



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • November 18, 2025



Pyotr Kochetkov makes 29 saves as Hurricanes beat Bruins 3-1

By: WRAL

BOSTON — BOSTON (AP) — Jordan Staal outmuscled a Boston defenseman for a goal with one arm, Pyotr Kochetkov stopped 29 shots and the Carolina Hurricanes cooled off the hot Bruins for a 3-1 victory on Monday night.

Former Bruin Taylor Hall and Mark Jankowski also scored for the Hurricanes, who won for the sixth time in eight games and evened the season-series after losing the first meeting on Nov. 1.

Riley Tuftle spoiled the shutout with 10 seconds left and Jeremy Swayman made 29 saves for the Bruins, who had a six-game home-winning streak halted and lost for just the second time in 10 games overall. Swayman's personal five-game winning streak was stopped.

Staal, positioned at the edge of the crease, held off Andrew Peeke with his left arm, and knocked in the rebound of Joel Nystrom's shot from the point to make it 1-0 at 8:25 of the second period.

Jankowski scored off a rebound, too, flipping the puck over Swayman's right shoulder 13:34 into the second for his first this season.

Kochetkov robbed David Pastrnak's bid from the right circle, coming across for a pad save late in the first.

Swayman made a glove stop on Seth Jarvis' clean breakaway with the Hurricanes' shorthanded late in the second.

Boston defenseman Charlie McAvoy was out after he was hit in the mouth by a slap shot in Saturday's victory at Montreal.

Boston coach Marco Sturm said after the morning skate that McAvoy was meeting with doctors and "there's no timeline" for his return. It's still unclear if he'll need surgery.

Hurricanes: At Minnesota on Wednesday in the second of a four-game road trip.

Bruins: At Anaheim on Wednesday in the first of four road games.



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Recap: Canes Stymie Bruins In Boston

By: Walt Ruff & Peter Dewar

Carolina knocks off Atlantic-leading B's, moves to 6-1-1 in its last eight

BOSTON - Two-point performances from Taylor Hall and Joel Nystrom, as well as a 29-save showing from Pyotr Kochetkov, led the Carolina Hurricanes to a 3-1 victory over the Boston Bruins at TD Garden on Monday.

[GAME SUMMARY](#) | [BOX SCORE](#) | [BUY TICKETS](#)

As was the case in the two clubs' meeting two-and-a-half weeks ago, the opening 20 minutes passed with a handful of chances for both sides, but no goals. But unlike in that matchup on Nov. 1, Carolina netted the game's first goal just before the midway point of period two, as Jordan Staal managed to bat home a Joel Nystrom rebound with one hand.

Five minutes later, Mark Jankowski pushed the Canes' lead to two, depositing more loose change after Hall's initial shot hit him and dropped conveniently to his stick. Hall shone once again in the third period, capping things off with a slick insurance tally at 17:27.

Kochetkov's shutout bid was foiled with a garbage-time goal in the final seconds, but the 26-year-old maintained his perfect record with his fourth straight win to start the season.

Stats & Standouts

Forward Taylor Hall tallied two points (1G, 1A) to push his point streak to three games. Hall has found the scoresheet in five of his last six outings, co-leading the team with six points in that span.

Forward Mark Jankowski's first goal of the season served as the game-winner on Monday. With that marker, every forward who has suited up for the Hurricanes this season has scored.

Forward Jordan Staal scored for the second straight game, recording points in back-to-back games for the first time this season.

Defenseman Joel Nystrom (2A) recorded the first multi-point game of his career.

Goaltender Pyotr Kochetkov has now won his first four starts in a season for the first time in his career. His seven

total goals allowed this season are also his fewest through four starts to open a campaign.

The Hurricanes have seven wins through their first 10 road games of a season for the third time in franchise history, following 2021-22 (8) and 2024-25 (7).

They Said It...

Rod Brind'Amour on the effort...

"I thought it was a solid game. We had a game plan, and the guys stuck to it for the most part. It's 2-0 going to the third, and we maybe sat back a little, but that's kind of natural. They were kind of throwing everything at you, but I thought we had a really solid game all around. 20 guys and everyone contributed."

Taylor Hall expressing similar thoughts...

"(The Bruins), they're not afraid to sit back and force you to make mistakes. They have a really good neutral zone trap. I think the last time we played here, we fed into that a bit. We turned pucks over, and they have some dangerous players. We didn't do that as much tonight. We still had some moments where we gave it to them, but for the most part, we controlled play by just taking what was given."

Jordan Staal reviewing Pyotr Kochetkov's night...

"Koochie was great. He's been great for us since he got back. He made some key saves and gave us a great chance to win..."

Pyotr Kochetkov after improving to 4-0-0 on the season...

"Every game the guys, defense and forwards, (are) very helpful. There's no surprises for nobody. We have a system, and guys always do well. For me, I'm very excited to play for the guys because they help me every night."

What's Next After This Game?

The Canes are scheduled to practice on Tuesday in Minnesota ahead of Wednesday's meeting with the Wild.

Next Game: Wednesday, Nov. 19 at Minnesota | 9:30 p.m. ET | TNT, TruTV, HBO Max

Next Home Game: Wednesday, Nov. 26 vs. NY Rangers | 7:00 p.m. ET | Tickets | Parking



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Kochetkov makes 29 saves, Hurricanes defeat Bruins

By: Joe McDonald

Hall has goal, assist for Carolina, which is 6-1-1 in past 8 games

BOSTON -- Pyotr Kochetkov made 29 saves, and the Carolina Hurricanes stayed hot with a 3-1 win against the Boston Bruins at TD Garden on Monday.

"I felt really good today," Kochetkov said. "It was a good team win. ... Every game, forwards, defensemen, everyone helps. There are no surprises. We have a system and guys always do well. I'm very excited to play for the guys because the guys help me every night."

Kochetkov is 4-0-0 with a 1.70 goals-against average, .926 save percentage and one shutout in five games (four starts) this season. He missed Carolina's first 11 games because of a lower-body injury he sustained during the preseason.

"He was great," Hurricanes captain Jordan Staal said. "He's been great for us since he got back (on Nov. 4). He made some key saves and gave us a great chance to win. It was a tough one to give up at the end for him when it was looking like a shutout, but obviously he played a great game for us."

Taylor Hall had a goal and an assist, and Staal and Mark Jankowski also scored for the Hurricanes (13-5-1), who are 6-1-1 in their past eight games. Joel Nystrom had two assists for his first multipoint NHL game.

Riley Tufté scored, and Jeremy Swayman made 29 saves for the Bruins (12-9-0), who had their six-game home winning streak end.

"We felt it in the morning, we felt it before the game. It was just a slow day today," Boston coach Marco Sturm said. "I could see it in their eyes, mentally, physically not 100 percent today, that's for sure."

The Bruins played without defenseman Charlie McAvoy, who may need surgery after he was hit in the face with the puck midway through the second period of a 3-2 win at the Montreal Canadiens on Saturday. Forwards Viktor Arvidsson (undisclosed) and Casey Mittelstadt (lower body) also missed the game after each was placed on injured reserve earlier in the day.

"We've had a great next-man-up mentality, and anyone who is in this lineup will do their job," Swayman said. "So, I'm really proud of the guys who have stepped in and played their role well."

Staal gave the Hurricanes a 1-0 lead at 8:25 of the second period. While warding off Bruins defenseman Andrew Peeke in front, he was able to knock in the rebound of Nystrom's shot with one hand at the right post.

"I was just trying to get to the net," Staal said. "Usually [Jordan Martinook] beats me there, so I got there first, and sometimes those bounces go either way, and I got my arm on it before anybody else did, and I was fortunate enough to have a little lane there and sneak it in."

Jankowski scored his first of the season to make it 2-0 at 13:34. Hall's initial shot hit Jankowski as he was cutting across the crease, and the forward was able to quickly locate the rebound and lift a shot in over Swayman's blocker.

Hall then extended the lead to 3-0 at 17:27 of the third period. A rolling puck hopped over Nikita Zadorov's stick in the neutral zone, and Hall picked it up and skated down the right wing before cutting toward the net and tucking a shot past Swayman's right pad while falling to the ice.

Hall has six points (three goals, three assists) in his past six games.

"When you're up 2-0 you want to keep the foot on the gas, you want to be smart where you are on the ice, (and) you want to be above their players," Hall said. "But at the same time, if you see a chance to create offense you've got to do that. That's in our DNA as attackers, so the best way to defend is to go play in their end and force them to come 200 feet, and we did that well."

Tufté scored a power-play goal with 10 seconds remaining for the 3-1 final.

"That was a real solid team game for us," Hall said. "The schedule has been pretty crazy, so for us to come out and play as well as we did, just real solid hockey, winning hockey, and that's what you have to have when you come into a barn like this."



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NHL power ratings: Avalanche show no decline after Week 6 of 2025-26 season

By: Scott Erskine

For the second consecutive week, six points were available for the Colorado Avalanche and they earned every one of them. In fact, Colorado (13-1-5) has come away without at least one point just once in its first 19 games of the 2025-26 season and has gone 8-0-2 since a regulation loss to the Boston Bruins on Oct. 25.

The Dallas Stars and Los Angeles Kings also went 3-0-0 in Week 6, which ran from Tuesday to Sunday this time around. Meanwhile, the New Jersey Devils won both of their contests but went beyond regulation in both.

Two teams in particular had a miserable time last week, as both the Anaheim Ducks and Montreal Canadiens failed to earn a point in three outings. All three of Anaheim's losses were on the road, while Montreal was outscored 15-3 while being defeated three times at home. As a result, the Ducks and Canadiens dropped out of this week's top 10 ratings.

Each week during the season, I'll rank the league's top 10 teams based on both the previous week's performances and overall body of work in 2025-26. I'll also give brief synopsis for each club that explains why they're ranked where they are.

Let's dive into the power ratings after Week 6 of the 2025-26 NHL season and highlight a few of the teams' notable accomplishments.

NHL Week 6 power ratings

1. Colorado Avalanche (3-0-0 in Week 6; 13-1-5 overall)

While two of Colorado's victories in Week 5 were by one goal, including one in overtime, all three of their triumphs this past week - which came on home ice - were by three tallies. Nathan MacKinnon notched four assists to increase his NHL-leading point total to 33 but failed to get on the scoresheet in Sunday's 4-1 win against the New York Islanders, ending his 11-game point streak. Cale Makar is tops among all defensemen with 25 points after recording an assist in each contest last week, while Martin Necas scored four goals over the three games and has 13 in 19 outings this season after registering 11 over 30 contests in 2024-25 after being acquired from the Carolina Hurricanes in January. The Avalanche were without Valeri Nichushkin in their last two games due to a lower-body injury but Brock Nelson has come alive, collecting two goals and two assists over his last three outings after producing only five points in his first 16 contests this campaign.

2. Dallas Stars (3-0-0; 12-4-3)

The Stars defeated the Ottawa Senators (in overtime), Montreal Canadiens and Philadelphia Flyers last week to

extend their winning streak to five games, outscoring the three clubs 15-3. Jason Robertson registered his sixth career hat trick in Saturday's 5-1 victory over Philadelphia, giving him three points in each of his last three contests as well as six goals and four assists during his four-game point streak. Mikko Rantanen followed a seven-point effort in Week 5 with a tally and four assists last week, while Roope Hintz has returned from a five-game absence due to an undisclosed injury with a six-game point streak during which he has collected three goals and five assists.

3. New Jersey Devils (2-0-0; 13-4-1)

The Devils are in the midst of a five-game point streak (4-0-1) after beating the Chicago Blackhawks in overtime and the Washington Capitals in a shootout last week. Jack Hughes notched a pair of assists against Chicago on Wednesday but injured his finger in a "freak accident" the following day and required surgery. That will keep him out of the lineup for up to two months. Simon Nemec completed his first career hat trick with an overtime winner against the Blackhawks, becoming the third defenseman in franchise history to record a three-goal game and first since Uli Hiemer in 1984. Dawson Mercer scored his ninth goal of the season in the win over Chicago, putting him second on the team, and he'll need to keep producing in Hughes' absence.

4. Los Angeles Kings (3-0-0; 10-5-4)

Los Angeles sandwiched an overtime victory over the Toronto Maple Leafs between wins against Montreal and Ottawa in Week 6. Quinton Byfield registered a goal and an assist in each of the Kings' first two triumphs before notching an assist on Alex Laferriere's tally in Saturday's 1-0 victory over the Senators. The 23-year-old right wing has picked up a point in five of his last six contests and ranks second on the team with 17, two behind leader Adrian Kempe, who has yet to be kept off the scoresheet in back-to-back games this season. The 29-year-old Kempe led Los Angeles in points each of the last two campaigns and was rewarded Monday with a new eight-year, \$85 million contract. Kevin Fiala scored a goal in three straight games and four of five prior to Saturday's win.

5. Carolina Hurricanes (1-1-1; 12-5-1)

After winning all four of their games in Week 5, the Hurricanes were mediocre last week as they lost to Washington, edged the Vancouver Canucks in overtime and lost to the Edmonton Oilers in overtime. However, they did get defenseman Shayne Gostisbehere back, who had missed six contests with a lower-body injury. The 32-year-old wasted no time getting involved offensively as he amassed five assists over Carolina's three games, including three against Vancouver. Nikolaj Ehlers scored in two of the



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Hurricanes' three contests and entered Monday with a seven-game point streak during which he has registered four goals and as many assists.

6. Boston Bruins (2-1-0; 12-8-0)

The Bruins had their seven-game winning streak halted Thursday as they suffered a 5-3 loss at Ottawa, but they bounced back with a 3-2 triumph at Montreal two days later. David Pastrnak posted a trio of multi-point performances in Week 6, recording three goals and four assists, and is tied for fourth in the NHL with 26 points. Morgan Geekie is second on Boston with 18 points and notched at least one in 11 of his 12 games prior to Saturday's victory against the Canadiens. The 27-year-old center scored his team-leading 12th goal in the loss to the Senators. The Bruins could be without their top defenseman for an extended period of time after Charlie McAvoy took a puck to the face in Montreal and may need surgery.

7. Pittsburgh Penguins (1-0-1; 10-5-4)

The Penguins earned three of a possible four points last week as they completed the 2025 NHL Global Series Sweden against the Nashville Predators with an overtime loss and a 4-0 victory. Two-time Art Ross Trophy winner Evgeni Malkin tallied in both contests and leads Pittsburgh with 23 points. The 39-year-old Russian center has notched a point in seven of his last eight games and has yet to be kept off the scoresheet in back-to-back outings this season. Two-time Hart and Art Ross Trophy recipient Sidney Crosby scored his team-leading 12th goal in Sunday's win while 21-year-old Russian goaltender Sergei Murashov turned aside all 21 shots he faced in his second NHL appearance for his first career victory.

