point-blank shot, but Couture whacked in his own rebound to tie it 1-1 at 13: 46 of the second period.

“ I thought I could beat him,” Ehrhoff said of his mistake. “ He got his stick on the puck — obviously a bad turnover that ended up in our own net. We had a pretty bad second period. They just outworked us and had a lot more energy.”

“ They took over,” Daniel Sedin said. “ We played better in the first, but they pushed back and took over in the second.”

Vancouver outshot San Jose 17-10 in the opening period and could have led by more than a goal had San Jose goalie Antti Niemi, working without a safety net due to a game-day injury to backup Antero Niittymaki, not been as sharp at the start as Luongo was at the end.

It took a brilliant move to beat him as Henrik, sprung by his brother’s saucer pass, scored at 11: 08 with a one-handed deke the Swede might have learned by watching countryman Peter Forsberg beat Canadian Corey Hirsch to win the 1994 Olympic tournament.

Sedin got the glory for the goal, but it was Dan Hamhuis’s tenacity in separating Shark Dany Heatley from the puck at the Canuck blue-line that sparked the counter-attack.

The Sedins combined for 13 shots. But the struggling five forwards, plus Shirokov, managed only seven between them.

“ There’s going to be stretches, five or six games during the season, when you’re not going to score,” Henrik Sedin said. “ It happens. I think this is more the way we’re playing; I don’t think we’re doing the little things we have to to score goals.”

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# Game within a game

Vancouver Sun- Elliott Pap

## THREE STARS

Roberto Luongo, Canucks. Only reason the Canucks made it to overtime. Too bad about the shootout, though.

Antti Niemi, Sharks. Couldn't get a pea past him after the first period. Perfect in OT and shootout.

Logan Couture, Sharks. Rookie of year candidate scored on spectacular individual effort. Dangerous all night.

**BY THE NUMBERS** Henrik Sedin ended a 10-game drought with his first-period tally ... Canucks rookie Sergei Shirokov played zero shifts after the second period. Ditto for Jeff Tambellini. Neither had a shot on goal in their 7: 26 of ice time ... Manny Malhotra led all faceoff men with a 10-for-15 night. Joe Thornton was the best of the Sharks at 11-for-19. As a team, Canucks were 37-for-67, or 55 per cent.

**SHOOTING GALLERY** The Sharks threw 45 pucks at Roberto Luongo, had another 17 blocked and missed the net 13 times for a total of 75 shots directed at the Canuck net ... The Canucks fired 37 on Antti Niemi, had 19 blocked and missed the net just eight times. There is no category for attempts not taken due to over-passing.

**DID YOU KNOW?** The 25 shots allowed by the Canucks in the second period was just three off the team record set 40 years ago — on Feb. 25, 1971 — when the expansion Nucks were overwhelmed by Bobby Orr, Phil Esposito and the rest of the big, bad Boston Bruins. The Bruins won that game 8-3. It was played in the old Boston Garden.

**THEY SHOOT, THEY SCORE** UBC goalie Jordan White, the emergency backup fill-in for the Sharks, didn't receive much net time during the pre-game warm-up and when he finally went between the pipes he was promptly beaten on consecutive shots by John McCarthy, Jamie McGinn and Benn Ferriero. Joe Pavelski, perhaps realizing the situation, then shot wide on the fourth puck directed at White.

**STARS DON'T COME OUT AT NIGHT** The three stars chosen at Rogers Arena by Rogers Sportsnet were: ( 1) Roberto Luongo; ( 2) Antti Niemi and ( 3) Henrik Sedin. Not one of the three came out for the traditional mini-lap in front of their bench. Why bother picking them then?

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## Improving Sharks edge slumping Canucks in shootout

VANCOUVER – THE CANADIAN PRESS

The San Jose Sharks are far too desperate right now to be intimidated by an opposing team's place in the NHL standings.

"We don't care who we play," Joe Thornton said after Thursday's 2-1 shootout win over the Vancouver Canucks that left him with a four-stitch cut near his right eye and blood smeared on his cheek.

"We've just got to get points. That's the bottom line. We've got to win games and get points and get back in this race."

The effort was certainly there as the Sharks scored their third straight victory after a six-game losing streak cast them out of the playoff picture. They are now a point behind seventh-place Colorado and Chicago in the Western Conference.

The Sharks didn't seem to care that Vancouver sits atop the West as they rebounded from a slow start to outshoot the Canucks 25-9 in a momentum-changing second period.

"We've been scoring more goals," Thornton said of the game that followed a pair of 4-2 wins over Phoenix and St. Louis.

