

## DEAR ABBY

Write to Dear Abby online at [dearabby.com](http://dearabby.com) or by mail at P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069



**Dear Abby:** My colleagues and I were recently notified that our company is closing next month. My work partner and I have collaborated closely for four years, and he's an expert at the software I need to know to get a job in my field.

When I asked if he would give me a couple of lessons via Zoom, I was thinking it'd be about a three-hour commitment for him. But he was enthusiastic and designed a 20-plus-hour curriculum for me.

He keeps saying he doesn't want me to pay him, but I want to find an appropriate way to express my gratitude. What would be an appropriate amount to compensate him without getting too steep (which is why I didn't do the full-price software training in the first place. It was \$2K)? Thanks for any advice.

— *Thankful in Illinois*

**Dear Thankful:** If you know of any interests, hobbies, a sport, etc. your partner has outside the workplace, consider going online to see if you can find something connected to that activity he would enjoy that's within your budget.

**Dear Abby:** Every year on Facebook's "National Daughter's Day," my daughter's mother-in-law professes her love, respect and admiration for her own daughter, but never acknowledges her daughter-in-law (my daughter).

Yet on "National Son's Day," she posts glowing tributes not only to her sons, but also to her son-in-law.

We all live within miles of each other, and this recurring slight makes it difficult to act like everything is fine when, in truth, this is hurtful to my daughter and to our family.

Should I address this issue with the mother-in-law or continue to bite my tongue?

— *Dismissed in Texas*

**Dear Dismissed:** If you are smart, rather than address the issue with your daughter's mother-in-law, who either has the emotional intelligence of an oyster or really doesn't care for your daughter, mention it to your son-in-law and point out to him that being slighted is hurtful. There may be a better result if HE brings it up to his mother.

**Dear Abby:** I battle with a double chin, and I loathe it. My chin hides itself only if I am under 126 pounds. Anything over that and it's there. I'm not overweight, but my double chin makes me feel that way.

I have read that dermal fillers in the chin can discreetly get rid of this issue. The problem? My husband. He's against any type of plastic surgery. He doesn't like my double chin either, but he wants me to only get rid of it "naturally."

Normally I would agree. I have been exercising (running four times a week) without success. I don't feel comfortable looking this way.

I think I deserve this short-cut. Should I get the filler without my husband's blessing, or should I continue this struggle?

— *Taking It On the Chin*

**Dear Taking It:** You are an adult, and it's your body. You do not need permission to do something that will help you feel better about yourself. If your husband is against any type of plastic surgery (and by the way, fillers do not qualify as plastic surgery), HE should forgo having it when his frown lines begin to look like tractor furrows and he develops a wattle.

## NHL

## Flat salary cap forces teams to get creative

BY STEPHEN WHYNO

AP Hockey Writer

In the 16 years since the salary cap has been a reality in the NHL, it never has been this much of a challenge to maneuver.

Teams that made moves in 2019 and right up to the 2020 trade deadline expected the cap to increase substantially from the current \$81.5 million. Then the coronavirus pandemic hit, the league and players' association agreed to freeze the ceiling at that number and executives had to get creative to be cap-compliant for opening night of the most unusual season in hockey history.

The defending Stanley Cup champion Tampa Bay Lightning set a roster that, when injury allowances are factored in, is just \$334 from the cap ceiling. It's a similar situation for the St. Louis Blues, who are within \$300,000 of the cap with hopes of adding Vladimir Tarasenko when he's ready to return from another shoulder operation. The Vegas Golden Knights started with the an unusual lineup of five defensemen and 13 forwards because they figured playing short on the blue line was less risky than exposing a young player to waivers.

"This is the hardest year to manage a flat cap," Blues general manager Doug Armstrong said. "It's certainly no one's fault at the league or the PA or the players or the management. It just caught everybody off guard."

A team can't be over the cap and would have to play with fewer than the standard 18 skaters if necessary. It has happened a handful of times since



Nathan Denette/The Canadian Press via AP file

**Tampa Bay's Nikita Kucherov, left, celebrates his goal against Toronto during a game in 2019 in Toronto. Kucherov's hip injury has helped the Stanley Cup champion Lightning to stay just under the salary cap.**

the cap was implemented in 2005.