8. Chicago Blackhawks (1-0-1; 9-5-4)

Chicago extended its point streak to five games last week with the overtime loss to New Jersey and a 3-2 triumph over Toronto. Connor Bedard scored his team-best 10th goal against the Devils to extend his point streak to nine games

but had it snapped by the Maple Leafs. The 2024 Calder Trophy winner collected eight tallies and 11 assists during his run. Veteran left wing Nick Foligno ended his six-game point drought with a pair of assists against New Jersey but suffered a left hand injury in Saturday's win and landed on injured reserve.

9. Seattle Kraken (2-0-1; 9-4-5)

The Kraken earned five of a possible six points in Week 6, losing to the Columbus Blue Jackets in a shootout before ending their three-game homestand with victories against the Winnipeg Jets and San Jose Sharks. Captain Jordan Eberle and Jaden Schwartz each recorded a two-goal performance, while Eeli Tolvanen tallied in both of Seattle's wins. Defenseman Jamie Oleksiak got involved in the offense, collecting three assists over the three games after registering only two points (a pair of goals) in his first 15 contests this season. Meanwhile, Chandler Stephenson amassed four assists last week, including three against the Sharks.

10. Detroit Red Wings (2-0-1; 11-7-1)

Detroit was outscored 10-2 while losing all three of its games in Week 5 but rebounded nicely last week, sandwiching victories against the Anaheim Ducks and New York Rangers around an overtime loss to the Buffalo Sabres. Five different players landed on the scoresheet in each contest, with Alex DeBrincat posting a pair of two-goal performances before opening the scoring in Sunday's 2-1 triumph at New York. The 27-year-old right wing has been streaky in 2025-26, beginning the season with an eight-game goal-scoring drought before tallying in four straight, then going four contests without a goal before his current three-game run. Captain Dylan Larkin, who leads the Red Wings with 23 points, had two goals and two assists last week. Lucas Raymond collected a tally and six assists, 2022 Calder Trophy-winning defenseman Moritz Seider recorded one goal and set up four others, and future Hall of Famer Patrick Kane registered a tally and three assists.



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SB NATION
CANES COUNTRY

Hurricanes start road trip in style, beat Boston 3-1

By: Al Hood

The Hurricanes showed no ill effects from a back to back with two straight overtimes and managed to get revenge for one of their few losses on the season with a 3-1 win over the Boston Bruins. The only reason the game wasn't a shutout was a very late power play goal from the Bruins, but the final score didn't really indicate just how dominant the Hurricanes were versus their first meeting on November 1.

The first period was a goalie battle, as starters Jeremy Swayman and Pyotr Kochetkov both faced stiff tests early on. The Canes and the Bruins would each have a Power Play, and each would go scoreless. It was clear early on both starters in net were up to the task as both Swayman and Kochetkov stopped excellent chances. The period ended scoreless and the Canes barely outshooting Boston 10-9.

The second period saw Carolina increase the puck barrage, keeping Boston hemmed in to the Canes' side of the ice. Despite not having a Power Play during the frame, the Canes outshot Boston 13-7, and the only reason it got that high for Boston was a Power Play near the end of the period. By the time that had occurred, the Canes had established a 2-0 lead. From the jump, Carolina seemed to want to put shots on Swayman from the blue line, hoping for rebounds that would bounce the right way. The problem was for a good part of the time is that no one for Carolina was close enough to Swayman to make him pay, even though Swayman was giving up rebounds.

Then Jordan Staal got what can only be described as a tough goal. The whole Staal line worked to keep the puck in the offensive zone—much like every line did for the Canes that period—and it resulted in a situation where Will Carrier was able to zip a pass over to Joel Nystrom. Nystrom shot the puck on Swayman, and this time Staal was in front ready for the rebound. However he and Andrew Peeke were engaged, occupying Staal's left arm. However, with his right he still had his stick and just shoved a backhanded shot one-armed past Swayman for the 1-0 lead.

Five minutes later the commitment to keep the puck in the zone helped the Canes again. This time, Shayne Gostisbehere took a bit of a risk by threading a pass over to Sean Walker just under the stick of a Bruin who could have taken it and skated it in to Kochetkov all alone. Instead, Walker whipped it to Taylor Hall, who put it on net. Instead of hitting Swayman, it hit Mark Jankowski who was able to settle the puck and score, putting the Canes on top 2-0.

Boston came out strong in the third, and outshot the Canes 12-9, but with a 2-0 lead the Canes were able to lock down on defense and didn't give the Bruins any sort of meaningful good shot on goal. Even when there was a four-on-four after a questionable embellishment call, Boston never was able to really establish themselves in the zone. A late Power Play when it was still 2-0 had the fans in the TD Garden booing as near the end the B's just skated around the neutral zone. Not too long after the end of that play, with Swayman still in net, the B's chanced it one too many times. Nystrom was able to dig the puck out of the area behind the goal, push it up the boards where Hall led a breakaway that ended with him doing his best Bobby Orr imitation to put the Canes up 3-0.

A very late penalty as the Garden was emptying led to the B's only score of the night, as the Canes were unable to preserve the shutout and Riley Tuft stuffed a chance by Kochetkov to wrape up the scoring 3-1.

It was easily Kochetkov's best outing since his debut against the Rangers, showing that he can perform well against goalies that are not Russian. The Canes performed well despite still missing Jalen Chatfield and Jaccob Slavin. There's still no word when either will be back, especially as the Hurricanes next square off against the team that injured Chatfield—Minnesota—on Wednesday night in St. Paul. The Canes will then continue on to Winnipeg and Buffalo before an extended stay back in Raleigh for the Thanksgiving Holiday.



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Hurricanes begin four-game road trip with 3-1 win over Boston

By: Haley O'Neill

After holding the Bruins scoreless through the first two periods and into the final seconds, the Carolina Hurricanes came within 9.6 seconds of their second shutout of the season, but couldn't close it out.

The Canes (12-5-1) set the tone for their road trip with a 3-1 win over the Boston Bruins (12-8-0), a sharp contrast after falling short to them just 16 days earlier. Using that loss as a blueprint, Carolina tightened its lines, limited its opponents' chances and set the pace.

The Hurricanes — sitting at 4-for-4 on the penalty kill — were basking in confidence, ready to run out the clock, until defenseman Alexander Nikishin was sent to the box with less than two minutes remaining. Letting off steam for just a second was all the Bruins needed to get on the board and avoid the shutout. Winger Riley Tufte saw goaltender Pyotr Kochetkov lose his stick and used this to his advantage. Kochetkov tried to get a glove on the uncontrolled puck, but was beaten by Tufte, who put up the sole point for Boston.

Constantly finding the paint, winger Mark Jankowski quickly became an obstacle for goaltender Jeremy Swayman, but even the perfect screen can turn out unexpectedly. Positioned in front of the net to create a shooting lane, Jankowski only created chaos, which is exactly what the Canes needed. Blocking a shot from his linemate, Jankowski knocked the puck down to his feet, leaving Swayman confused, and swiftly swatted the puck into the net. Not only was this the game-winning goal, but his first goal of the season.

"On the goal, he is in front of the net alone," said winger Taylor Hall. "He's not tied up, he's always in a really good spot, and in our defensive zone too, he allows [Robinson]

and me to kind of take off and use our speed to create chances. We didn't get a whole lot tonight, but we were really close on a lot of instances. [Jankowski] is such an effective player and a fun player to play with."

Hall had his own show stopper late in the third to lift the Canes out of reach of the Bruins. Defenseman Joel Nystrom, with his second assist of the night, got the puck to Hall, who skated into Boston's defensive zone. Skating parallel next to him, his linemate was covered by defensemen, so in a split decision, Hall decided to do the dirty work himself. Pulling the goalie off his line, he had just enough space to go around and push the puck to the inside of the far post.

"The puck wouldn't settle down," Hall said. "So my first option, especially with a lefty going to the net, was to try and find a way to get it to him because if I can put it on his stick, all he has to do is just hit the puck and it goes in. ... I was kind of flying through the air as I scored, so it was fun."

Center Jordan Staal had a standout night as well. After weeks of training and building chemistry with his linemates, wingers William Carrier and Jordan Martinook, the trio looked nearly unstoppable. Opening the scoring, Staal pounced on a shot by Nystrom and used his size and power to fend off the defenseman with one arm, and the other to swipe the puck into the net.

"We play a lot of games together, so we know each other," Carrier said. "We all play a similar way out there, and we're responsible defensively. It starts there, and when you get a couple of big goals there, we embrace it. [Staal] had one there last game, and we're trying again tonight."

The Hurricanes continue their road trip to Minnesota and take on the Wild, with a 9:30 p.m. puck drop on Wednesday, Nov. 19.



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The Hockey News

'All 20 Guys, Everybody Contributed': Pyotr Kochetkov, Jordan Staal, Taylor Hall, Rod Brind'Amour On Win In Boston

By: Ryan Henkel

Kochetkov stars, Staal and Hall strike, and Brind'Amour praises team depth in Carolina's victory over Boston.

The Carolina Hurricanes got back in the win column Monday night as they defeated the Boston Bruins 3-1 at TD Garden.

The Canes depth shined as Jordan Staal, Mark Jankowski and Taylor Hall all got on the board and Pyotr Kochetkov stopped 27 shots in the win (he was scored on in the final nine seconds).

After the game, Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour along with Kochetkov, Staal and Hall spoke with the media in Boston. Here's what they had to say:

Carolina's bottom-six ignited a dominant win, showcasing impressive offensive depth. Kochetkov's shutout bid was cruelly denied with seconds left.

thehockeynews.comDepth Scoring Shines As Hurricanes Dominate Bruins; Kochetkov's Shutout Bid Spoiled In Waning SecondsCarolina's bottom-six ignited a dominant win, showcasing impressive offensive depth. Kochetkov's shutout bid was cruelly denied with seconds left.

Rod Brind'Amour

On the game: It was a solid game. We had a game plan and I thought the guys stuck to it for the most part. It's 2-0 going into the third and I thought we maybe sat back a little, but that's kind of natural. They're kind of throwing everything at you, but I thought we had a real solid game overall. All 20 guys, everybody contributed.

On the fourth line: They've been good all year, that line. Since Jankowski's come back in, he's provided a little pop there. Robbie too. That's a very valuable group going right now for us and it's a good matchup. That's a world class goal too. That's an MVP kind of thing that he pulled out there. I know it was 2-0 at the time, but it kind of put the game away which was great.

On Pyotr Kochetkov: Solid. That's the key. That's what we need. When we needed a save, it was there. I'm sure he'd like to have that last one back, reaching for it, but who cares at that point. Game's over. He did his job tonight.

Pyotr Kochetkov

On the game: I feel today, good. We do step-by-step every period. Good team win.

On the team in front of him: Every game, guys, defense and forwards, very help. No surprise for nobody. We have a system and the guys always do well. For me, I very excited to play for the guys because the guys help me every night.

On his strong start to the year: I no think too much about the results now. I just try to find my game and my style now. I no play every game, just more time to find my way.

Jordan Staal

On the goaltending performance: Kooch was great. Been great for us since he got back. Made some key saves and gave us a great chance to win. Tough way to end for him, especially with it looking like a shutout, but obviously he played a great game for us.

On the team's performance: I thought it was great. We gave up a couple chances in the first. They do a good job of kind of clogging it and then taking off and they made some good plays off the rush. They have some talented players, but Kooch made some key saves there. It's hard to come back in this league. We got one and then two and then kind of kept it as stifling as we could and then Kooch did the rest.

On his goal: Just trying to get to the net. Usually Marty beats me there, but I got there first. Sometimes those bounces can go either way, but I got my eye on it first and I was fortunate enough to have a little lane there to sneak it in.

Taylor Hall

On keeping the pressure on Boston: You want to keep your foot on the gas, but you want to be smart with where you are on the ice and you want to be above their players. But at the same time, if you see a chance to go make a play and create offense, you have to do that. That's in our DNA as attackers. The best way to defend is to go play in their end and force them to come 200 feet. We did that well.

On scoring against his former team: I loved playing here and I love the city. It's so fun to come back and take my guys out to dinner. I'll always love it here. When I'm done playing, I'll want to come back here and go to Bruins games, go to a Red Sox game. But to come back and score and most importantly win the game is huge.



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Depth Scoring Shines As Hurricanes Dominate Bruins; Kochetkov's Shutout Bid Spoiled In Waning Seconds

By: Ryan Henkel

Carolina's bottom-six ignited a dominant win, showcasing impressive offensive depth. Kochetkov's shutout bid was cruelly denied with seconds left.

The Carolina Hurricanes avenged their TD Garden loss from earlier in the month Monday night as they handily defeated the Boston Bruins 3-1.

Depth scoring was the name of the game for the Hurricanes, as they got all three goals from their bottom-six with Jordan Staal, Mark Jankowski and Taylor Hall all finding the back of the net.

It was a fairly low-event game through the opening 20 minutes, but Carolina proceeded to blow the doors off the game in the second, as they outchanced Boston 35-6 in that period alone and grabbing a two-goal lead.

Staal got the Canes going by showing off his strength.

The captain used one-hand to hold off Bruins defenseman Andrew Peeke and gain positioning at the net front and the other to bat home a loose puck that had deflected off of a few bodies in front of him.

What strength from Jordan Staal. 🏒 Winning the net-front battle with one hand, poking home the game's first goal with the other.

x.comWalt Ruff (@WaltRuff) on XWhat strength from Jordan Staal. 🏒 Winning the net-front battle with one hand, poking home the game's first goal with the other.

Jankowski's goal was also in a bit of a similar vein to Staal's as the centerman positioned himself right in front of Boston goaltender Jeremy Swayman.

After absorbing a point shot from Taylor Hall, Jankowski showed off some quick hands as he collected the puck and fired it home for his first of the year.

Mark Jankowski was a goal-scoring machine after being acquired at the trade deadline last year. He's had to play different roles and wait his turn this season, so it's great to see him finally get one tonight.

x.comWalt Ruff (@WaltRuff) on XMark Jankowski was a goal-scoring machine after being acquired at the trade deadline last year. He's had to play different roles and wait his turn this season, so it's great to see him finally get one tonight.

The Canes almost had another one before the period ended, but Seth Jarvis' shorthanded breakaway rung the post after completely undressing Swayman.

However, Carolina would ultimately find that third goal as Hall put together his submission for goal of the year on a crazy solo effort.

Canes defenseman Joel Nystrom sent a puck up along the boards, which hopped the stick of Nikita Zadorov and sent Hall on a break.

The veteran winger collected the rolling puck to the best of his abilities and then utilized the uneven nature of it to essentially alley-oop it to himself as he crashed the net on a 2-on-1.

Taylor Hall. Gross.

x.comWalt Ruff (@WaltRuff) on XTaylor Hall. Gross.

Defensively, the Canes did a good job of limiting the Bruins' opportunities, as they allowed just three high-danger chances at 5v5 and just 28 shots overall.