"I know we didn't score too many tonight but we've been playing better defensively and it gives us a chance to win every night."

Thornton, who was clipped by the stick of a falling Alex Burrows late in the third period, had the game on his stick late in the game but Canuck goalie Roberto Luongo got a glove on one shot and smothered another.

Henrik Sedin gave Luongo a first-period lead to work with, but talented rookie Logan Couture took advantage of a defensive zone giveaway in the second period to put his own rebound behind the Vancouver netminder.

Luongo (45 saves) and Sharks goalie Antti Niemi (36 stops) were brilliant.

Only Joe Pavelski scored in the shootout, beating Luongo with a low stick-side shot.

"I've tried glove (side) in games before and I haven't really beat him glove much so it was one of those things," Pavelski said.

"We've found ways to win the one-goal game and that's the biggest thing. Tonight was a different way. The penalty kill was tremendous and Nemo, great goaltending."

Coach Alain Vigneault said the Canucks had a good start after a five-game road trip.

"I thought we came out strong, skating, considering it was our first game back," he said.

"I'm not quite sure what happened in the second (period) there. I've never been part of giving the opposition (25) shots in a period. But we gave it a good push in the third and we gave it a push in OT."

Sedin scored a spectacular goal on a play that he finished on the seat of his pants.

He took brother Daniel's break-in pass, froze Niemi and finessed the puck past him and inside the far post as he slid backwards.

"I think we had a lot of chances from the slot," Henrik Sedin said.

"It was just a matter of bad shots and the goalie making the save. I think we had enough chances to score a few more."

Niemi provided Vancouver with several scoring opportunities off rebounds, but he would save the second chance or the Sharks defence would get in the way.

"Most definitely I was seeing the puck well and when I didn't see it we were able to block it so I felt pretty good tonight," he said.

University of British Columbia goalie Jordan White was on the Sharks bench as an emergency replacement for Antero Niittymaki who suffered a groin injury at the morning skate.

The six-foot-two, 22-year-old native of suburban Surrey was signed to a one-game amateur tryout to back up Niemi.

"I knew I was going to get to stop some shots (in the warmup) and be out on the ice with the guys and that Nemo was going to be in goal for the night," said White who had three years of major junior experience in the WHL.

"It was just exciting. It was an experience I'll remember for a while."

**Notes:** Centre Kyle Wellwood made his Sharks debut against his former team ... He spent half the season with the Kontinental Hockey League's Atlant Moscow Oblast, was signed by the St. Louis Blues and claimed a day later off waivers by San Jose. Joining him on the third line was Ben Eager, another addition acquired from Atlanta for a fifth-round draft pick ... Vancouver's Alex Edler, who's fourth in Canuck scoring, played his 300th NHL game ... Canuck players will be accompanied by their brothers and sisters on a road trip to Dallas and Phoenix after the all-star break.

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## Canucks shot down by Sharks

## ***MATTHEW SEKERES***

Vancouver— Globe and Mail Update

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Not too long ago, an NHL game between the Vancouver Canucks and San Jose Sharks would have matched two of the best teams in the Western Conference, and two electric offences bound to liven up any arena.

That was not the case Thursday, however.

The Sharks entered the contest in 11th place in the conference, and Rogers Arena was a dead zone. There was little goal-scoring, and even less atmosphere.

In the end, the two goaltenders stole the show and San Jose walked off with its third straight victory, 2-1 in a shootout.

Vancouver's Roberto Luongo made 45 saves, including a glove stop on Joe Thornton during a third-period breakaway, and a point-blank save on Thornton during overtime. San Jose's Antti Niemi was just as good, though, making 36 saves and thwarting several Canucks attempts during a four-on-three power play in overtime.

### **Turning Point**

Joe Pavelski was the fourth shootout participant, and the first to score. He heaped pressure on Ryan Kesler to extend the shootout with a goal, but even with a length-of-the-ice run-up, the Canucks centre couldn't beat Niemi.

### **Scoring**

Entering the game, the Canucks were 21-1-4 when scoring first, and they notched the all-important first goal thanks to more wizardry from the Sedin twins. Daniel hit a streaking Henrik, who finished with one hand for his 10th goal of the season. But Vancouver was thoroughly outplayed in the second period. The Sharks outshot the home side 25-9 in the middle period, and tied the game on a goal by Logan Couture. It was the rookie's 21st of the season, and he remains a strong candidate for the Calder Trophy.