What's usually a difficult balancing act became a trapeze show this year for GMs and their cap gurus to save every dollar. According to the database site Puckpedia, 22 of 31 teams either started the season using the long-term injured reserve exemption to go over or were within \$2 million of the cap.

The Lightning faced a crunch before becoming bubble hockey champions and were only able to avoid more treacherous cap gymnastics and losses when star Nikita Kucherov was lost for months because of a hip injury that required surgery. They still gave up a second-round pick and center Cedric Paquette in a trade with Ottawa and had to play opening night without forward Tyler Johnson to make it work. He was stashed on the taxi squad — created this season to help teams deal with

roster headaches — after clearing waivers.

"It isn't ideal, but it's manageable," Tampa Bay GM Julien BriseBois said. "Part of the ingredients necessary to success in the NHL is team depth. In order to have team depth, you need to properly manage your cap space."

Even without Kucherov — who could be activated for the playoffs when the cap doesn't matter — Tampa Bay is again a title contender.

"A big part of that is what Julien was able to do," coach Jon Cooper said. "To be able to keep a group together that had some success last year, obviously, that took some work. And you have to be prepared for every scenario that's going to come at us. He was."

Armstrong and Blues assistant Ryan Miller were, too. They went through several "what if?" scenarios after it was clear that forward Alex Steen couldn't keep playing because

of an injury.

Much like the Washington Capitals used long-term injury cap allowances to make up for losing goaltender Henrik Lundqvist and defenseman Michal Kempny by signing former Boston captain Zdeno Chara, the Blues made the most of Steen's retirement by adding one of the top free agents available in Mike Hoffman just before training camp.

Oh, and they should get Tarasenko back healthy and under the cap just in time for the stretch run.

"Our goal is to have him ready," Armstrong said.

And the dance isn't over. The Montreal Canadiens continue to cycle some of their top young players through their taxi squad for no reason other than to bank cap space for later; those players don't need waivers and instead are paid a minor league salary for taxi squad days while they practice and await a call-up.

## Sitting Stars

The NHL's first COVID-19 outbreak came for the Dallas Stars, who had 17 players test positive for the coronavirus. Their first four games were postponed, with the new season opener scheduled for Friday at Nashville, which had its game Tuesday against Carolina postponed.

Veteran coach Rick Bowness is prepared for more changes.

"I've laid out this whole thing and a map on a day-to-day basis and it's in pencil, so we can erase it and change it," Bowness said. "We'll adapt and we'll just roll with what each day brings us."

YOUR HOROSCOPE *By Madalyn Aslan*

Stars show the kind of day you'll have

★★★★★ DYNAMIC | ★★★★★ POSITIVE | ★★★★★ AVERAGE | ★★★★★ SO-SO | ★★★★★ DIFFICULT

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR THURSDAY, JAN. 21, 2021:** Exciting, colorful and passionate, you're headed straight for the top. You're both driven and pleasure-loving, and this year your star quality allows a project to grow and be very profitable. If single, you're a heartbreaker and lovers never forget you. You don't commit this year. If attached, you work hard if you wish to remain so. Your private life's separate from your public life. AQUARIUS inspires you to go far.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19)**

★★★★★ Today underscores how emotional impulses and early family conditioning have affected your financial choices, and offers insights into making changes for the better regarding this. You will feel unexpectedly grateful. Tonight: A cherished bond grows and matures through honest discussion.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)**

★★★★★ Today ushers in a renewed zest for life. Leadership skills are present, and you'll enjoy physical activity. This inspiring pattern continues throughout the day. A touch of humor and tolerance helps you make the best of complex situations. Tonight: Up late burning the midnight oil.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20)**

★★★★★ Today finds you more reserved, cherishing private time. A dream conveys important messages. Others have opposing tastes and priorities. Compromise and tolerance will smooth over differences. Take more time out for yourself. Tonight: Early beddie-byes and a deep slumber, for once.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22)**