The team also killed off three straight penalties before conceding the one goal with nine seconds remaining in the game on what really shouldn't have even been a penalty on Alexander Nikishin.

Pyotr Kochetkov was solid through 60 minutes, and should have had his second shutout of the season, but alas, his dropped stick curse came back to bite him as he got five-holed trying to dive on a loose puck he could have easily deflected away.

Carolina will continue its road trip on Wednesday with a stop in Minnesota to take on the Wild.

LINKS

<https://www.wralsportsfan.com/pyotr-kochetkov-makes-29-saves-as-hurricanes-beat-bruins-3-1/22251301/>

<https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/recap-can-es-stymie-bruins-in-boston>

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SportScan

Articles from outlets covering the Hurricanes' upcoming opponents and league-wide news

1368599 Websites

The Athletic / NHL encouraging teams to play more color-on-color jersey matchups

By Peter Baugh

The scuffle at the end of Sunday's New York Rangers-Detroit Red Wings game wasn't notable only because both teams' benches cleared in their entirety. It was also visually striking: New York and Detroit wore blue and red jerseys, respectively, to celebrate their centennials, so there was a flood of color on the ice at Madison Square Garden.

The night was a rarity from an equipment perspective. Normally, away teams wear white jerseys while the home club dresses in its primary color. The visiting Red Wings taking the ice in red was a surprise, but according to an NHL spokesperson, the league's marketing department has actively encouraged teams to explore color-on-color jersey matchups. The idea has been brought up at general manager and board meetings, the spokesperson said. After all, hockey is played on a white surface, so the primary-color jersey combinations pop nicely, as they did Sunday.

The Rangers and Red Wings had to get permission from the NHL to both wear non-white jerseys, just as teams sometimes have done in the past for outdoor games. Detroit and the Toronto Maple Leafs wore their primary colors at the 2014 Winter Classic at Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor, Mich. The Boston Bruins and Philadelphia Flyers did the same at the 2021 game at Lake Tahoe in Stateline, Nev.

The NHL, its teams and its broadcast partners have a few factors to consider when it comes to jersey matchups. Some games don't have the option of both teams wearing primary colors because they'd look too similar — think Carolina Hurricanes-New Jersey Devils or Tampa Bay Lightning-Toronto. Watching could be confusing for fans watching on TV or in the stands, and perhaps even the players, too.

And some jersey matchups might not work because of fans who experience color blindness. In 2015, the NFL heard enough complaints after a New York Jets (green jerseys) and Buffalo Bills (red jerseys) Color Rush game that it put out a statement acknowledging it failed to account for color blindness. So, a Dallas Stars-Calgary Flames matchup in primary jersey colors might not work because of red-green color blindness.

But after the reception to the Rangers-Red Wings jerseys in Sunday's game — the aesthetically pleasing red-blue matchup drew positive reviews on social media — and the league's marketing department's encouragement, perhaps other colorful matchups will follow.

The Athletic LOADED: 11.18.2025

1368600 Websites

The Athletic / Lou Lamoriello on exit as Islanders GM, transitioning to a new role: 'It's all positive'

By Pierre LeBrun

There isn't a trace of bitterness or regret in Lou Lamoriello's voice.

In his first interview addressing being let go as general manager of the New York Islanders in April, the Hockey Hall of Famer sounded at peace Monday as he put in perspective where he is now and a remarkable hockey life lived.

And just to be clear, he's not fully retired, still working as an adviser to Islanders owner Scott Malkin.

But for a man who has run a team ever since taking over the New Jersey Devils in 1987 — and also was busy every fall after becoming head coach of the Providence College hockey team in the late '60s — this is indeed a new feeling.

And it's absolutely fine.

"It's totally different and unique," Lamoriello, 83, told The Athletic on Monday morning. "There are more nights you sleep much better."

He said that with a laugh but was quick to add that his daily regimen hasn't changed as far as getting up early every day and getting on with his day, which still includes calls and meetings.

The difference is he's not running a hockey team and not traveling with one, either.

"I was a believer in being with the team," Lamoriello said. "My day is totally different. It's controlled by me. I'm not involved with the hockey side, which is the right thing."

He's had a few chats with new Isles GM Mathieu Darche, especially helping during the transition.

"I had a couple of lunches with him during training camp," Lamoriello said. "We communicate. I am a fan of Mathieu, I like him."

As far as the day to day, Lamoriello still watches as much hockey as ever.

"I'm just enjoying the blossoming of some of these young players that are coming into the league or have been in the league a year or two," he said. "But the days of being in day to day for the hockey team, I'm retired from that part of the game, I believe it's time."

Again, he sounded very content as he said this.

Lamoriello attended the NHL Board of Governors meeting on Oct. 15 in New York City and plans to do the same for the main Board of Governors meeting in Colorado Springs next month. That's part of his gig as consultant to Malkin — a role that extends past this season as per his contract.



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The reality is that Lamoriello planned to make this kind of transition a decade ago when still in New Jersey. When the late Ray Shero became Devils GM in May 2015, Lamoriello stayed on as team president. The plan was eventually for him to become a consultant to ownership over time.

However, Toronto Maple Leafs president Brendan Shanahan offered Lamoriello the Leafs GM job, which he couldn't resist, given how special an opportunity that was.

In Toronto, Lamoriello planned to be GM for three years, which actually did happen. And he remains close with now-Pittsburgh Penguins GM Kyle Dubas, who replaced him as GM in Toronto in 2018.

The idea at the time was that Lamoriello would stay on as a consultant with the Leafs, the same as in New Jersey. But yet again, another team came calling. The Islanders hired Lamoriello as GM in June 2018. The original deal was that he would be GM for four years and then consult for a few years after that. He ended up being Isles GM for seven years before the change was finally made after last season.

It's a long way of saying Lamoriello has now transitioned into the consultant role he had first envisioned for himself a decade ago in New Jersey.

"I never thought I'd leave New Jersey," Lamoriello said. "Even today, I never thought I'd be anywhere but New Jersey. Similar to my days at Providence. They had opportunities there. I never thought I'd leave there."

He's made a point of having his own office separate and at a different location from the Islanders' team headquarters.

"I know what the job is to be a general manager and to run a club — the independence you need," said Lamoriello, whose 1,470 regular-season wins as NHL GM are second only to David Poile's 1,533. "You don't need anyone looking over your shoulder. That will never happen. I support Mathieu, and if he wants to talk, I'm there. I like what he's doing. And I'm enjoying the other part of the game now."

What a ride it's been in hockey for him over the past six decades. Three Stanley Cup championships. GM of the U.S. team that famously won the 1996 World Cup of Hockey. Inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2009.

"The game has been great to me," Lamoriello said. "I never thought of it as it being a day at work."

Lamoriello said the relationships he forged with people in the game are what he values most. He said it's been "humbling" how many of those people have reached out to him since last season to check up on him.

"Thank God I'm in good health," said Lamoriello, who enjoys the occasional glass of Italian Brunello red wine. But just one.

The reality has set in. His GM days are over. About 10 years after he thought they would be.

"There's no looking back. I've been very fortunate," Lamoriello said. "I'm blessed with a great family, three great adult kids, seven grandkids. That's something special. You've got to feel good. How can you not feel good? Why wouldn't you?"

"It's all positive."

The Athletic LOADED: 11.18.2025

1368601 Websites

The Athletic / The biggest 'missing' modern sports cards: LeBron, Curry, Brady, Bedard and a found Ohtani

By Larry Holder

Buying a famed 1952 Topps Mickey Mantle card might be a challenge given the price tag for even the most damaged example, but it's not hard to find. There are thousands of graded examples of that card in existence, even after how many were supposedly thrown away by unwitting parents over the past 70 years.

The modern trends of manufactured scarcity and serial numbers stamped on cards have created a new level of ultra-rare and difficult to find chase cards, though. It's why some of the most coveted and valuable cards for a variety of top players can go years without being publicly accounted for or claimed.

After his incredible 2025 World Series performance, Topps revealed the most valuable card for Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Yoshinobu Yamamoto — his MLB Debut Patch one-of-a-kind autographed rookie card — remains within the walls of the company. That's because no one has used the code on the back of the Yamamoto Debut Patch redemption card, which was put into a 2024 Topps Chrome Update pack, to claim it.

There are a variety of other highly coveted and supremely rare sports cards that remain publicly unaccounted for years after their release, though. Whether they're still tucked away in sealed packs, quietly residing in a private collection, in a landfill or who knows where else is a mystery, which means the chase continues for any collector who wants to track them down.

Here are some of the top cards that many collectors are still hunting for:

Stephen Curry's 2009 Topps Chrome Superfractor one-of-one rookie card

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Trove (@findyourtrove)

Where it could be: Still inside an unopened pack of 2009-10 Topps Basketball or discarded by someone who only collects Seth Curry cards.

Current hobby box price: Last sold in Oct. for \$48,000 (original 2009 price: \$55-\$65)

This may be the most sought after "missing" card within the hobby because of Curry's status and how long the card has been unaccounted for. It was even a topic of interrogation between actress Emma Roberts and WWE wrestler/social media star Logan Paul on stage at Fanatics Fest over the summer.

In the 2009 Topps Basketball release, Chrome cards appeared at an average rate of nine per hobby box and even the base versions were limited to just 999 of each card.

There's little doubt that Curry's rookie Superfractor, a golden variation of the base card design, would fetch at least \$1 million on the secondary market, which would make it the most expensive non-autographed Superfractor ever.

According to online sales database Card Ladder, the most expensive Topps non-autographed Superfractor ever sold publicly is the 2020 Topps Chrome F1 Lewis Hamilton card with a Near-Mint 7 grade from PSA (Professional Sports Authenticator). It sold for \$900,000 in April 2022 through Goldin.

There have been two sales for Curry's Gold refractor card (numbered to 50) from the 2009 set with a Gem-Mint 9.5 grade from Beckett that have gone for \$550,000 and \$575,000 in 2021 and 2022, respectively. A more recent sale for a Near-Mint/Mint PSA 8 example went for nearly \$238,000 in May via Heritage.



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Tom Brady's 2023 Bowman Draft Gold autographed inscription card, numbered 12 of 50

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Topps (@topps)

Where it could be: In an unopened pack of 2023 Bowman Draft or wherever Montreal Expos mascot Youppi is now.

Current hobby box price: \$1,500 (original 2023 price: \$1,750)

The Pittsburgh Pirates' Paul Skenes, Athletics' Jacob Wilson and Texas Rangers' Wyatt Langford may be the top actual baseball players within this set, but adding cards of Brady wearing a Montreal Expos uniform (the MLB team that drafted him in 1995) made this one of the most unique Bowman Draft sets ever.

This may be the rare case where an autographed card numbered to 50 could command a higher price tag than its related Superfractor, which sold for nearly \$160,000 through Goldin in Jan. 2024. The differences with this unaccounted for Brady card are that "12" was his uniform number and that it's signed with a unique inscription: "If baseball doesn't work out, there's always football." This effectively makes it a one-of-one card in its own right.

There have been 21 sales of Brady football cards (all involving his 2000 Playoff Contenders Championship Rookie Ticket autograph cards) that have hit at least \$1 million. It's hard to imagine this Brady card would reach seven figures, but given how unique it is and the hype that still surrounds it, you never know.

2023 Bowman Draft boxes

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Luka Dončić's 2018 Panini Prizm Black one-of-one rookie card

Has this Monster been pulled yet?

2018-19 Panini Prizm Basketball #280 Luka Dončić – Dallas Mavericks – Black 1of1 Rookie Card#collectorsleague #1of1 #Prizm #luka #thehobby #Collect #basketballcards #basketball #sportscards #nba #Panini #whodoyoucollect #tradingcards #rookie pic.twitter.com/atGrRtk2CE

— Collectors League (@CollectorLeague) June 3, 2021

Where it could be: In an unopened pack of 2018 Panini Prizm Basketball or traded away for a dinged up Anthony Davis card by Nico Harrison.

Current hobby box price: \$6,000 (original 2018 price: \$120)

If ever sold, this would likely become the most expensive Prizm Black card — a parallel so highly desired by basketball and football collectors that even Jay Cutler's 2012 Prizm Black Finite card sold for more than \$12,000 this year.

Los Angeles Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert's 2020 Black Finite 1/1 still holds the top price for a publicly known sale. It sold for \$1.1 million in Sept. 2022 in a private transaction.

Dončić's top selling non-autographed cards all stem from the Gold Prizm cards within this set, which are serial numbered to 10. An example of this card with a Gem-Mint PSA 10 grade sold for as high as \$780,000 in Feb. 2021 through Goldin. The most recent sale of the card this past February with the same grade only went for around \$342,000, though.

Could the Black 1/1 card challenge Dončić's most expensive cards in general? That would be a tough ask given his 2018-2019 Panini Flawless

NBA Logoman one-of-one autographed rookie card sold for \$4.7 million in September in a private sale.

2018 Prizm Basketball boxes

Where it could be: Somewhere in New Jersey...or anywhere else in the world.

This James card was one of the earliest NBA Logoman chase cards, and according to a report in the July 2004 issue of Beckett Basketball, it was pulled from a box of UD Ultimate Collection at the time and promptly sold on eBay for \$28,000 to "a guy in New Jersey." Since then, however, the card has not been publicly seen.

James RPAs (rookie patch autograph cards) reached seven-figure price tags in the past five years. Make it a James rookie Logoman card that's been stashed away and the subject of intrigue for more than 20 years and the heavy hitters in the hobby would be opening up their bank vaults for this one.

Here are a few reasons why this could be James' most expensive card, according to Basketball Card Insider:

The first release of rookie NBA Logoman autographs

One of just two LeBron rookie Logoman autographs in existence

The only LeBron rookie Logoman autograph with a vertical orientation (the other is horizontally formatted, which some collectors see as less desirable)

James' most expensive solo card sale occurred privately in April 2021 when his 2003-2004 Upper Deck Exquisite Collection RPA card numbered to 23 with a BSG 9 grade sold for \$5.2 million.

Curry, James, and Kevin Durant's 2024 Topps NOW Team USA one-of-one triple autographed card

(Image: Topps)

Where it is: Still with Topps, waiting to be redeemed.

Current sealed pack price: \$2,000+

This card may be the most curious of the bunch because of the Topps Now element. Topps Now cards are printed to order for a limited time, with some lucky orders fulfilled with a special parallel, short print, autograph or relic card rather than the standard base card. After the U.S. team won gold at the 2024 Olympics, a Topps Now card featuring Curry, James, and Durant was produced, with one order set to receive a 1/1 version signed by all three players — the first card ever signed by all three modern legends.

Adding another wrinkle to the situation, Topps decided to mail out the parallels and triple autograph redemption card in sealed packs, which many recipients resold unopened for thousands rather than checking to see if they hit the triple auto.