### **Slumping**

The Canucks' secondary scoring has disappeared in the last 10 games, and some prolonged draughts continued Thursday. Mikael Samuelsson has just one assist in his last 13 games, while Jeff Tambellini, who was benched for the third period, is without a point in 12 games and Manny Malhotra hasn't dotted the scoresheet in 11 contests. Mason Raymond and Raffi Torres have but three points apiece in their last 11. If the Canucks fancy themselves Stanley Cup contenders, this simply can't continue.

## Living the Dream

A 22-year-old from Surrey, B.C. was given the chance to wear an NHL uniform, take an NHL warm-up, and sit on an NHL bench. The Sharks summoned Jordan White from the University of British Columbia after Antero Niittymaki injured his groin in the morning skate during a shootout drill. White signed a one-game amateur tryout earlier Thursday, and dressed as Antti Niemi's backup. "I would have wanted to make it on different terms, and hopefully that's still a possibility for me, but I'll take it any way I can," White said prior to the game. "The whole day has been kind of an overwhelming experience. Friends are kind of excited to watch the game and just having you guys [the media scrum] here is something I don't usually get at my own home games." Alas, there was no fairytale ending to this story. White sat the bench.

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# Streaking Sharks beat Canucks in shootout

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THE CANADIAN PRESS

VANCOUVER -- Joe Pavelski scored the shootout winner Thursday as the San Jose Sharks won their third straight game by defeating the suddenly struggling Vancouver Canucks 2-1.

Pavelski showed patience as he came in on Vancouver goalie Roberto Luongo and beat him with a shot low to the stick side.

Henrik Sedin gave Vancouver a 1-0 lead while Logan Couture replied with his 21st of the season for the Sharks.

The Sharks had to survive a four-on-three Vancouver power play in overtime after Dan Boyle went off for roughing when he caught Canuck Ryan Kesler with a forearm to the face.

The win kept the Sharks in the Western Conference playoff hunt as they improved to 24-19-5. Their modest win streak is a rebound from six consecutive losses.

The Canucks stayed atop the conference standings with a 29-10-8 record but have lost four of their last five games.

The Sharks held a 44-34 advantage in shots after 60 minutes of the wide-open game and Luongo, who has not lost in regulation since Dec. 5, needed a virtuoso performance to keep that streak alive.

Henrik Sedin, the NHL's assist leader, showed a goal-scorer's instinct when he scored the only goal of a first period where Vancouver outshot San Jose 17-10.

He took brother Daniel's break-in pass, froze goalie Antti Niemi and finessed the puck past him and inside the far post as he slid backwards past the net on the seat of his pants.

Henrik Sedin got the puck behind Niemi during a goalmouth scramble later in the period, but defenders covered it before it could cross the line.

His goal came after Luongo denied Devin Setoguchi's backhand on his doorstep and Jamal Mayers missed burying an unexpected bounce off the end boards.

Couture evened the game in the second period after stripping defenceman Christian Ehrhoff of the puck in the Vancouver zone.

Luongo made a solid pad save, but the talented San Jose rookie backhanded home the rebound at 13:46 of a period where the Sharks had a 25-9 edge in shots.

The most shots the Canucks had given up in a single period was 28 in their inaugural season 40 years ago.

The Vancouver netminder had to be quick early in a fast-paced middle frame dominated by the Sharks to deny Pavelski's wraparound attempt.

He was sharp to foil Pavelski again and beat Patrick Marleau's attempt on the rebound. Dany Heatley couldn't convert from short range during a late second-period power play.

Luongo came to his teammates' rescue early in the third period when he got a glove on Joe Thornton's breakaway and deflected the puck over the end glass.

University of B.C. goalie Jordan White was on the Sharks bench as an emergency replacement for Antero Niittymaki who suffered a groin injury at the morning skate.

The six-foot-two, 175-pound native of suburban Surrey was signed to a one-game amateur tryout to back up Niemi. White also had three seasons of major junior experience with the WHL's Portland Winter Hawks and Prince George Cougars.

**NOTES:**(at) Centre Kyle Wellwood made his Sharks debut against his former team ... he spent half the season with the Kontinental Hockey League's Atlant Moscow Oblast, was signed by the St. Louis Blues and claimed a day later off waivers by San Jose ... joining him on the third line was Ben Eager, another addition acquired from Atlanta for a fifth-round draft pick ... Vancouver's Alex Edler, who's fourth in Canuck scoring, played his 300th NHL game ... Canuck players will be accompanied by their brothers and sisters on a road trip to Dallas and Phoenix after the all-star break.

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## **Canucks lack bite**

By HOSEA CHEUNG, QMI Agency

VANCOUVER - The Canucks failed to put a halt to the bleeding Thursday.