★★★★★ Healing and growth are due. A larger-than-life quality prevails, but stay grounded and keep your perspective. Seek efficiency. Kind, talented associates open appealing avenues of activity for you. Become more active in community work or groups. Tonight: Online networking.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)**

★★★★★ Work hard and be patient today. Prepare a poster with pictures and affirmations portraying your aspirations. Use it to visualize where you want to go with your life. Protect your professional credibility by doing the very best you can. Tonight: Then just release the situation.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)**

★★★★★ Today encourages thoughts of travel and exchanging information. Listen carefully. Worthwhile information comes your way during casual conversations. Foreign languages and imported items intrigue you. Tonight: Reach out to a foreign-born friend or colleague residing in a land far away.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)**

★★★★★ The afterlife and reincarnation captivate you today. Heed a message brought by a spectral visitor or the fey folk. Strategy helps resolve any monetary glitches. The sunset offers glimpses into other dimensions. Tonight: Thinking what a strange day it has been.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)**

★★★★★ Companions will present ambitious plans and ideas. Trust your instincts and all will be well. An established partnership is entering a new phase. A loved one is experiencing a temporary setback or facing a legal issue. Tonight: Your support and loyalty would be appreciated.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)**

★★★★★ Today favors learning more about wellness. Rethink your dietary and exercise habits. Others set a positive example and offer worthwhile suggestions. It's an ideal time to make needed changes and to examine how hereditary influences might impact health. Tonight: Relax.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)**

★★★★★ Creative projects can be revamped. An old friendship is rekindled, but for good or ill the same patterns repeat in a relationship. Others will be attracted to you. Cultivate new friendships and follow through with artistic ventures. Tonight: Favors tender interludes.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)**

★★★★★ Today brings a surprise regarding your heritage. Happiness is shared with one you love very much. Make a special effort to communicate with family members. A house blessing would be very beneficial. Tonight: Use sandalwood incense to invoke a calming, helpful ambience.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)**

★★★★★ Today helps you focus and refine details. Others express enthusiasm for your suggestions. Have a brainstorming session over cups of hot mulled cider on the longest of nights. It's a wonderful time to write that book you've been talking about. Tonight: Ideas and more ideas.

## McCollum

Continued from A7

The timing isn't great. Not only did the injury occur during what so far has been the best season of his career, but the team is already without center Jusuf Nurkic. Plus, it's McCollum's third major foot injury of his career dating back to his days at Lehigh. Still, McCollum appeared to be managing the news well.

"I think I'm at the point in my life where you control what you can control," McCollum said. "I'm not going to feel sorry for myself. I live a good life. I'm still going to live a good life."

McCollum's injury is the latest in a run of bad luck for the franchise over the past few years. This season, the Blazers (8-6) were already without forward Zach Collins (ankle) for at least a few months, Nurkic for at least eight weeks and now McCollum. Coach Terry Stotts chalked it all up as being a part of the NBA.

"My thoughts always go to the player first in these situations," Stotts said. "What they're going to be going through. It's much more how it impacts them and how they come back from it. Obviously, it affects our team and we have to get back on track and figure out ways to win games without him."

Let's recap the team's run of bad luck just for context:

The Blazers began last season without Nurkic, who broke his foot in March 2019. In November of the following season, forward Zach Collins was lost for several months with a shoulder injury. A month later, Rodney Hood was lost for the season with a torn Achilles.

Nurkic and Collins returned to the team during the bubble restart last summer. There, Collins fractured his ankle. He

"There's a lot of people going through a lot worse situations than me. So, I'll be OK. I've been through injuries before."

— **C.J. McCollum, Trail Blazers guard**

was expected to return this season by the end of January but recently underwent a second surgery that could cost him several more months.

Then, Nurkic went down with a broken wrist last Thursday while trying to steal the ball during a loss to Indiana. Saturday night, McCollum broke his foot in the oddest of ways.

He drove to the basket in the first quarter against Atlanta. After scoring on a layup, McCollum landed and Atlanta center Clint Capela came down on his foot and it twisted.