As a result of that or the wrong pack getting lost in the mail, the historic card remains unclaimed more than a year after the original sale.

The one-of-one non-autographed version of this card sold for nearly \$54,000 in Sept. 2024 through Goldin. The highest price of a James/Curry combo card came from their 2022-2023 Panini Flawless Dual Logoman patch (non-autographed) one-of-one card. It sold for \$317,200 via Goldin in Aug. 2024.

Where it could be: In an unopened pack of 2023-24 Upper Deck Series 2 Hockey or wherever the 2010 Stanley Cup winning puck is.

Current hobby box price: \$180 (original 2024 price: \$240)

This card made national headlines when New York-based hobby shop Dave and Adam's placed a \$1 million bounty on the card. The bounty



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offer unceremoniously ended in Dec. 2024, but the card has still yet to surface.

Bedard's most expensive card sale occurred when his 2023-24 Upper Deck The Cup Exquisite Collection NHL Shield RPA one-of-one rookie sold for \$123,220. The highest-priced Young Guns card sale happened in Aug. 2023 when a 2015-2016 Connor McDavid Young Guns Exclusives Spectrum card numbered to 10 with a BGS 9.5 grade went for nearly \$110,000 via Goldin.

2023-24 Upper Deck Hockey Series 2

Where it was: In an unopened pack of 2018 Bowman Chrome or under a mountain of Ipei Mizuhara's betting slips.

Current hobby box price: \$1,000 (original 2018 price: \$170)

As recently as last year, Topps posted on social media that this card remained unaccounted for six years after it was released. Then in January, PSA put out a list of the 25 most significant PSA-graded cards since 2000 and this card was quietly tucked in there at No. 9 with dual 10 grades for card condition and autograph quality. It's unclear when it was pulled and graded or who has it, but it's out there and it's one of Ohtani's very best rookie cards.

This is one of three 2018 Bowman Chrome Superfractors Ohtani has. There are the more widely known pitching and hitting image cards, then there's this one — an image variation (an offbeat photo selection with a more limited print run) showing Ohtani standing with a bat bag while holding his glove. While the pitching and hitting Superfractors were long since accounted for, this one remained a mystery. In fact, many collectors didn't even know it existed.

The highest public sale of an Ohtani card from this set came in at nearly \$535,000 via Goldin in Nov. 2024 for his Orange Refractor autographed card numbered to 25 with a Pristine 10 grade from Beckett. There's little doubt that any of the three Bowman Chrome autographed Superfractors would reach seven figures today if sold.

The Athletic LOADED: 11.18.2025

1368602 Websites

The Athletic / NHL weekend rankings: These teams are who we thought they were (maybe)

By Sean McIndoe

The biggest story through the season's first month or so was that nobody knew anything.

OK, sure, there were a few teams that stuck to the script. The Colorado Avalanche were good. The Nashville Predators were bad. But in between, it was chaos. Teams nobody thought would be all that good were dominating. Teams we thought would be terrible were competitive, or better. And so many presumed contenders were struggling that you could barely hear the goal horns over the sounds of all the windows slamming shut.

It seemed to set up a wild season where you could just throw out the preseason projections entirely. But then, over the last few weeks, something changed. Not entirely, and there are still plenty of surprises playing out. But doesn't it feel like the hockey gods are trying hard to slam the brakes on this runaway season?

Bonus five: "They are who we thought they were" stories playing out

5. The Canadiens aren't unbeatable — After looking like the East's best team through the first dozen games, Montreal has lost five of six, including three straight in regulation in which they've been outscored 15-3. Injuries are a big factor, and every team faces some adversity eventually. But any early thoughts of the Canadiens running away from the rest of the Atlantic Division have faded.

4. The feel-good Penguins are struggling — They did get the win yesterday to split that European mini-series with the Predators, but it was just their second victory in their last seven. They're still in a playoff spot, but by only two points after building a nice early cushion. Is it time to restart the Sidney Crosby trade rumors? Of course not. We'll give them one more week on that.

3. The Lightning and Stars are still good — Remember when the Tampa Bay Lightning were 1-4-2 and looked like they were cooked? Never mind. They've won eight of 11 since, including beating the Panthers on Saturday despite missing half the roster. Meanwhile, the Dallas Stars are rolling again, winning five straight including their last two by a combined score of 12-1. Spoiler: One of these two teams is in this week's top five.

2. The Mammoth aren't the powerhouse we thought — More on that down below.

1. The Ducks come back to the pack — There wasn't a better story over the first month than the young gun Ducks. They weren't just winning, they were playing maybe the most exciting hockey of anyone in the league. But now they've lost three straight in regulation, including a shutout in Minnesota on Saturday. They're at home for the next six, so they've got a chance to get it going again. But for now, they're back to looking like a young team coming out of a rebuild.

So there you go. It's mid-November, and everything makes sense again. Now to take a big sip of water and check on the Pacific.

The five teams with the best chances of winning the Stanley Cup.

I'm still not really sure what to make of the Edmonton Oilers, who haven't won a game in regulation since October. But I do know that as long as they've got these two guys, they'll be at least vaguely terrifying at all times.

5. Vegas Golden Knights (8-4-6, +5 true goals differential*) — I'll just say it: This is a pure placeholder pick. I don't know what's up with the Knights right now, with five losses in six. But I know I don't trust the Kings, Kraken or Ducks ahead of them in the Pacific, and I'm not putting the Oilers here. There are plenty of teams with better records that you could make the case for here, but when in doubt, we tend to move slowly on big changes around here. So the Knights keep their spot for another week, even if they're not scaring anyone these days. Inertia for the win!

4. New Jersey Devils (13-4-1, +7) — The Jack Hughes injury is a brutal piece of news, with the star expected to miss eight weeks after undergoing surgery on his finger. The circumstances surrounding the situation remain mysterious; we know it was a "non-hockey" injury that happened at a team dinner, but not much more. Peter has more on who they'll lean on in Hughes' absence.

3. Dallas Stars (12-4-3, +9) — Well well, look who's back. We haven't seen them in the top five since the season's opening week, but they've certainly earned a return appearance. Losing Thomas Harley will hurt, and the power play can't run at 33 percent forever ... we think. But for now, they look a lot like the all-star team most of us had them pegged as heading into the season.

2. Carolina Hurricanes (12-5-1, +13) — They're trailing the Devils in the standings, but I've got them ahead partly because they didn't just lose their best player for two months and partly because I don't want them to beat me up. That said, man, the Metro is getting crowded.

1. Colorado Avalanche (13-1-5, +33) — The thing with a guy like Cale Makar is that you only get so many opportunities to see a generationally



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great blueliner at the absolute height of his powers, so it was probably pretty exciting for him to get a chance to see Matthew Schaefer up close last night.

*Goals differential without counting shootout decisions like the NHL does for some reason.

Not ranked: Utah Mammoth – Let's look back three weeks, which isn't a long time unless you're an NHL team, in which case it can be forever.

Three weeks ago today, the Mammoth had just gone into Winnipeg earned a regulation win over the Jets in a Central Division statement game. It was their seventh straight win, with the last four all coming against division rivals. The win brought their record to 8-2-0, and they were sitting alone on top of the Central. Their +13 goals differential was the best in the conference by a mile. And while we didn't know it at the time, they were just a few days away from locking their best young player into a max-length extension.

In other words, it was all good. They crested to fifth spot in the Other Rankings. Everyone was on board. And yes, that includes me — the Mammoth hadn't cracked the top five yet, but I listed them in the top spot of a "stories I'm starting to buy" list. The long-term view we preach around here meant I still had Colorado and Winnipeg ahead of them, but even I had to admit it was getting tough to hold that ground.

And then ...

Their next game was an early-season showdown with the Oilers, which they lost to snap the win streak. No big deal, we all figured. But another loss followed, this one to the Lightning, and in hindsight it was the start of a slide back to the pack. In the eight games since I said I was buying, the Mammoth are just 2-5-1. Worse, both of those wins came against the Sabres, and one of those wasn't even in regulation. They lost to the Leafs. Nobody loses to the Leafs.

Today, their record sits at 10-7-1, good for fifth in the Central and 10 points back of the Avalanche for top spot. The goals differential is down to +3, behind even the Chicago Blackhawks. Things can change quickly in this league.

Let's be clear – there are a lot worse places a team can be than sitting comfortably over .500 while just one win away from a playoff spot. If anything, this current snapshot might have felt just about right if you'd seen it before the season. They're good, but hardly great. But it's that tale-of-two-seasons context that makes it feel significantly worse.

Maybe it shouldn't. The Mammoth came into the season as basically a coin flip to make the playoffs, according to Dom's model. At the height of the win streak, their odds were just short of 75 percent. Now they're down to about 65 percent, which still represents a decent chunk of progress. And unless you really believe in the Blackhawks keeping this up all season long, the playoff path in the Central actually looks better now than it did at the start of the season, thanks to the Wild and Blues struggling.

That's not to say that everything is rainbows; they need better goaltending, the power play isn't clicking and their leading scorer sure seems like he could be headed to the UFA market in the summer. But it shouldn't feel like a crisis. This CJ column from two weeks ago laid out the path forward, and while the win-loss numbers have changed, most of the positivity still rings true.

The trajectory is still pointing up in Utah, even if the ceiling might not look quite as high as it did a few weeks ago.

The bottom five

The five teams headed towards dead last and the best lottery odds for Gavin McKenna (we think).

It was an ugly weekend for injuries, especially on blocked shots. Charlie McAvoy took the worst of it:

Nick Foligno took one in the hand and will miss a month. And Drew Doughty looks like he'll miss a few weeks after being hit in the ankle against Ottawa.

5. Buffalo Sabres (6-8-4, -14) – It was good to see Rasmus Dahlin back with the team over the weekend. Even better, he helped them to a big comeback win over the Red Wings, snapping a five-game losing streak. They're home for the next four, so if there's any hope of climbing back into the mix before Thanksgiving, this would be it.

4. San Jose Sharks (8-8-3, -6) – We made a big production of the Blackhawks escaping the bottom five last week, which led to a few Sharks fans wanting to know why they didn't deserve the same. It's a fair point, although two straight regulation losses to drop them back to .500 puts a bit of a dent in the argument. They're getting there, though.

3. Nashville Predators (6-10-4, -22) – The good news: After splitting two in Sweden, they get some time off before getting back to action on Saturday. The bad news: They get the Avalanche and the Panthers, so building some momentum won't be easy.

2. St. Louis Blues (6-9-4, -20) – Yep, it's getting to be about that time.

1. Calgary Flames (5-12-3, -18) – The week saw Dustin Wolf's first shutout of the season, although it took only 17 saves to blank the Sharks. The Flames lost their other two, but we'll find the positives where we can. Meanwhile, we're apparently going to do the Rasmus Andersson trade rumor thing all year long.

Not ranked: Washington Capitals – Are we getting worried? Saturday's shootout loss to the Devils was their fourth loss in five, and their eighth in the last ten. That's dropped them all the way down to fake .500 and 14th in the East.

And in maybe the weirdest story of their season so far, that's all happening despite Logan Thompson leading the league in both save percentage and goals-against average. Normally when a good team is struggling, you can just point at the goalie and say he needs to heat up. But in Washington, it may be the only part of their game that's really working right now. And it's not enough.

The offense just isn't holding up its end of the bargain. Alexander Ovechkin scored on Saturday, which is news because he's got only five on the year. (Sorry Caps fans, it doesn't look like the Halloween reverse jinx is going to work this time.) Connor McMichael has just six points after pushing 60 last year. The power play is struggling. And obviously, the Pierre-Luc Dubois injury is a problem.

All that said, the season is hardly going down the drain. In fact, Dom's model still has them ranked in the top ten, and as favorites to make the playoffs. Part of that has to do with their five-on-five numbers, which remain solid. That's even true during this ten-game slump, as RMNB gets into here. Moral victories only get you so far, but at four points out of a playoff spot with games in hand, they haven't dug a hole they can't climb out of.

It's still a hole, though, and there's work to be done. They're at home for six of the next seven, although that stretch starts tonight against the suddenly rolling Kings, and also includes tough matchups like the Oilers, Lightning and Jets. It's not a make-or-break few weeks quite yet ... unless it goes badly. Which it might, if they can't get the offense going.

The Athletic LOADED: 11.18.2025

1368603 Websites

ESPN / The NHL's best this week: How Devils move forward minus Hughes - ESPN



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Arda Ocal

Once again, NHL fans will have to watch a hockey world without the talents of Jack Hughes.

Though his career so far in the show has been riddled by injury, this one was a "freak accident," according to ESPN's Emily Kaplan, an incident that involved getting cut by glass at a team dinner on Thursday. The Devils said Friday that Hughes had surgery on his finger in New York City and will be reevaluated in six weeks, while his expected recovery time is eight weeks. For Team USA fans keeping score, the Olympics begin in about 12 weeks.

Clearly this is an unpredictable off-ice injury. But, because of Jack's history with missing significant time in his career, you can't help but feel several emotions about it right now, whether you are a Devils fan or not.

Certainly, you feel for the player -- Hughes was off to a terrific start. Ten goals and 20 points in 17 games. Before the season, some pundits suggested this might be the season that the middle Hughes brother becomes the first Devil in NHL history to reach 100 points in a season (and maybe even 50 goals). His personal best remains 43 goals and 99 points in 78 games in 2022-23, his fourth season in the league.

Through seven seasons, the 24-year-old has been able to play north of 70 games in just that one season; shoulder and upper-body injuries flood his career injury report.

There is also, of course, the impact on the Devils for the next two months without their star player. They prevailed against the Washington Capitals on Saturday, with younger brother Luke Hughes notching a goal and assist.

But consider the numbers in the past five seasons for the Devils with and without Jack Hughes in the lineup, as seen at right.

Devils fans have been sincerely making the case for Hughes' elite prowess: At his best, is Hughes the most talented player in the NHL outside of Connor McDavid and Nathan MacKinnon?

Putting the obvious homerism aside, any hockey observer can see the way he controls a game, his creativity on the ice and his elite shot.

This particular injury did not happen on the ice. Hughes can recover, stay healthy for a couple of seasons, put up monster points and the narrative will certainly change. But are we inching closer to that unfortunate "he was amazing, but injuries plagued him" status that so many high-potential hockey players were slapped with, even if they did end up winning Stanley Cups and going into the Hockey Hall of Fame?

Players such as Cam Neely, Peter Forsberg and Eric Lindros were all elite forwards with many accolades and a spot in the Hall of Fame, but limited by injuries that prevented them from reaching even higher. That's great company, don't get me wrong, and it's hockey -- injuries inevitably happen. I just hope that we get a long healthy stretch to watch Jack Hughes excel at hockey after this latest mishap.

Jump ahead:

Games of the week

What I loved this weekend

Hart Trophy candidates

Social post of the week

Stick taps

Biggest games of the week

New Jersey Devils

at TB, at FLA, at PHI

Obviously since I just wrote that whole bit about Jack Hughes, I'm curious about how the Devils adapt to playing without him.

