


REGULAR SEASON

# #NHLSTATS

## 2019-20 SEASON PREVIEW

- Past two Stanley Cup champions open season against each other as Blues set out for repeat**
- Young players, new-look teams among top storylines entering League's 102<sup>nd</sup> season**



### **BANNER-RAISING, RIVALRIES HEADLINE OPENING NIGHT OF 2019-20 SEASON**

On the heels of a 2018-19 campaign that witnessed 7,664 total goals – the most ever in an NHL season – the 2019-20 schedule begins Wednesday with a banner raising in St. Louis, the ‘Battle of Ontario’ in Toronto, a showcase of youthful talent in Edmonton and a playoff rematch in Las Vegas.

\* In St. Louis, the Blues will raise the franchise’s first-ever Stanley Cup banner to the rafters of Enterprise Center before hosting the Capitals – a contest that features the past two Cup champions.

\* Wednesday’s contest will mark the second time in the NHL’s modern era (since 1943-44) that the two previous Stanley Cup champions will face one another in each club’s first regular-season game. The Maple Leafs (1962) and Blackhawks (1961) squared off in the other, with Toronto defeating Chicago 3-1 to begin 1962-63 en route to a second straight Cup win.

\* Defending Stanley Cup champions own an all-time record of 58-25-15 in season openers, including four wins over the past 11 seasons: Washington won in [2018-19](#), Pittsburgh won in [2009-10](#) and [2016-17](#) and Chicago won in [2013-14](#).



### **SETTING THE STAGE: SEASON OPENERS**

Highlights from 101 years of NHL season openers are noted below. [A detailed overview](#) – with stats for teams, players, head coaches and League records – is available within the [season-opening information package](#) on the League's media site.

\* Winners of each of their last five season-opening contests, the Lightning (.692; 17-7-2 in 26 GP) hold the best point percentage in season openers in League history.

\* The Lightning and Canucks (5-0-0 since 2014-15) share the longest active win streak in season openers. The NHL record is nine straight wins, set by the Canadiens (1953-54–1961-62) and matched by the Blues (1978-79–1986-87).

\* The Lightning (5-0-0), Canucks (5-0-0), Canadiens (4-0-1) and Capitals (3-0-2) share the longest active point streak in season openers, dating to 2014-15. The NHL record is 17 consecutive season-opening games with a point (MTL: 13-0-4 from 1963-64–1979-80).

\* The Wild host the Predators on Thursday before travelling to Colorado to face off against the Avalanche Saturday – the latter's home opener. Minnesota (.833; 13-1-4 in 18 GP) and Colorado (.744; 27-8-4 in 39 GP) rank first and second in League history, respectively, for point percentage in *home openers*.

\* The NHL record for fastest goal from the start of a season opener is 0:10, scored by Minnesota North Stars forward **Kent Nilsson** on Oct. 11, 1986 against the Quebec Nordiques.

\* The NHL record for goals by one player in a season opener is five, achieved twice in 1917-18 (**Joe Malone** and **Harry Hyland**) and once in 1922-23 (**Babe Dye**). The modern-era record is four, last achieved by Maple Leafs forward **Auston Matthews** in his League debut on Oct. 12, 2016 in Ottawa.

\* There have been 56 instances of a player scoring *at least three goals* in a season opener, including at least one to begin five of the past six campaigns (4 in 2017-18; 2 in 2016-17; 2 in 2015-16; 1 in 2014-15; and 2 in 2013-14).

\* Ten active NHL players have scored a hat trick in a season opener, including four who did so in 2017-18: **Connor McDavid**, **Wayne Simmonds**, **Brandon Saad** and **Alex Ovechkin**.

\* Matthews has scored at least one goal in all three season-opening games of his NHL career (7-2—9). A goal on Oct. 2 would make him the fourth player in League history to score in each of his first four career season openers; he would join **Dit Clapper** (1927-28—1930-31), **Dave Andreychuk** (1982-83—1985-86) and **Sergei Fedorov** (1990-91—1993-94).

\* The NHL record for assists in a season opener is five, set by **Greg Adams** on Oct. 10, 1985 with the Devils (at PHI) and tied by **John Cullen** on Oct. 5, 1990 with the Penguins (at WSH).

\* The NHL record for points in a season opener is six, set by Dye (5-1—6) on Dec. 16, 1922 with the Toronto St. Patricks (vs. MTL) and matched by **Kevin Stevens** (2-4—6) on Oct. 5, 1990 with the Penguins (at WSH).

\* Ovechkin has 10-7—17 in 14 career season openers, tied for the most goals and most points in such games among active NHL players.