"There's no training for a 7-footer landing on your foot," McCollum said. "There's nothing you can do about it."

McCollum hopped to the bench. He passed his normal stress reaction test he uses but acknowledged that his adrenaline was also high at the time.

"I was definitely moving differently," he said.

McCollum figured he could play a few more minutes but ended up finishing the half.

"Once halftime came, it got stiff," he said.

McCollum sat out the remainder of the game. An MRI that night determined he had a sprained foot.

Later that evening, the team issued a release stating that McCollum's foot was fractured but that fortunately it would not require surgery. The fracture is so small that doctors didn't notice it in the initial MRI, according to McCollum.



Rich Pedroncelli/AP file

**Sacramento Kings' Buddy Hield, left, fouls Portland Trail Blazers' C.J. McCollum during a game in Sacramento, California, on Jan. 9. McCollum will be out several weeks due to a fracture in his foot on Saturday against the Atlanta Hawks.**

Overall, McCollum said he is in good shape compared to past foot injuries.

In January 2013, McCollum broke his left foot, ending his senior season at Lehigh.

"I don't think I'll ever be as low as I was when I hurt my foot in college," McCollum said. "That was probably as low as I've ever been besides my grandfather. So, I'll be all right."

He came out OK from those ordeals and expects to do the same with the latest bad break.

"I like to think that since I work so hard on my body and I do things the right way that I'm going to be in a boot for a few weeks as opposed to having to get surgery," McCollum said.

McCollum said he isn't experiencing any pain. He will wear a boot to protect the foot. All he can do is rest. After some time, he'll be able to work out in a pool.

In four weeks, the boot comes off and doctors will examine his fracture.

"I don't have a timeline," McCollum said. "I'll return when I feel like myself."

Losing McCollum, Stotts

said, will require some adjustments, of course. He said the Blazers must figure out how to make up for the loss of his 26.7 points and five assists per game.

Players such as Gary Trent Jr., Rodney Hood and Anfernee Simons will see time at the shooting guard spot in place of McCollum. And, of course, Lillard might have to take on even more of the offensive load, although that's not ideal.

"I don't want to overwork Damian," Stotts said. "Obviously, we're going to still rely on him to carry a lot of shoulders. But I think it's up to everybody, all the players, myself, to lighten that burden a little bit."

It's not a good situation for the team or McCollum, from a basketball standpoint. Still, McCollum, who said his aunt has been diagnosed with COVID-19, kept reiterating that there are more serious things going on in the world than his foot.

"This is something," he said, "that I can overcome with some time and some rest."

## Next up

Washington St. at No. 13 Oregon  
When: 5 p.m.  
Friday  
TV: Pac-12



## Ducks

Continued from A7

"We've certainly put a certain unit together a little bit more this week. We've basically divided up our lineup most days in practice pretty much the whole year. We've basically set on a group that we hope that will really work for us, then I think we'll play it by ear for the rest of the game. I don't know if you're going to see the same kind of revolving door but that remains to be seen. It's still fluid in practice. We still have a lot of

players that are vying for that time and competing."

Graves didn't have to go through the entire roster to make it clear where the demarcation is; the stats illustrate it. Te-Hina Paopao, Taylor Mike-sell, Erin Boley and Nyara Sably have each started all of

UO's 10 conference games and play the most minutes, with Jaz Shelley, Taylor Chavez and Sedona Prince not far behind and Sydney Parrish, Maddie Scherr and Angela Dugalic also making regular contributions.

With turnovers being more problematic of late, Oregon could start to lean on its more experienced players a bit more.

"We can't turn the ball over as much," Graves said. "We can't deal with pressure in that way. We've got to be a little bit more patient offensively; I think we took some really early

shots (at Arizona)."

Graves was happy with the way the Ducks played defensively in last week's loss, but the offense was erratic.

Washington State (7-3, 5-3) pushed UO to the brink last month and its three losses have been by a combined 10 points, with two coming in overtime. The Cougars are easily the Ducks' best win of the season to date and Friday will either be a season sweep of what so far has been a more poised WSU team, or a split that results in a fourth loss in five games for UO.