They head to Florida next, playing the Tampa Bay Lightning on Tuesday and the Florida Panthers on Thursday before meeting up with the Philadelphia Flyers in Philly on Saturday.

play

0:28

Simon Nemeč slaps in Devils shootout winner

Simon Nemeč scores the winning goal in the shootout to give the Devils 3-2 win over the Capitals.

Colorado

Avalanche at

Chicago

Blackhawks

Sunday, 7 p.m. ET | NHL Network

I'm looking forward to this matchup. With Connor Bedard and Nathan MacKinnon, the star power is there. But these two teams are both thriving this season.

Are the Hawks for real? A game against one of the West's juggernauts is a fun test for a team like Chicago.

Other key games this week

Carolina

Hurricanes at

Boston

Bruins

Monday, 7 p.m. ET | ESPN+

Seattle

Kraken at

Detroit

Red Wings

Tuesday, 7 p.m. ET | ESPN+

New York

Islanders at

Dallas

Stars

Tuesday, 8 p.m. ET | ESPN+

Boston

Bruins at

Anaheim

Ducks

Wednesday, 10 p.m. ET | ESPN+

Edmonton

Oilers at

Tampa Bay



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Lightning

Thursday, 7:30 p.m. ET | ESPN+/Hulu

Los Angeles

Kings at

San Jose

Sharks

Thursday, 10 p.m. ET | ESPN+/Hulu

Toronto

Maple Leafs at

Montreal

Canadiens

Saturday, 7 p.m. ET | ESPN+

Vegas

Golden Knights at

Anaheim

Ducks

Saturday, 10 p.m. ET | ESPN+

What I loved this weekend

Friday's NHL slate made history: According to ESPN Research, it was the first time since the league began operation that -- when at least four games were being played-- every one of them went to overtime or a shootout.

Once Friday's four games were decided, 282 NHL games had been played this season. Of that 282, 28% of them (80) went to the extra frame -- that's also the highest percentage at this point in the season in NHL history.

And on the history-making Friday night, the history-making rookie made even more of it. One of the biggest stories of the season has been 18-year-old New York Islanders rookie Matthew Schaefer setting records. This time, he scored his seventh goal of the season, winning the game for the Islanders against the Utah Mammoth, and becoming the youngest player in NHL history to score an overtime goal (and giving the Isles a four-game win streak in the process).

On the poetic side, earlier that day the Global Series took place in Sweden between Erik Karlsson's Pittsburgh Penguins and Filip Forsberg's Nashville Predators. With 70 seconds left and the Preds down a goal, Forsberg scored to tie it up, getting an incredible reaction from the fans in Stockholm. Forsberg's teammate Steven Stamkos scored the overtime winner, giving the Swedish fans another opportunity to cheer.

Hart Trophy candidates if the season ended today

Nathan MacKinnon cannot be denied. Now with 33 points and 14 goals, he leads the league in both categories outright. He stays on the Hart Finalist list.

Last week it was fun to put Connor Bedard and Macklin Celebrini in as finalists, because they were 1-2 on the points list at one point last weekend. But since that's no longer the case, they are both on the outside looking in. Instead, I'm going to tip my cap to another young standout, Leo Carlsson. He could have easily been a Hart Finalist last week too -- the "three young superstars" angle would have been a good one in hindsight. So to rectify it -- and to curry favor with all the Ducks fans that flooded my mentions because I left Carlsson out -- he's getting a Hart Trophy finalist nod this week. Uncle Leo is in!

I'm keeping an eye on Logan Thompson because he's still sitting at a .925 save percentage despite the Capitals being four points out of the playoff spot. But, Connor McDavid has eight points this week and is now second behind MacKinnon. And if you were to guess, Mac and Mc would definitely be easy picks to be Hart Trophy finalists at the end of the season.

But it's not the end of the season. And there's plenty of time to throw flowers at McDavid (like when he probably inevitably takes over the points race lead). We haven't had a goalie in here for a while, so I want to shine a spotlight on a tendy. Why not, it's my list after all! Spencer Knight definitely deserves it. He has a .924 save percentage, 7-3-3 record, and the Blackhawks are in a playoff position. This week, Spencer Knight is a Hart Trophy finalist!

For the record, I don't subscribe to the "goalies have their own award" chatter. Connor Hellebuyck won just last year, and Igor Shesterkin should absolutely have a Hart Trophy in his cabinet before he retires.

Stick taps to Sarah Thompson, who won a CHA championship at Syracuse, as well as under-18 World Championship gold with Canada. Last season, while playing for St. Lawrence, Thompson was awarded the 2025 Hockey Humanitarian Award, given annually to "college hockey's finest citizen," recognizing a student-athlete making significant contributions to both team and community as a volunteer.

Thompson founded Sticks Together, an organization that aims to give kids the opportunity to learn to play and love hockey in disadvantaged areas of the world. So far, Thompson has brought sticks, nets and pucks to Kenya, the Philippines, South Africa and Argentina. Thompson's immediate goal is to return to Kenya to bridge the gap between ice and street hockey -- to skate with the Ice Lionesses and teach street hockey in girls' private schools around Nairobi.

"I hope that we can encourage more girls to play for the Lionesses and further develop the players in the program," Thompson told ESPN.

As for the long-term vision for her program?

"To create a global network of girls' and women's hockey programs where access to the game means access to education and opportunity," Thompson replied. "Hockey gave me the opportunity to go to university on a scholarship and build a career of my dreams, and I hope to create these opportunities for girls around the world."

ESPN LOADED: 11.18.2025

1368604 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Oilers not even close to good enough in loss to last-place Sabres

Mark Spector

The Edmonton Oilers opened Q2 in familiar fashion, ineffective at five-on-five play and a step behind for most of the night in an embarrassing 5-1 loss to the Eastern Conference's last-place team, the lowly Buffalo Sabres.

"We'd better figure out how to win games as soon as possible," said winger Vasily Podkolzin after Monday's debacle. "Because we're not happy with what's going on right now."

Yawn. Heard that one before?

No depth scoring, ineffective at even strength, and far too easy to play against in their own zone, the Oilers were manhandled by the Sabres despite Edmonton having shown signs of life recently. On a slumberous



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Monday night in Western New York, however, the Oilers were no-shows against a far hungrier and more interested Sabres club.

"They did a good job," Podkolzin said. "They played simple, they scored their goals. So there's not much to say."

Head coach Kris Knoblauch united his top two centres — Leon Draisaitl and Connor McDavid — halfway through the opening period. From there, those two had 23:07 and 23:36 of ice time, respectively, while the fourth line of Noah Philp (6:23), Mattias Janmark (8:36) and Curtis Lazar (9:02) barely broke a sweat.

It's a chronic issue that has plagued Oilers coaches for years — overplaying the big boys at the expense of the rest of the roster — and now it has fully engulfed Knoblauch's coaching decisions as well.

McDavid and Draisaitl rank first and third, respectively, in ice time per game among NHL forwards who have played more than two games. Knoblauch is going to the whip in an Olympic year, and not getting rewarded with wins thus far.

Goalie Stu Skinner was Edmonton's best player, and he still surrendered four goals before Buffalo added an empty-netter. Meanwhile, the usual problems beset the Oilers, a team that doesn't get it done these days unless McDavid and/or Draisaitl does it for them.

The rest of the Oilers forwards, beyond the top line of McDavid, Draisaitl and Zach Hyman, had just 10 shots in goal. The defence corps chipped in 16 shots, but rookie Colten Ellis was beaten only once, on a Jack Roslovic one-timer.

"We ran into a pretty good goalie over there. He's playing well," offered defenceman Brett Kulak. "(We're) just not really playing to the level we want to get to.

"It's been spurts of what we want to play like, and it's just not enough," added Kulak, whose own struggles have been notable. "We've got to put in full 60-minute efforts. Everyone's got to find some chemistry with their linemates and just (step it) up a little bit."

Said Knoblauch: "After their power play goal (at 19:03 of Period 1), we let up a little bit. Just with confidence or emotion — we just didn't have the same jump as we had starting the game. After that, Buffalo played with that emotion, that speed, and were the better team in the second half of the game."

Easily deterred, the Oilers went through the motions in the final 40 minutes, losing the high-danger chance battle to the Sabres by a 14-5 count. This loss will look the same in the standings as all the others, though Knoblauch saw it a bit differently than recent setbacks.

"It was a little bit different tonight," he said. "We've been giving up a lot of chances off the rush. Tonight, that wasn't the case. They had us running around, whether we were getting beat to the net or ... just not being aggressive enough.

"Unfortunately, I'm not seeing a pattern."

With the opening quarter of the season now behind them, the Oilers stand with a 9-8-4 record. They are 4-7-2 on the road, and have just four regulation wins in their first 21 games.

The struggle is real, especially in Buffalo, where hockey's longest rebuild somehow owns the Oil.

How bad has Edmonton been at Buffalo over the Sabres' elongated version of the Decade of Darkness (Buffalo has missed the playoffs for 14 straight seasons)? With family and friends in the stands at the KeyBank Center, the Oilers have lost five of their last six in Buffalo, winning only four of their past 11 games at KeyBank.

"I think they're not what they were last year," Mattias Ekholm said of the Sabres prior to the game. "They're definitely working at being better."

Indeed, the Sabres were vastly better than Edmonton on Monday. They scored, and then after Roslovic tied the game, Buffalo rifled home two goals in 62 seconds and never looked back.

The Oilers, now 2-2 on this seven-game road swing, boarded a plane for Washington, where they'll play the Capitals on Wednesday.

Oil spills

Roslovic now has goals in four of his last five games, and has seven goals and eight assists in 18 games as an Oiler ... After playing just 7:08 in Carolina on Saturday, Frederic had an ineffective 12:23 of ice time in Buffalo: zero shots, two shots, five hits.

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1368605 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canadiens leave Columbus one step closer to busting slump

Eric Engels

It was a step in the right direction, just not the leap the Montreal Canadiens were hoping for.

But that's the thing about deep funks and losing streaks — you don't just jump out of them; you dig your way out one foot at a time.

And so it made sense that when the cameras hit Montreal's room, after Kirill Marchenko scored his fourth goal on his fourth shootout attempt of the season and Jet Greaves made the stop on Ivan Demidov that secured a 4-3 win for the Columbus Blue Jackets, they captured Canadiens players in relatively good spirits.

"I thought we played well tonight," Josh Anderson, the former Blue Jacket who scored one of two third-period goals to get the Canadiens back into the game from down 3-1, told reporters at Nationwide Arena. He was right.

Down Patrik Laine, Kirby Dach, Alex Newhook and Kaiden Guhle — four regulars out long-term — the Canadiens controlled play for most of the game.

They withstood the Blue Jackets' charge in the opening minutes and took over the second half of the first period. From down 1-0, they connected on the type of play they'd regularly botched in three straight losses prior to this one, with Juraj Slafkovsky feeding Ivan Demidov, who hit Mike Matheson on a high-slot cycle before Matheson crossed up Yegor Chinakov and Sean Monahan to find teammate Oliver Kapanen in the middle of the slot for a goal to the roof of Greaves' net early in the second period. And from down 3-1 in the third, they produced shot attempts at a two-to-one ratio, dominated scoring chances 12-3, and found the back of the net by creating chaos and traffic in front of it.

The Canadiens lost five of six games coming into this one not doing enough of that stuff, and they had every reason to feel dejected after outshooting the Blue Jackets 6-0 in overtime and getting beat in a breakaway competition in the end.

But the step they took was towards resembling their better selves, and it was important they recognized it so they can finally take the one that'll get them out of this hole.

"There were a lot of things we did tonight that were very encouraging," said Canadiens coach Martin St. Louis. "I liked our collective game, we didn't give up much, and in the third we looked like ourselves. The only



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disappointing thing tonight was not getting the result. We played to our standard."

"We're chasing standards, not the scoreboard," he added moments later. "It'll take care of itself if we bring those intentions and play to the standard, and we'll be fine."

At 10-6-3 on the season, tied with Detroit for the best points percentage (.605) in an extremely competitive Atlantic Division (and tied with them for the fourth-best points percentage in the league), the Canadiens already are fine.

Had they come into Columbus and played well beneath the standard they set for themselves through a 9-3-0 start to the season, it would've been a step towards being anything but fine, no matter the result.

Things couldn't continue the way they went in a 5-1 loss to the Los Angeles Kings, a 7-0 loss to the Dallas Stars and a 3-2 loss to the Boston Bruins last week.

Not that the Canadiens were as bad as the combined scoreline suggested. They just weren't nearly good enough, and the process reflected it.

The process looked different enough against the Blue Jackets for the Canadiens to rightfully believe they took a step in the right direction.

That step was a step towards each other, towards leaning more on the collective game in the absence of the injured. It was a step taken thanks to some line juggling and strategy tweaks that sparked some much-needed offence. And that step found solid ground with the cohesion the Canadiens found at the most critical point in the game—on their only man-advantage, with 1:51 remaining.

It didn't happen on a power play seeking redemption after 17 straight misses, including seven against Boston, and that's because the Canadiens didn't get a single power-play opportunity against Columbus.

But they pulled goaltender Jakub Dobes with just under two minutes remaining in regulation, went six-on-five, and everyone did their job away from the puck to enable Lane Hutson to do his with it.

Hutson's second goal of the season, scored at 18:41 of the third period, extended momentum the Canadiens came so close to capitalizing on in overtime.

"Thought we gave ourselves a really good chance to win," said Nick Suzuki afterwards.

He talked about Hutson and the other defencemen getting pucks to the net, about the forwards getting themselves there, and about how the Canadiens were generally in control.

Control was what they hadn't particularly had over the last two weeks of losing hockey, so the most important thing for them was to start wrestling it back.

Now it'll be critical to keep it against the Washington Capitals Thursday. It's the step that'll lead the Canadiens back to the win column.

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1368606 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canucks Takeaways: Road trip ends with defensive disaster

Iain MacIntyre

With so much of the micro-view ugly for the Vancouver Canucks on Monday, the struggling National Hockey League team can encourage itself with the bigger picture.

As their injury wave crests again, the depleted Canucks managed to collect three points from a daunting three-game Atlantic road trip in which going 0-for was a real possibility and would have seriously damaged their playoff chances even this early in the season.

So, the Canucks survived to fight another week.

That's the good part.

The bad part on Monday was that with a chance to use the tour of Stanley Cup contenders as a turning point in their season, and up two goals early and somehow still tied early in the third period, the Canucks' disaster on defence was too much to outscore and they lost 8-5 to the two-time champion Florida Panthers.

Yes, the Canucks scored five times on 15 shots on the road... and lost by three goals.

