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## Leafs fall to Rangers at ACC

Zach Hyman short-handed goal highlight of the night for blue and white.



Leaf Zach Hyman controls the puck under pressure from Rangers captain Ryan McDonagh late in Thursday night's game at the ACC. (RICK MADONIK / TORONTO STAR) | [ORDER THIS PHOTO](#)

By [MARK ZWOLINSKI](#) Sports reporter  
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Zach Hyman gave a fist pump, then body-slammed the glass after he scored one of the nicest short-handed goals you'll see.

For Hyman and the Leafs, though, there was little else worth celebrating on Thursday night against the New York Rangers, who — with a short-handed marker of their own from ex-Leaf Michael Grabner — won 5-2 at the Air Canada Centre and brought the Leafs back to earth after about a month of solid play.

After eight wins in their previous 10 games, the Leafs were uncharacteristically sloppy, especially in their own zone.

It was easy to pin part of the struggle on the loss of top defenceman Morgan Rielly to injury this week, but Hyman and the Leafs said that was no excuse for a poor team effort overall.

"Freddie (Andersen) kept us in the game," Hyman said after the Leafs were outshot 41-25. "We've gotta be better on the forecheck. We have to get pucks back and we have to better on the cycle."

Hyman lifted fans out of their seats for a few moments, at least, with his nifty effort at 16:02 of the second period. The rookie has already earned a reputation for tenacity, relentless puck pursuit and hockey smarts.

After carrying the puck into the Rangers zone, he left it along the end boards to the right of Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist. Defenceman Adam Clendening took possession, but made a huge mistake in front of his own net. The Ranger hung onto the puck a shade too long and Hyman stripped him of it before drawing Lundqvist to the ice, then roofing a wrist shot for his sixth goal of the season.

That nose for the puck has proved to be a ticket to a full-time job on a line with Auston Matthews and Connor Brown, and earns daily praise from the coaching staff.

“I just tried to forecheck hard,” Hyman said of his goal. “I kinda saw the puck and stick-lifted (Clendening). . . . I got the puck back, then waited out Lundqvist.”

The short-hander was the third for the Leafs this season, as many as J.T. Miller of the Rangers has this season to lead the league.

Grabner, who flashed tremendous speed on his breakway goal with the Rangers a man down, added an empty-netter moments later when the Leafs pulled goalie Andersen for an extra attacker. Grabner now has 21 goals and has been one of the most dangerous forwards in the NHL.

Hyman hit the 20-point mark, the fifth Leaf rookie to do so following Matthews, Brown, Mitch Marner and William Nylander.

Marner had an assist — his 27th, tops among NHL rookies — on Tyler Bozak’s first-period goal and climbed to within one point of Matthews for the overall NHL rookie scoring lead.

Overall, Toronto rookies have 62 goals and 107 assists for 169 points through 42 games. They are on pace for 334 points, which would break the NHL record of 330, set by the 1992-93 Winnipeg Jets — who had Teemu Selanne with 76 goals and 132 points in his rookie year.

Rangers rookie Pavel Buchnevich also scored for the Rangers, his sixth in 14 games.