## SEASON-OPENING LEADERS

GOALS		POINTS	
<b>ALEX OVECHKIN</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>ALEX OVECHKIN</b>	<b>17</b>
ZACH PARISE	10	JOE THORNTON	17
PAUL STASTNY	8	ZACH PARISE	16
AUSTON MATTHEWS	7	MIKE GREEN	15
JAMES NEAL	7	PATRICK KANE	15
COREY PERRY	7	NICKLAS BACKSTROM	14
KYLE TURRIS	6	EVGENI MALKIN	14
BLAKE WHEELER	6	PAUL STASTNY	14
SIDNEY CROSBY	6	SIDNEY CROSBY	13
PATRICK KANE	6	JOE PAVELSKI	13
BRYAN LITTLE	6	JASON SPEZZA	13

\* Ovechkin's longtime teammate, **Nicklas Backstrom**, has 14 assists in 11 season-opening contests and paces all active NHL players in that category.

\* **Cam Atkinson** has scored in five straight season-opening games dating to 2014-15, the longest active run in the NHL and one shy of matching **Mud Bruneteau** (1940-41—1945-46) and **Yvon Cournoyer** (1973-74—1978-79) for the longest such streak in NHL history.



\* **Marc-Andre Fleury** (9-5-0 in 14 GP; VGK) and **Ryan Miller** (9-3-1 in 13 GP; ANA) each need one victory to match the NHL record for career wins in season-opening games.

FACE-OFF 2019		
NHL HISTORY		
#NHLStats		
WINS IN SEASON OPENERS		
	WINS	GP
CURTIS JOSEPH	10	13
MARTIN BRODEUR	10	18
RYAN MILLER	9	13
MARC-ANDRE FLEURY	9	14
JACQUES PLANTE	8	12
MIKE VERNON	8	13
HENRIK LUNDQVIST	7*	13

\* 9 OTHERS WITH 7

\* Fleury and **Jimmy Howard** (8 GP; DET) each have two shutouts in season openers, one shy of tying the record shared by Hall of Famers **Glenn Hall** (11 GP) and **Jacques Plante** (12 GP).

\* **Jared Bednar** (3-0-0; COL), **Travis Green** (2-0-0; VAN), **Ralph Krueger** (1-0-0; BUF), **Jim Montgomery** (1-0-0; DAL) and **Todd Reirden** (1-0-0; WSH) are the only active head coaches with a perfect record in season openers.

\* Seven head coaches enter 2019-20 looking for their first NHL season-opening win: **Rod Brind'Amour** (0-0-1; CAR), **Rick Tocchet** (0-3-0; ARI), **Dallas Eakins** (0-1-0; ANA), **Craig Berube** (0-1-0; STL), **David Quinn** (0-1-0; NYR), **Jeremy Colliton** (0 GC; CHI) and **D.J. Smith** (0 GC; OTT).

### YOUTHFUL STARS READY TO SHINE IN 2019-20

**Connor McDavid** (EDM), **Auston Matthews** (TOR), **Patrik Laine** (WPG) and **Elias Pettersson** (VAN) are among a handful of players age 22 or younger looking to build off the offensive numbers they have already achieved early in their career.

\* After posting the highest single-season point total by an Oilers player since **Mark Messier** (45-84—129 in 1989-90), 22-year-old captain McDavid (41-75—116 in 2018-19) sets his sights on becoming the first player to post four consecutive 100-point campaigns since **Steve Yzerman** and **Brett Hull** concluded six- and four-season runs in 1992-93. McDavid (128-244—372 in 287 GP) also can join **Sidney Crosby** (183-323—506 in 371 GP) as the second active player to record at least 400 points before his 23rd birthday.

\* Matthews, 22, looks to become the first U.S.-born player in League history to reach 30 goals in each of his first four NHL seasons. Toronto's franchise record for most consecutive 30-goal seasons is eight (NHL debut or otherwise), held by **Darryl Sittler** (1973-74—1980-81).

\* Laine, 21, also has scored at least 30 goals in each of his first three NHL seasons. Only 21 players in history have opened their NHL career with four or more consecutive 30-goal campaigns, with **Jari Kurri** (10; 1980-81–1989-90) the only Finnish player on that list.

\* Pettersson, 20, the reigning Calder Trophy winner, enters 2019-20 after leading NHL rookies in goals (28), assists (38) and points (66) last season. Pettersson, who turns 21 on Nov. 12, can join **Trevor Linden** (84-96—180 in 233 GP), **Cam Neely** (51-53—104 in 201 GP), **Tony Tanti** (53-49—102 in 118 GP) and **Petr Nedved** (41-42—83 in 165 GP) as the fourth Canucks player to record at least 75 points prior before age 21.

### **2019 OFFSEASON REIGNITES DEVILS-RANGERS RIVALRY**

A flurry of offseason acquisitions and the addition of the top two players from the 2019 NHL Draft have the 'Hudson River Rivals' looking to make a statement in the Metropolitan Division.