Vancouver was playing its second game in just over 24 hours, and head coach Adam Foote made the safe (and conservative) choice in net by giving minor-league goalie Jiri Patera his first NHL start in 601 days. But the Canucks were not remotely close to the Panthers, who also have some serious injuries, in any sense except their finishing.

After getting outshot 19-7 in the first two periods Sunday in Tampa, where the Canucks scored five third-period goals for the fourth time in franchise history to win 6-2, Vancouver was outshot 27-9 through 40 minutes by Florida.

In the Canucks' road trip opener Friday in Carolina, where goalie Kevin Lankinen earned them a point with a 4-3 overtime loss to the Hurricanes, Vancouver was outshot 26-12 through two periods.

For the three games, Natural Stat Trick had high-danger scoring chances at five-on-five 51-11 against the Canucks, whose expected-goals were just 24 per cent. Vancouver was outshot 109-50 on the trip.

Yet, against this territorial landslide, the Canucks managed to dig in and score enough times to go 1-1-1 and pass the quarter-mark of their regular season at 9-10-2, two raw points out of a playoff spot in the Western Conference, although considerably farther back on points percentage.

The Canucks have admirably adapted to the daily task of surviving the month-long injury crisis, which currently has six players out, but just alternating wins and losses is slowly but steadily flattening their playoff odds.

Vancouver has not won consecutive games since Oct. 19, when their lineup crisis accelerated with injuries that same afternoon to centres Filip Chytil and Teddy Blueger. The Canucks are 5-8-2 since then.

If they really want to survive and stay in the race, they're simply going to have to play better and plug the gaping holes in their defensive game. No team has allowed more goals than the 77 surrendered by the Canucks, whose goals-against average of 3.67 is 30th among 32 teams, and whose 67.1 per cent penalty kill is the worst in hockey.

As Sportsnet analytics correspondent Adam Vingan reported last week, the Canucks' defensive deterioration can be traced to the front of their net, where the share of shots coming from Vancouver's slot had plummeted from 11th-best last season to 28th this year, and the team's defence of slot passes had collapsed to 30th from fifth.

A DIFFERENT NARRATIVE

With their paper-thin depth at centre and lack of offensive game-breakers up front, the Canucks were expected to be a team that had trouble



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scoring, but one whose goaltending and strong defence would make Vancouver stingy and force opponents to work for their goals.

32 Thoughts: The Podcast

32 Thoughts: The Podcast

Hockey fans already know the name, but this is not the blog. From Sportsnet, 32 Thoughts: The Podcast with NHL Insider Elliotte Friedman and Kyle Bukauskas is a weekly deep dive into the biggest news and interviews from the hockey world.

Latest episode

More or less, the opposites have been true, exemplified by this road trip. Including an empty-netter, the Canucks scored 14 goals in the three games. And the most encouraging aspect of this is that their two franchise skaters, defenceman Quinn Hughes and centre Elias Pettersson, have rediscovered their world-class offensive levels.

Hughes helped set up the first three Vancouver goals in Florida, making him the first player in franchise history to collect 10 assists over three games. (Hughes had one game off during that streak due to an upper-body injury.) And Pettersson clinically scored the third and fourth Canuck goals on Monday as Vancouver rallied from a 5-2 deficit to tie it on defenceman Filip Hronek's power-play finish off the rush at 3:14 of the third period.

Pettersson has eight points in his last four games, after being blanked in five of the previous seven.

The best part about this road trip for the Canucks is having both Hughes and Pettersson simultaneously playing again at an elite level. That hasn't happened in a while.

SPECIAL TEAMS TIMING

Besides Lankinen and Hughes, what enabled the Canucks to win in Tampa was their special teams. Their power play went 2-for-3 while the barely-functioning penalty kill blanked the Lightning during two disadvantages.

In Florida, each power play scored twice. But timing is often as important as totals, and when the game was still there for Vancouver in the middle of the third period, its power play generated almost nothing during advantages when it was 6-5 and 7-5 for Florida. Canuck penalty-killing, meanwhile, didn't survive Marcus Pettersson's interference penalty at 7:11 as Panthers defenceman Seth Jones skated unchecked to the slot to convert Sam Reinhart's pass and restore his team's two-goal lead at 8:19.

THE GOALIE DECISION

Nobody outside the team knows what conversations took place between Foote, goaltending coach Marko Torenus and Lankinen between the back-to-back games. But the head coach made the call to give minor-league backup Patera his first NHL start since March 26, 2024.

With starting goalie Thatcher Demko on his fifth injury in less than two years, Foote rested Lankinen, who was brilliant in Tampa and Carolina and would have been playing his third game in four nights in Florida. Lankinen faced "only" 30 shots against the Lightning and handled back-to-back starts last weekend at home.

Patera is a 26-year-old with nine NHL games in his career. He was signed as a free agent by the Canucks in the summer of '24 due to uncertainty about Demko's health and the organization's desire to have at least one experienced professional in the minors to play alongside Vancouver's talented prospects.

Patera made several strong saves on Monday, but by the end of the night had allowed seven goals on 40 shots.

Demko's reported groin injury is week-to-week. With the Canucks finally getting a slight breather this week, with home games Thursday against Dallas and Sunday against Calgary before they open another four-game trip in Anaheim on Nov. 26, it may be a while before Patera gets another NHL game.

KAMPF, DAVID

We're not going to judge newest Canuck David Kampf on one game when his team was outshot 41-15, but his debut as Vancouver's checking centre after his contract termination in Toronto did free up Pettersson for more offensive starts. Kampf also went 11-4 on faceoffs, but finished minus-three and was on the ice for one of the Panthers' power-play goals.

QUOTEBOOK

Adam Foote: "We were right there and we made a couple of mistakes at the wrong time. We have to find a way to take some of the good stuff that happened out of that, too."

CANUCKS LINEUP

Forwards

Kane-Pettersson-Sherwood

O'Connor-Sasson-Boeser

MacEachern-Kampf-DeBrusk

Reichel-Raty-Karlsson

Defencemen

Hughes-Hronek

M. Pettersson-Myers

E. Pettersson Jr.-Willander

Goalies

Patera

(Lankinen)

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 11.18.2025

1368607 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Is this Maple Leafs season beyond saving?

Justin Bourne

TORONTO — The easy part of the schedule has not been so easy.

The Toronto Maple Leafs sit 8-9-2 through 19 games, and their opposition hasn't exactly been the cream of the crop.

Coaches will reflexively tell you that there are no easy games in this league, and that's fine; of course any team can win on any night.

But the Leafs have played 13 home games versus just six on the road, and only a handful of games against teams that made the playoffs last season. What remains is only harder, and that's not great when you're already 15th in the conference.

There are no easy games in this league. OK, great, I guess it's all the same then. Hey, good luck on this six-day stretch in January:



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This is my sixth year hosting a show on Sportsnet, and it's the first time I've legitimately had to ponder the question we're going to work through in this article:

For the Leafs, is success in the 2025-26 season worth fighting for?

I'm obviously not referring to literal effort here, which of course you expect. I'm referring to the tools management and coaching have at their disposal to alter the team at a more material level: trading players, firing coaches, changing systems, or wholly re-allocating ice time.

For all of these bigger options we're asking, is there really any point? Not being sarcastic, but asking for real: If the team isn't going to compete for a Stanley Cup — which has only ever been the goal since Auston Matthews' sophomore season — is there any logic in moving picks or prospects to aid in this season?

For what? Squeaking into the playoffs?

So, let's have the debate.

Is contending for a Stanley Cup a realistic place the Leafs can get back to?

They're nowhere close to "Cup contender" status right now, but there's also a lot that's been off this season, and Toronto doesn't have that typical burdensome problem most non-contenders have: a lack of talent. Talent-less teams don't sit third in goals well into the season.

The things that are "off" include starting the year with chaos in the crease. Joseph Woll left a couple days into training camp, and that piled the pressure and starts on Anthony Stolarz, who didn't handle that last-second assignment well.

But also related to Stolarz's bad start is how wildly disorganized the team has been in front of him, something that was to be anticipated for a bit while they got several new forwards and new lines settled.

"Settled" is not something they have achieved.

After an expected slow start, the Leafs started getting hurt. The loss on Saturday night in Chicago seemed like one that probably could have gone the other way had Matthews and Chris Tanev (and, sure, Scott Laughton) been active.

Looking at expected goals for and against, the Leafs are in a huge pocket of teams that sit just below the few best teams, but nobody outside Colorado looks that unstoppable yet. Frankly, the East around the Leafs looks generally kinda bad. Carolina and New Jersey are good. Everyone else carries question marks.

With some better health, more saves, maybe a roster move or two, and perhaps some different on-ice strategy, the Leafs have too much talent to say this team is going to be some bottom-feeder.

On the other hand, Toronto's big defence isn't remotely physical (nor can it make plays), it legitimately misses Mitch Marner's ability to transport the puck up the ice, and it feels like it's constantly chasing games.

They have excuses, but a few of these problems ain't going anywhere.

As a result, the big decisions are arriving earlier than expected.

Why are we talking about this, exactly?

We should talk about the elephant in the room, which is mostly the oft-floated question: Should they trade for Rasmus Andersson? The Leafs want more offence from their back end, and so they understandably covet the soon-to-be free agent. Calgary isn't trying to win this year, and so would love some combination of picks and prospects to help it load up for when its new arena is ready, in 2027-28.

It's terrifying for Leafs fans, because if the Leafs trade for Andersson — or "right-handed Morgan Rielly," as I've seen him described — and it makes them a little better, they could still miss the playoffs and have

fewer bits to hope on in the future. I'm not even sure marching into the playoffs to a first-round drubbing is much better if that costs you someone who could help the organization in the next few years.

The point is, they just can't trade futures right now. Things are too uncertain, and they're not "close" yet. So it's hard to see the Andersson thing materializing, outside of a "hockey trade," and I can't see many that make sense both ways.

My only note on why I like Andersson for the Leafs is that beyond his offence, I like his attitude. I like that he runs his mouth at people, and isn't intimidated by anyone, as evidenced by the game he spent running his mouth at Tom Wilson. The Leafs could use a little attitude from a guy who plays regularly, a la Oliver Ekman-Larsson, one of their few guys who has that great trait.

So they don't want to trade picks or prospects. What else is there to do?

There's the "hockey trades" thing, then there's changing the coach.

As for "hockey trades," I just don't see any teams out there coveting, say, Max Domi in mid-November. Who else could we be talking about? Yes, Brandon Carlo's name comes up, but he's a perfectly OK defender, and you need right-handed defencemen. As soon as Carlo is gone, you're brutally thin on the right, unless Calgary wants him and you can get Andersson back, but I have to believe that would cost additional assets and an extension.

Dakota Joshua cost a fourth-rounder and hasn't improved his value since, so how does trading him help? Nic Roy's coming around, Matias Maccelli hasn't improved his value. Rielly is one of the few puck-moving blue-liners they have and I just don't see a path to being better by trading him. I just can't imagine a hockey trade that another team would want.

So, what about the coach?

There are a few problems here: One, I believe a coaching change would cost the Leafs millions of dollars (\$10 million-plus, perhaps?) before you even have to pay a new guy. Even for MLSE, that's not nothing. Two, it would also be an admission of failure from GM Brad Treliving, which I don't think he's eager to make in front of the new boss. And, three, would there be guaranteed returns? Do we know Berube is the problem here?

Berube has been with the team for not even one-and-a-half seasons, and last year they won the division and went on the deepest run into the playoffs they've had yet with this group. Now, the underlying numbers for them have gotten progressively worse in just about every category since the day he took over, and the goaltending papered over a lot of it last season.

There are reasonable questions to be asked about if his style meshes with this particular roster. There's no evidence of buy-in from this group, which is a concern a quarter of the way into the season. It's not going great for the coach, but he is universally well-liked around the organization and I think people are rooting for him to sort it out.

Changing the coach is an option made stronger mainly by the lack of options the Leafs have with the actual roster. But it's also reasonable to suggest they should get some time to play through this, get healthy, and try to find their way when both goalies are back again.

So what's the best course of action here?

It depends on the internal desperation level, which goes up with every loss.

Making a coaching change indicates the highest level of desperation, and would make a massive difference — you just don't know if it would all be positive or not. (It's tough to see them getting worse, though.)

Making a hockey trade is a smaller move that would be meant to show everyone that management is not content with how it's been going. As



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long as it didn't involve futures, it could be palatable if Treliving can find one that makes sense.

And doing nothing would be tough for fans to stomach, unless the Leafs started to win some games. Winning cures all, and they've been losing too much, so the ailments have been evident for all to see.

Whichever course the Leafs opt for, the spotlight is just getting brighter, and the standings are taking shape. You'd hate to see them go down with the bat on their shoulder here and not even taking a swing. As I noted, there is talent on the roster. They just can't trade futures, because if they strike out, their chances of hits in the future look an awful lot less likely.

Toronto has its back against the wall, and now their coach's former team is coming to town Tuesday night to get a first hand view of things. I'm guessing the coach, and a good number of the players, are on high alert as the Leafs head into games that are starting to feel must-win way earlier on that easy part of the schedule than they'd imagined.

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Sportsnet.ca / Flames quarter-mark report: Lack of offence proving costly

Eric Francis

CALGARY - Last in the league.

Last in goal scoring, shooting percentage, power play efficiency and, most importantly, in the standings.

While it's unlikely anyone in the dressing room or front office feels the Calgary Flames are the league's worst team, that's where they sit at the quarter mark.

The numbers don't lie.

All the momentum gained from a late push that landed them one point short of a playoff spot last season has been lost.

Obliterated.

For an organization hellbent on making the playoffs, things couldn't have started any worse.

Several weeks before U.S. Thanksgiving, their playoff hopes have made like a Costco sample and disappeared.

"We're in a tough situation — there's no sugar coating it," said Rasmus Andersson following a recent loss.

"It sucks. I don't even know our record anymore. It's frustrating. It's just not acceptable."

At 5-12-7, they're 10 points out of a wild card spot and almost every team ahead of the Flames has games in hand.

They can't score, and with the league's worst shooting percentage, there is little reason to believe that will change anytime soon.

Talk around town is focused entirely on leaning into the adversity by trading veterans, getting more picks for this summer's draft, giving more youngsters longer looks in the bigs, and ensuring a season of tremendous pain translates into a top-three pick.

It would be foolish to act any other way, especially in a city fed up with three decades of being stuck in the mushy middle.

Compounding frustration in town has been the ongoing debate surrounding the early play and use of prized prospect Zayne Parekh, who

is currently injured. Prior to his injury, he was unable to make an impact, was in and out of the lineup, and struggled to gain the confidence and poise that made him the 9th pick overall in 2024.

Matvei Gridin, another first-rounder, made the team as a 19-year-old out of camp, but was demoted soon afterwards. The Russian has six goals and 14 points in 14 games with the AHL's Wranglers, making him one of the few bright spots in town these days.