With a mediocre showing in front of a sold-out yet lifeless Rogers Arena crowd, Vancouver lost their third straight, dropping a 2-1 decision in a shootout to the San Jose Sharks.

Joe Pavelski's lone tally in the shootout, combined with missed attempts by Mason Raymond, Daniel Sedin, and Ryan Kesler, proved to be enough for the Sharks, who have now won three straight.

The loss is Vancouver's fifth in their last seven games and they had Roberto Luongo to thank for the extra point. The goaltender stopped 44 shots, including a breakaway save on Joe Thornton in the third to help send the game into overtime.

"It was a hard-fought game," said Luongo, who have yet to suffer a regulation loss since Dec. 5. "It could have went either way and obviously it came down to a shootout and we lost."

His counterpart Antti Niemi turned aside 36 of the Canucks' 37 shots, 15 of which came from the top trio of the Sedins and Alex Burrows.

Missing for Vancouver was that secondary scoring, which was so prominent during their torrid streak through December and early January, as Daniel and Henrik provided the lone regulation tally and generated most of the team's quality chances.

The twins got the scoring started in the first period with a highlight reel tally as Daniel, on a fast break, fed the puck to Henrik who finished with a one-handed deke past Niemi.

San Jose tied it in the second when Logan Couture stripped the puck from Christian Ehrhoff in Vancouver's zone. After Luongo made the initial save, Couture put home the rebound for his 21st of the season. Despite dominating the middle frame with 25 shots to Vancouver's nine, San Jose only managed one on the board.

"I thought we had a pretty good first period and I don't know what happened in the second," said Luongo. "They were throwing pucks from everywhere, which is good for me, I was able to get into a good comfort zone and I was tracking the puck well."

### **Welly quiet in return**

There was no dramatic return by ex-Canuck Kyle Wellwood in his Sharks debut as the centre, who spent the previous two seasons with Vancouver, finished with just one shot. Wellwood, however, wasn't the only one to don the Sharks jersey for the first time.

With Antero Niittymaki injured in the morning skate, the Sharks signed UBC Thunderbirds goaltender Jordan White to a one-game amateur tryout. The 22-year-old didn't see any game action but watched from the bench in a backup role.

### **Up next**

The Canucks play the second game of their four-game home stretch Saturday when division rival Calgary Flames come to town.

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## College goalie gets call from Sharks to be emergency backup

VANCOUVER -- Jordan White got the best seat in the house to watch a goaltending clinic Thursday night.

The University of British Columbia netminder signed a one-game amateur tryout contract to be the emergency backup for the San Jose Sharks before their 2-1 NHL shootout victory over the Vancouver Canucks.

He got to watch Shark goalie Antti Niemi make 36 saves and stone Canucks Mason Raymond, Henrik Sedin and Ryan Kesler in the shootout.

At the other end, Canuck netminder Roberto Luongo was also brilliant, stopping all but one of a 46-shot barrage.

"It was really exciting," White, who jumped on the ice with the rest of the team to congratulate Niemi after the shootout, said in the dressing room.

"Both goalies played really well but I'm glad these guys came out on top. I've been a Canucks fan for a while but not tonight."

Sharks goaltender Antero Niittymaki suffered a groin injury during the morning skate at Rogers Arena, leaving Niemi as San Jose's only netminder.

White, of suburban Surrey, was told he was making the jump to the big leagues when he was called in to his coach's office just before the UBC Thunderbirds' practice.

"Everyone was really welcoming," said White, 22, a second-year university goalie with three years' major junior experience in the WHL.

"I played some soccer with the guys before (the on-ice warmup). The guys were really positive and upbeat in here. It was really nice."

His day was done after stopping some shots and stretching in the pre-game warm-up.

But there were plenty of memories for the Thunderbirds goalie who has started every conference game in 2010-11. He has a 7-7-4 record with a 3.51 goals-against average and an .876 save percentage.

"These are guys you meet on TV, you have in your fantasy hockey teams or guys you cheer for, so it's nice to see how they prepare and practise their trade.

"The whole day overall had a lot of moments that exceeded what I thought it would be.

"The first call in the afternoon and coming here and seeing how welcoming all the guys are, and just being able to go out there and lace 'em up and see the energy in this building and just be on the ice is something I really cherished."

There was one anxious moment when Niemi crawled out from under a pileup on his doorstep in the first period.

"I wasn't too worried," White said. "He bounced back right away."

White isn't the first UBC goalie to get a call from the NHL. Chris Levesque served as a backup to Johan Hedberg for the Canucks in a Dec. 9, 2003, game.

White got to keep his Sharks sweater and hat for his night's work.

"I don't really need too much," he said. "This is something I will remember forever."