\* In an offseason of change, each club selected a promising prospect at the draft (NJD: **Jack Hughes**, No. 1; NYR: **Kaapo Kakko**, No. 2), traded for a workhorse to bolster their blueline (NJD: **P.K. Subban**, 22:40 TOI in 2018-19; NYR: **Jacob Trouba**, 22:53 TOI in 2018-19) and added offense up front (NJD: **Wayne Simmonds** and **Nikita Gusev**; NYR: **Artemi Panarin**).

\* Hughes and Kakko aim to become the first Devils and Rangers rookies to each finish in the top five in rookie scoring [since 1999-00](#) (**Scott Gomez**, NJD, 1st; **Mike York**, NYR, 3rd; and **Jan Hlavac**, NYR, 5th). That is the only such instance since the Devils moved to New Jersey in 1982-83.

\* Hughes will be 18 years old for the entire 2019-20 regular season. Only three *18-year-olds* in franchise history have eclipsed the 20-point mark: **Kirk Muller** (12-27—39 in 1984-85, 52 GP), **Nico Hischier** (8-17—25 in 2017-18, 39 GP) and **Paul Gagne** (15-9—24 in 1980-81, 36 GP). Gagne's totals stand as the *single-season* franchise mark for most goals by an 18-year-old.

\* Kakko needs only eight goals and 16 points before his 19th birthday on Feb. 13, 2020 to match **Manny Malhotra** (8-8—16 in 1998-99, 73 GP) for the most in a season by a Rangers player *at age 18*. **Mike Allison** (24-36—60 in 1980-81, 71 GP) has the most goals, assists and points in a season by a Rangers *teenager*.

\* Hughes and Kakko are expected to meet for the first time in the NHL on Oct. 17 as they look to follow in the footsteps of the 2018 draft class. The 2018 cohort of **Rasmus Dahlin** (9-35—44), **Andrei Svechnikov** (20-17—37), **Jesperi Kotkaniemi** (11-23—34) and **Brady Tkachuk** (22-23—45) combined for the [fourth instance in NHL history](#) of each of the top four picks recording at least 30 points in the season following the draft.

### **NHL VETERANS SET FOR NEXT CHAPTER WITH NEW CLUBS**

Blockbuster trades and free agent signings highlighted a busy summer, compiled in the [offseason summary](#) section of the [season-opening information package](#) on the NHL's media site.

\* After spending the past seven seasons with the Blue Jackets, two-time Vezina Trophy-winner **Sergei Bobrovsky** signed a seven-year contract with the Panthers four days after **Roberto Luongo** [announced his retirement](#). Bobrovsky's 115 regular-season wins and 21 shutouts over the past three seasons are the most among all goaltenders over that span.

\* **Phil Kessel**, a two-time Stanley Cup champion and six-time 30-goal scorer, was traded to the Coyotes. The second-highest scoring active U.S.-born player has averaged at least one point-per-game in each of the last two seasons (1.12 in 2017-18, 1.00 in 2018-19) and is one of four players to score [20 or more goals in each of the last 11 or more seasons](#) (also **Alex Ovechkin**, **Jonathan Toews** and **Patrick Kane**).

\* **Matt Duchene** and his [love for music](#) are heading to the 'Music City' after he signed a seven-year deal with the Predators on July 1. Duchene, who tallied his second career 70-point season in 2018-19 with the Senators and Blue Jackets (31-39—70 in 73 GP), has more career points than any other player on the current Nashville roster (232-315—547 in 727 GP).

\* After spending 14 and 13 seasons with the Ducks and Sharks, respectively, **Corey Perry** and **Joe Pavelski** are two of the newest members of the Stars. Perry (needs 12) and Pavelski (needs 37) are two of 18 skaters on pace to skate in their 1,000th career regular-season game in 2019-20.

\* **Tyson Barrie** (14-45—59 in 78 GP) netted a career-high 59 points in 2018-19 with the Avalanche and will don a Maple Leafs sweater in 2019-20. Barrie joins **Morgan Rielly** (20-52—72 in 2018-19) on the team's blueline; the last time Toronto had two defensemen each record 60 or more points in a single season [was 2005-06](#) (**Bryan McCabe** and **Tomas Kaberle**).

### **2019-20 RESOURCES**

A selection of resources available via the League's media site (some only for registered users):

\* [2019-20 NHL Season-Opening Information](#)

\* [Approaching Milestones](#)



- \* [Chasing Milestones: Alex Ovechkin and Sidney Crosby](#)
- \* [Chasing Milestones: Joe Thornton and Zdeno Chara](#)
- \* [Chasing Milestones: Henrik Lundqvist and Marc-Andre Fleury](#)
- \* [Approved Rule Changes for 2019-20 Season](#)
- \* [2019 NHL Preseason: What You Need to Know](#)
- \* [2018-19 Season in Review](#)



# OPENING NIGHT SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2

**7:00PM**



@



SN, SN360, TVAS

**10:00PM**



@



SN, SN360

**8:00PM**



@



NBCSN

**10:30PM**



@



TVAS, NBCSN





\*ALL TIMES EASTERN



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