Dustin Wolf has rebounded from a slow start, and the team has played better of late, returning to play the sort of never-say-die hockey that made them so popular and successful a year earlier.

Most Encouraging Development: Their draft position

I know this is supposed to be about a player or trend, but the reality is that the best thing to come out of the team's playoff-busting start is that it helps position the club for a top-three pick in the draft — something they've never done in franchise history.

That, for a fan base clamouring for the team to finally lean into a lost season to land a difference-maker in the draft, is encouraging.

Calgary needs a star to sell hope and build around, and those only come via the draft.

Most concerning development: The team's inability to score.

In a league in which elite talent is the difference most nights, the Flames have none.

Matt Coronato, Gridin and AHL prospect Aydar Suniev seem like they are capable of scoring bushels of goals when they reach their prime, but those days seem far away.

The notion they'd score by committee is now a pipe dream, putting far too much pressure on Wolf and their defensive game.

Top-six forwards: Grade F

When you're the lowest-scoring team in the loop, there is no other grade, especially when the team's leading goal scorer (Blake Coleman) is on the third line.

Nazem Kadri is the team's leading point-getter with 11 in 20 games, which is one point more than the Flames' best player so far this season, Morgan Frost.

Not enough.

Yegor Sharangovich, who is in year one of a five-year contract at \$5.75 million annually, has two goals and has been a healthy scratch of late due to engagement issues that rival Brad Pitt's.

Bottom-six forwards: C

Mikael Backlund, Sam Honzek and Coleman have been the team's steadiest line, limiting the opposition's top trios with an effectiveness that has kept the club in the middle of the pack in terms of goals against. Alas, Honzek is now out week-to-week.

The fourth line has done its job, with Ryan Lomberg and Adam Klapka anchoring a unit that does well to create energy, play physically and forecheck the way the rest of the team can learn from.

Defence: D

Outside of the top duo of Kevin Bahl and Rasmus Andersson, things have been a bit of a mess defensively. The other two pairings have been juggled nightly in an effort to find the right partner for Parekh.

Future captain, Mackenzie Weegar, is the first to admit he's had a rough go, with just four assists and a team-low minus-16.

The defencemen haven't been able to help out offensively either, sitting 31st in the league in points.



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Goaltending: C+

Wolf had a rough start to the season, but has been much better of late, coinciding with the team's ability to keep most games close.

Backup Devin Cooley might be the most pleasant surprise of the season, posting a 1.75 GAA and .935 save percentage in his five appearances.

The duo sits 13th in the league with a 2.96 GAA and 13th with an .895 save percentage.

Quarter Mark Awards:

MVP: Blake Coleman

Most Improved Player: Morgan Frost

Best Defensive Player: Kevin Bahl

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Sportsnet.ca / Troy Stecher arrives to help fragile Maple Leafs end losing ways

Luke Fox

TORONTO — Within hours of getting scooped off waivers by the increasingly desperate and depleted Toronto Maple Leafs, Troy Stecher flew to Chicago in a rush.

Hope he was wearing a cape.

Though the right-shot defenceman had no chance of making it to United Center before the puck dropped on Toronto's fifth consecutive loss, everyone saw value in Stecher's being able to have dinner and break ice with his new teammates, who opted for a team-bonding event in the Windy City instead of the typical post-game charter home.

"It was unfortunate they couldn't get the win that night. It would've been probably a little more upbeat. But it's nice. Anytime you can have time with your teammates away from the rink, especially on the road, it's a lot easier — and it's not very often you stay over in a city," Stecher said Monday, after leading the post-practice stretch.

"A good opportunity for me to come in and meet the guys on different terms, instead of walking into a dressing room kind of on eggshells."

Stecher — who will debut Tuesday (Sportsnet+, 7 p.m. ET / 4 p.m. PT) against the struggling St. Louis Blues — isn't tiptoeing around his seventh NHL club. But that doesn't mean the Maple Leafs aren't fragile after fumbling their way to the longest active losing skid in the league and learning of more bad news on the injury front.

Coach Craig Berube commented on the "low energy" of his players at practice and could be heard barking at the skaters to bust their, uh, butts.

Following the downbeat skate, Berube revealed that the absent Nicolas Roy is sidelined with an upper-body injury and that captain Auston Matthews (lower body) has yet to skate since Tuesday's injury.

Tumbling down the standings, the Maple Leafs are now missing two of their top four defencemen (Chris Tanev, Brandon Carlo), their No. 1 goalie (Anthony Stolarz, who hasn't practised since Tuesday either), and three of their top four centres. (This after terminating the contract of reliable depth centre David Kämpf last week.)

The club remains vague with timelines for return of their wounded.

In the spirit of next man up, 23-year-old Marlies centre Jacob Quillan gets a shot Tuesday after piling 14 points in 14 AHL games.

Berube believes Quillan, like Stecher, will inject his lineup with good feet and hard compete.

If the Leafs are beginning to feel like their backs are against a wall here, well, Stecher's mindset is in alignment.

"Seeing the team and how competitive they are and where they are on the standings, I knew it would be a motivated group I would be joining," Stecher said. "Kind of goes hand in hand with the way I play. I play with a lot of motivation and bit of a chip on my shoulder."

Listed at 5-foot-10, Stecher is the rare undersized defender who has dawged his way to a 566-game, 10-year career and a Stanley Cup Final.

That stems from "just being told no my whole life, being a smaller guy," the 31-year-old explained.

"Try to prove people wrong and, more than anything, just prove myself right."

Favouring younger defencemen Ty Emberson and Alec Regula, both 25, the Edmonton Oilers nudged Stecher aside.

"That's the way the business works. Like, I was on the other side of it when I came in the league. You kind of push some older guys out. So, wish them well. But I don't think it necessarily had anything to do with being a poor player," said Stecher, who spoke positively of his Alberta days.

"A lot of fond memories of going to battle with a lot of those guys in that room. Just the fan support around Edmonton was incredible. And I feel very fortunate to still be in Canada and Toronto — and having that same (support), if not more, here."

Stecher's confidence hit a low in 2024, when he was dealt at the deadline from Arizona to help the surging Oilers, only to miss all four playoff rounds due to an ankle cyst that required surgical removal.

He re-signed in Edmonton and suited up for eight games in the Oil's return to the final last spring.

"It's the best hockey you'll find. So, it's something I'll look back on when my career is all over and be thankful I got to experience," Stecher said.

"But in saying that, I still feel like I got a lot of game left to myself, and I hope to win the Stanley Cup at some point. And that starts here in Toronto."

The Leafs extol the virtues of Stecher's first pass, his character and competitive nature.

But the pickup is an indictment of fellow righty Philippe Myers, who signed a two-year, one-way contact extension in January and will be scratched upon Stecher's arrival.

Berube figures Myers' extra usage has contributed to his dash-seven rating, lowest among the team's defencemen.

"Probably got overextended this year a little bit with the injuries. But he definitely hasn't played the way he played last year," Berube said. "He just needs to get his game back in order a little bit. Because he's capable of doing it. We saw it. But it's just been a little bit of a long stretch here for him."

The whole first quarter of this season has felt unusually long in these parts.

An impressive showing by Quillan and Stecher in Tuesday's double debut — and a skid-snapping win against the equally troubled Blues — would go a long way to turn the mood.



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"I mean, we're losing, but I think we're feeling positive. Trending, hopefully, in the right direction," said William Nylander, wearing a shirt. "I mean, this keeps going for another month, it'll be a different mood."

One-Timers: Laughton was a full participant in practice for the first time since suffering an upper-body injury from a hard Nikita Zadorov hit on Nov. 8.... Carlo (lower body) was placed on injured reserve retroactive to Nov. 13.... Jake Neighbours (leg) will travel with the Blues but is doubtful to play in Toronto.... New Canuck David Kämpf penned a farewell letter to Leafs Nation, which he posted on Instagram. "It's been a pleasure Toronto," he began. "A great chapter of my life but the time has come to move on. I gave everything I had to this organization and city and I'll always be thankful for the opportunity I got here..."

Maple Leafs projected lineup Tuesday vs. St. Louis Blues

Robertson – Tavares – Nylander

Knies – Domi – Cowan

Maccelli – Quillan – McMann

Joshua – Lorentz – Järnkrok

Rielly – Ekman-Larsson

Benoit – McCabe

Mermis – Stecher

Woll starts

Hildeby

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1368610 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Weekend Takeaways: Dominant Avalanche putting NHL on notice

Ryan Dixon

With a sizeable morass of mediocrity defining the NHL standings, it can be easy to forget about the cream at the top. And by most any metric you choose right now, that would be the Colorado Avalanche.

The Avs won their sixth straight contest on Sunday night, downing the New York Islanders 4-1 in Denver. Colorado has the best points percentage (.816) in the NHL and its single 60-minute loss through 19 contests is three fewer than any other squad.

The Avalanche are No. 1 in goals per game (4.11) while allowing the fewest goals against (2.37). They have the best expected goals percentage (58.82 per cent) per Money puck and the top high-danger Corsi percentage (61.06) per Natural Stat Trick.

Perhaps most impressively, the Avs' league-best goal-differential of plus-31 is more than double the plus-14 posted by the second-best team in that category, the Carolina Hurricanes.

If you want to ding the Avalanche for anything, a power play featuring Nathan MacKinnon and Cale Makar somehow only ranks 21st. Of course, the Big Foot Boys make up for that by killing 88.7 per cent of their penalties, a figure that ranks second.

Individually, MacKinnon leads the league in points (33) and goals (14), which is a surprise to absolutely no one. Far more attention-grabbing is the fact Scott Wedgewood has a .917 save percentage, a number topped by just Logan Thompson (.925) and Spencer Knight (.924) among

goalies with at least seven games played. His solid work while presumed starter Mackenzie Blackwood was sidelined to start the year has already earned Wedgewood a million-dollar raise on a one-year contract extension inked late last week. Even if you're not sold on him as a starter, it sure seems like the squad has the potential for a solid duo in goal when Blackwood finds his legs.

Crease talk is a good portal to the past for the Avs, because it was around this time last year they acquired Wedgewood — then Blackwood a few weeks later — to improve what had been a miserable situation in the blue paint.

Check.

Martin Necas scored his 13th goal of the year into an empty net on Sunday and his performance — along with his monster eight-year extension, signed one day before Halloween — has assuaged most of the pain from seeing major franchise pillar Mikko Rantanen traded about 10 months ago.

Speaking of friends from the past, Gabriel Landeskog is playing NHL hockey in the fall for the first time since 2021 and after going 16 games without a goal, he's got two in his past three outings.

Landeskog's injury combined with the free-agent departures of Nazem Kadri and Darcy Kuemper following Colorado's 2022 championship essentially knee-capped this club just as it summited the mountain.

Now, the Avalanche are serving notice they're serious about another climb.

Weekend takeaways

- The Islanders may have lost on Sunday, but Emil Heineman potted his ninth goal of the campaign to open the scoring. To the outside world, Heineman — who's hit the net in three straight outings — was the overlooked piece in the huge swap that sent Noah Dobson to Montreal right before the 2025 NHL Draft. The Swedish winger, though, has looked like anything but a throw-in with his offensive performance this year, to say nothing of his hard-nosed approach. Give GM Mathieu Darche a solid grade on his first major deal in the big chair.

- Good as the Avalanche has been, the Stars are basically going win-for-win with them in the Central Division. Dallas collected its fifth straight 'W' with a 5-1 stomping of Philly on Saturday and has outscored its opponents 12-1 in its past two outings. Jason Robertson is scorching right now, posting his third consecutive three-point outing versus the Flyers.

- The Kings won their fourth straight contest — all on the road, by the way — with a 1-0 whitewash of the Senators on Saturday. The next day, Los Angeles inked pending UFA Adrian Kempe to an eight-year extension, making it a spectacular weekend for the club and a horrible one for the last flickers of excitement around free agency. Lord help us all if Artemi Panarin re-ups with the Rangers and Alex Tuch does the same in Western New York.

32 Thoughts: The Podcast

32 Thoughts: The Podcast

Hockey fans already know the name, but this is not the blog. From Sportsnet, 32 Thoughts: The Podcast with NHL Insider Elliotte Friedman and Kyle Bukauskas is a weekly deep dive into the biggest news and interviews from the hockey world.

Latest episode

Red-and-white power rankings

1. Winnipeg Jets (11-7-0): The Jets squeaked out a 4-3 shootout win over the Flames on Saturday, but the game capped a disappointing roadie in



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which Winnipeg went 2-4-0 and was held to one goal or fewer in half of the six games.

2. Edmonton Oilers (9-7-4): Like the Jets, the Oilers pulled out an extra-time win on Saturday with a 4-3 W in Carolina. While the Oilers will take the points any way they can get them, it's wild to think no team in the league — including the other one that plays in Alberta — has fewer 60-minute wins than Edmonton's four.

3. Montreal Canadiens (10-6-2): After a couple years of being ravaged by injuries, the Habs got a bit of a reprieve last year. It seems like that hiatus is over, though, with Sunday's announcement that Kirby Dach — who might have the worst injury luck of any guy in the NHL — is out four to six weeks with a fractured foot. That means Patrik Laine, Kaiden Guhle, Alex Newhook and now Dach are all out long-term for Montreal.

4. Ottawa Senators (9-6-4): The back half of November is a huge stretch for Ottawa, which begins a seven-game road trip in Anaheim on Thursday. After facing all three California teams, the Sens visit Vegas, St. Louis and Dallas before closing out the excursion in Montreal.

5. Toronto Maple Leafs (8-9-2): The Leafs' next two games are at home against the Blues and Blue Jackets. After that, it's a six-game roadie. Can we non-hyperbolically call Tuesday versus lowly St. Louis and Thursday versus Columbus must-wins for the Buds?

6. Vancouver Canucks (9-9-2): One day after snapping a three-game losing skid Sunday night with a satisfying 6-2 victory in Tampa, the Canucks are right back at it in Sunrise facing the Panthers on Monday. If you're looking for bright spots, Vancouver is averaging four goals per game in its past five outings.

7. Calgary Flames (5-12-3): After dropping a shootout loss on home ice to the Jets, Calgary is about to play seven of its next eight contests on the road. It feels like we're at a tipping point in terms of earnestly exploring a sell-off and leaning into lottery odds.

The week ahead

- Two defencemen are poised to play game No. 1,000 in the NHL, with Jeff Petry set to hit the career milestone when the Panthers host Vancouver on Monday, while Justin Faulk is slated to put that notch on his belt when the Blues visit the Maple Leafs on Tuesday.
- The 2025-26 season will officially hit the quarter mark on Thursday night when its 328th contest will be played during a 12-game slate.
- Nikolaj Ehlers had a slow start to his Canes career — as in, zero goals through 11 games played — but he scored during Saturday's loss to the Oilers and has eight points in his past seven outings since finding the net for the first time on Nov. 4. The Dane, who signed a massive UFA deal with Carolina, will be back in Winnipeg on Friday, facing the Jets team that selected him ninth overall in 2014.

• Neither the Leafs nor Habs are having a ton of fun right now. Maybe the Forever Rivals will take out some of their frustrations on each other when they meet on Saturday night in Montreal on Hockey Night in Canada.

That same evening, the clubs who battled in the past two Cup finals will meet again in Florida when the Oilers visit the Panthers.

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1368611 Websites

TSN.CA / Pace the focus in practice as Leafs' winless streak hits five games

Mark Masters

The Toronto Maple Leafs practiced Monday, and head coach Craig Berube brought the players together early in the session and implored the group to pick up the pace.

"It was a little low early today," the Leafs coach said of the energy level. "Sometimes after a day off, though, that could be the case. But I thought it picked up."

Monday's workout was the team's first on-ice session since dropping a fifth straight game (0-4-1) on Saturday night in Chicago. This is Toronto's longest winless run since April 2021, and the urgency level appears to be rising.

During a break-out drill later in practice, Berube again barked at the players.

"You guys don't get to the wall quick enough," the coach said. "You're way too f--king high. You're just at the blue line the whole time. And then in the game, we don't want to get to the f--king wall and break the puck out. You gotta go up the wall a lot of times in the game. So that's where you gotta f--king battle. You got to hit the net-front D, you gotta hit your centre underneath, but if you don't bust your ass to get there, if you don't get low enough, then we're f--ked. That's just effort and it's just wanting to get there. That's all it is. It's wanting to get there. So just f--king do it, and do it hard and do it right."

The Leafs have spent far too much time in their own end so far this season. It's a big reason why they rank 31st in goals-against per game.

"We did a better job last game of not giving up as much, not spending as much time in our zone, so that's a big part of it," Berube said when asked about the compete level at practice. "So you've got to work on it and we do work on it. But we're going to continue to work on it and get better at it."

Monday's practice featured a series of 5-on-5 drills with a focus on breaking out, coming back into the defensive zone and getting in on the forecheck.

In a rare move, the team will hold a full skate on Tuesday morning. Usually, the Leafs make the game-day skate optional when there is a full practice the previous day.

General manager Brad Treliving will meet the media before Tuesday's skate to discuss the team's performance through the first quarter of the season.

The Leafs have allowed 22 goals during the five-game skid, but there are some signs of progress.

"The past few games, I think there's been a lot of effort," said winger Matthew Knies. "I think there's been a lot of good. I think our game is definitely trending in the right direction. The few games before that, I think that there was a little bit of a lack of effort. In practice you guys saw that everyone's moving well, everyone's going hard so, yeah, I don't think that's what it is anymore."

Fellow winger William Nylander never considered effort an issue.

"To be honest, I think there's always been good effort and good compete," Nylander said when asked specifically about Knies' comment. "So, I don't think that that has really ever been the issue."

After each of the last three games, Berube has highlighted a lack of confidence as a factor. The Leafs have held a lead in four of the last five games.

On Saturday night, Toronto's 2-1 advantage in the third period turned into a 3-2 regulation defeat.



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"We just got to find a way to just step on them and not let them breathe when it comes to the third period," said Knies. "I think we let them come back in the game and obviously that's happened to us a few times here. So, we're just trying to figure out how to finish out a game right now and I think we have the ability to do that. I think we just have to execute on a few things and I think we'll be good."

What's the mood like around the team?

"We're losing, but I think we're feeling positive," said Nylander. "I mean, trending hopefully in the right direction. So, yeah, I mean, if this keeps going for another month then [it's] a different mood (laugh)."

Nylander has failed to register a shot on goal in the last two games.

"I think I've had chances to actually shoot the puck ... [I] just haven't really," the 29-year-old said. "I mean, I had a breakaway last game [and] put it in the corner. I mean, there are a couple of chances where I'm looking to pass it maybe instead of shooting it. So that's probably what I would say: [it] is just [about] getting the shooting mindset instead."

This is the first time Nylander has gone consecutive games without a shot since December 2019.

With the team's former assist leader Mitch Marner now in Vegas, Nylander leads the Leafs with 18 helpers in 16 games.

"He's maybe looking to pass a little bit too much at times," Berube said. "He's been passing quite a bit all year, and obviously he's got a lot of assists, but we do need him to shoot for sure."

Nylander is averaging just 2.1 shots per game, which is down from 3.1 last season. He has landed just six shots on net during the power play.

"The power play has been run on his side, and so he's looking to make more plays, but he also needs to shoot too," said Berube.

Toronto ranks 25th in power-play percentage (16.0 per cent) after failing to convert on three chances in Chicago.

Nylander leads the Leafs in scoring with 26 points in 16 games. He's hit the scoresheet in his last 13 games.

The injuries continue to pile up for the Leafs with Nicolas Roy the latest to go down. The centre will miss Tuesday's game after sustaining an upper-body injury. Berube isn't sure when he will be able to return.

Roy landed a season-high five shots on goal while playing a season-high 19 minutes and 45 seconds on Saturday night.

The Leafs are now without three centres, with Auston Matthews and Scott Laughton also sidelined.

Matthews has not skated since suffering an injury last Tuesday in Boston, Berube said.

For the first time since suffering an upper-body injury on Nov. 8, Laughton practised in a regular sweater on Monday, but still isn't cleared to return.

Jacob Quillan has been called up from the American Hockey League and will suit up in his second career NHL game on Tuesday.

"He doesn't have a lot of experience," Berube said. "He can skate. He's competitive and brings some energy. Like, listen, I get it. We're down a lot of guys, but he's got to step up and next man-up mentality and go play."

Quillan, who has 14 points in 14 games with the Toronto Marlies this season, skated between Matias Maccelli and Bobby McMann on the third line at practice.

Natural wingers Max Domi and Steven Lorentz also skated as centres at practice.

The Leafs are also missing two right-handed, top-four defencemen right now.

Chris Tanev skated on his own before practice, but is not expected back soon. He was stretchered off the ice with an upper-body injury on Nov. 1.

Brandon Carlo missed Saturday's game with a lower-body injury. He did not take part in practice on Monday and was placed on injured reserve, which means he will miss at least the next two games.

"I really don't have a timeline right now," Berube said of when Carlo might return to the ice.

Toronto claimed right-handed defenceman Troy Stecher off waivers from the Edmonton Oilers on Saturday and the 31-year-old is set to make his Leafs debut on Tuesday.

"I was excited for a fresh start," Stecher said. "Obviously seeing the team, and how competitive they are and where they are in the standings, I knew it would be a motivated group that I'd be joining, so it kind of goes hand in hand with the way I play. I play with a lot of motivation and a bit of a chip on my shoulder and I think the team is kind of that way as well."

Standing just 5-foot-10, Stecher has long been doubted. The Leafs will be his seventh NHL team.

"Always just kind of try to prove people wrong and more than anything just prove myself right," the native of Richmond, B.C. said.

Stecher got into just six games so far this season in Edmonton.

"It just became a numbers game," he said. "They were trying to get younger internally on the back end and they had two really good younger D-men in [Ty] Emberson and [Alec] Regula come up and I just kind of got pushed to the side and that's the way the business works. I was on the other side of it when I came to the league, you know, kind of pushed some older guys out. So, wish them well, but I don't think it necessarily had anything to do with [me] being a poor player. It just kind of came down to numbers."

Stecher skated on the third pair beside Dakota Mermis at Monday's practice.

The Leafs have preferred bigger and longer defencemen in the Treliving era. Stecher is the shortest blueliner on the roster by three inches.

"I feel small," he said with a laugh after practice.

But Stecher has a good sense of how he can fit in starting on Tuesday night.

"Trust your strengths," he said. "For me that would be my feet. The coaches want me to use my feet and help break-out pucks."

Right-handed defenceman Philippe Myers is set to be a healthy scratch on Tuesday. He was benched after being on the ice for a pair of Chicago goals on Saturday.

"He probably got overextended this year a little bit with the injuries," Berube said. "He definitely hasn't played the way he played last year. I think he just needs to get his game back in order a little bit. He's capable of doing it. We saw it. But I think it's just been a little bit of a long stretch here for him."

Myers is minus-seven in 10 games this season.

Stecher joined the Leafs in Chicago for a team-bonding dinner after Saturday night's game.



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"The guys were really welcoming," Stecher said. "It was unfortunate they couldn't get the win that night. It would have been probably a little more upbeat but, yeah, it's nice any time you can have time with your teammates away from the rink, especially on the road. It's a lot easier. It's not very often you stay over in a city, so for them to do that was a good opportunity for me to come in and meet the guys on different terms and instead of walking into a dressing room, kind of walking on eggshells."

All of Toronto's injured players made the trip to Chicago for the dinner.

"I think we needed it," Nylander said. "I mean, we've been home a lot, so it's good to get some time with the guys and enjoy that night."

The Leafs have played a league-high 13 home games. Saturday was only their sixth road game this season and the first outside the Eastern time zone. The longest road trip for the team this season has been two games.

The Leafs will have a pair of home games this week on Tuesday and Thursday. How do they unplug when in Toronto?

"I play guitar," said Knies. "I know some of the guys play whatever, piano, and I think there's actually a few guitars on our team. Other guys go home to their kids and wives and family. I think you just try to not think about hockey and focus on your life ... It's important to take your mind off it a little bit and then just enjoy your life."

Knies said his go-to guitar song at the moment is 'Must've Never Met You' by Luke Combs.

"I play to myself and that's about it," Knies said with a smile.

"Never heard him," Nylander said with a grin. "So, I don't know, I can't imagine he's that good then."

Does the 23-year-old sing as well?

"Yeah, but it's not great," Knies said. "You wouldn't want to hear it."

Goaltender Joseph Woll provided the Leafs a positive rallying point despite Saturday's loss in Chicago.

"The frustration mounts, it builds," said defenceman Jake McCabe. "Confidence dwindles away, so you've got to manufacture it at times. I think you take positives here and there. I thought the positive for me was seeing 60 [Woll] back in there. I thought he did a phenomenal job. I just told him that. Super good seeing him back in there and grinding and battling. He was composed all night. He played great with the puck. So that gives me a lot of joy, you know, just seeing him doing his thing. It was awesome."

Woll missed the start of the season for personal reasons. Saturday marked his first game with the Leafs since the playoffs in May.

"It's a mix of probably every different emotion," the 27-year-old said. "A little nervous, a little excited. But, you know, just being out there on that sheet was pretty cool."

Woll stopped 29 of 32 shots.

"Felt pretty solid," he said. "I felt like I was moving well, seeing the puck well."

The St. Louis native is set to start again on Tuesday against his hometown team. Woll is 0-2-0 in his career against the Blues with both losses coming early last season.

Lines at Monday's practice:

Robertson - Tavares - Nylander

Knies - Domi - Cowan

Maccelli - Quillan - McMann

Joshua - Lorentz - Jarnkrok

Laughton, Blais

Rielly - Ekman-Larsson

Benoit - McCabe

Mermis - Stecher

Myers

Woll

Hildeby

#stlblues practice lines:

Holloway-Thomas-Snuggerud

Schenn-Dvorsky-Kyrou

Joseph-Suter-Buchnevich

Toropchenko-Sundqvist-Walker

Extras: Bjugstad, Texier

Broberg-Parayko

Fowler-Faulk

Tucker-Kessel

Extra: Skinner

Binnington

Hofer

— Jeremy Rutherford (@jprutherford) November 17, 2025

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TSN.CA / Maple Leafs are at a crossroads

Travis Yost

The National Hockey League's regular season is 20 per cent complete, and the Toronto Maple Leafs are at a crossroads.

Deeply uninspired play has driven Craig Berube's perennial contender to a middling 8-9-2 start, and despite playing in the weaker Eastern Conference, the performance has been brutal enough to speculate if this team could be sellers at the trade deadline.

Selling at the deadline would be an unconscionable thought over the past decade in Toronto, and specifically in the Auston Matthews era. But this Toronto team is being played off the ice at a rate we haven't seen in a long time, and unless they can pull themselves out of this tailspin, general manager Brad Treliving and Toronto's front office are going to have an awkward lead-in to the March trade deadline.

It's easy, and perhaps fair to some degree, to point to a meaningful goaltending regression. Last season's Maple Leafs team was not the typical even-strength juggernaut we had grown accustomed to, but the combination of Anthony Stolarz and Joseph Woll were sensational behind an improved Maple Leafs defence.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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But that's broken down considerably year over year (Woll has only been available for one start this season):

Yost1 (Travis Yost)

So yes, goaltending has been a sizable contributor to Toronto's downturn and Stolarz's specific decline has been most impactful.

But what's of much more concern is how routinely this team is struggling to play with any sort of possession game at 5-on-5. Over much of the past decade, Toronto has been notoriously good at sustaining offensive zone pressure and finding their blue-chip attackers in Matthews, William Nylander, John Tavares, the departed Mitch Marner, and so on to turn scoring chances into goals.

Now? This team is routinely outshot and outchanced most nights, which both puts significant stress on the goaltending and reduces their own scoring opportunities. They are spending too much time bailing water from the boat, and you see it in the shot differentials – consider how Toronto's pacing this year versus what we have typically seen:

Yost2 (Travis Yost)

Not only is this year in stark contrast to any season prior in the Matthews era, it also looks like a daunting continuation of how Toronto finished last year, an epic slide buoyed entirely by goaltending outperformance.

Strip away the goaltending, as has been the case this year, and those big negative differentials start turning into routine regulation losses. Add the fact their strength of schedule has been very forgiving to start the year, and you have a five-alarm fire brewing.

What's remarkable is Toronto's situation could be worse – this is a team that's scoring on more than 12 per cent of their shots at even strength, which is tops in the NHL. Toronto does have a collection of higher-end shooters, but this degree of outperformance seems unsustainable (their preceding five-year average is 10 per cent), and if that breaks down those shot differentials are going to lead to even bigger negative goal differentials.

At the skater level, you can see how this freakishly high shooting percentage is masking a broader team issue. By on-ice goal differentials, some Toronto skaters – especially inside of their top-six forwards – still look good, outscoring the opposition on the year.

But when you bring shot differentials (which, over longer periods of time, better inform scoring chance rates and corresponding goal rates), you see a team that's just spending too much time defending the run of play, harkening back to the years of Randy Carlyle's Maple Leafs:

Yost3 (Travis Yost)

Coaches love preaching patience in these moments, and Berube has tried a similar approach. You don't want to panic publicly, and there's enough talent in this locker room to pull themselves out of the hole they have dug.

But privately, I do wonder if concern is genuinely creeping in now. For the first time in a long time, their playoff prospects are up for debate – oddsmakers have it priced at a coin flip right now, an unimaginable fall for a team that had the ninth-shortest odds to win the Stanley Cup in August.

I think that says everything. Toronto needs to start winning, and now.

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