



TEAM STORYLINES

2024-25



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TEAM STORYLINES: 2024-25 NHL SEASON

As of Sept. 11, 2024

Anaheim Ducks

The Ducks, who enter the 2024-25 season with a [fresh look and updated logo](#), will look for their young stars to take the next step and help the franchise snap a six-season drought of missing the playoffs – the longest gap between postseason appearances in franchise history. The key to Anaheim's success could be the emergence of four forwards age 23 or younger who were top-10 selections in the NHL Draft: **Trevor Zegras** (age 23; No. 9 in 2019), **Mason McTavish** (age 21; No. 3 in 2021), **Leo Carlsson** (age 19; No. 2 in 2023) and **Cutter Gauthier** (age 20; No. 5 in 2022 by PHI).

Boston Bruins

Jeremy Swayman is likely to enter 2024-25 as the undisputed No. 1 goaltender in Boston after splitting duties with 2022-23 Vezina Trophy winner **Linus Ullmark** (traded to OTT) over the past three seasons – the duo combined to win the 2022-23 William M. Jennings Trophy and Boston had more wins (163) and points (351) than any other team [across the three-year span](#). The Bruins will again rely on veteran staples such as **Brad Marchand**, **David Pastrnak** and **Charlie McAvoy**, alongside free agent additions **Elias Lindholm** and **Nikita Zadorov**, to earn a playoff spot for the ninth consecutive year. Boston's streak of eight consecutive postseason appearances is tied with Toronto for the longest active run.

Buffalo Sabres

Lindy Ruff, who was previously head coach of the Sabres for 15 seasons from 1997-98 to 2012-13, returns behind the Buffalo bench in hopes of delivering the team back to the postseason – Buffalo reached the Conference Finals four times in Ruff's previous stint and have not appeared in the postseason since his departure. The Sabres, who missed the playoffs by seven points in 2023-24 and one point in 2022-23, boast a young defense core as its strength including two No. 1 overall picks in the NHL Draft: **Rasmus Dahlin** (age 24; No. 1 in 2018) and **Owen Power** (age 21; No. 1 in 2021), as well as **Bowen Byram** (age 24), acquired in a trade with Colorado last year, and **Mattias Samuelsson** (age 24), a shutdown defender and son of former NHL blueliner **Kjell Samuelsson**.

Calgary Flames

The Flames will look a lot different than they did on opening night of the 2023-24 season, with **Jacob Markstrom**, **Chris Tanev**, **Noah Hanifin**, **Elias Lindholm**, **Nikita Zadorov** and **Andrew Mangiapane** all having moved on since the start of last season. **Nazem Kadri** returns and has more goals (53) and points (131) than any Flames skater since joining the team for the 2022-23 season, with his 75 points in 2023-24 standing as the second-highest total of his 15-year career. In addition, **Yegor Sharangovich** (31 in 2023-24) and **Blake Coleman** (30 in 2023-24) will each look to build on their first career 30-goal season with expanded offensive roles in 2024-25. The last Flames player to record consecutive 30-goal seasons was **Sean Monahan** from 2017-18 to 2018-19.

Carolina Hurricanes

The Hurricanes are one of two teams that have won at least 50 games in each of the past three seasons (also COL) and Carolina also has won at least one playoff round in each of its last four trips to the postseason. The Hurricanes extended head coach **Rod Brind'Amour** during the offseason and will rely heavily on the same players who have contributed greatly to their success over the last few seasons, including franchise mainstays **Sebastian Aho** and **Jacob Slavin** (who are signed through 2031-32 and 2032-33, respectively). While Carolina lost two key defenders to free agency in **Brett Pesce** and **Brady Skjei**, they added a pair of veteran defensemen in **Shayne Gostisbehere** and **Sean Walker**.



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Chicago Blackhawks

After winning the Calder Trophy and leading all rookies and Blackhawks skaters with 22-39—61 in 68 games during the 2023-24 season, **Connor Bedard** can become the first player in franchise history to lead the team in points in each of his first two career NHL seasons – the closest to achieving that feat were **Tom Cook** and **Patrick Kane**, who led the team in points as rookies in 1929-30 and 2007-08, respectively, but finished second a year later to **Johnny Gottselig** (1930-31) and **Martin Havlat** (2008-09). The Blackhawks spent the offseason adding veterans to play alongside Bedard and the young core, with **Alec Martinez** (15 seasons), **TJ Brodie** (14 seasons), **Pat Maroon** (13 seasons), **Craig Smith** (13 seasons), **Teuvo Teravainen** (11 seasons) – who won a Stanley Cup with Chicago as a rookie in 2015 – and **Tyler Bertuzzi** (8 seasons) all added to the fold.

Colorado Avalanche

The Avalanche join the Hurricanes as one of just two teams that have reached the 50-win plateau in each of the past three seasons, doing so on the backs of superstars **Nathan MacKinnon**, **Mikko Rantanen** and **Cale Makar**. MacKinnon (51-89—140 in 82 GP), who set a franchise record for points in a season while capturing the 2023-24 Hart Trophy and Ted Lindsay Award, and Rantanen (42-62—104 in 80 GP) can each post their third consecutive 100-point season – a feat achieved by only one player in Avalanche/Nordiques history (**Peter Stastny**: 6 from 1980-81 to 1985-86, while the team was based in Quebec). Makar, meanwhile, recorded a career-high 90 points to finish second among NHL defensemen in 2023-24. The last blueliners to post consecutive 90-point seasons were **Paul Coffey** (3 from 1988-89 to 1990-91) and **Al MacInnis** (2 from 1989-90 to 1990-91).

Columbus Blue Jackets

The Blue Jackets will enter their 24th season following a summer marked by the tragic passing of fan favorite **Johnny Gaudreau** and his younger brother, **Matthew**. Gaudreau led Columbus in both assists and points in his two seasons with the club. Columbus will lean on the veteran presence of captain **Boone Jenner**, who posted his fourth 20-goal campaign in 2023-24 (despite missing more than a quarter of the season), and veteran newcomer **Sean Monahan**, who has eight 20-goal seasons to his name (including three 30-goal showings, all across nine seasons as Gaudreau's teammate in Calgary). After playing only 13 games two seasons ago, franchise defenseman **Zach Werenski** emerged with club defensive records for [assists](#) (46) and [points](#) (57; tied) in 2023-24, a campaign that also included key contributions from promising young forwards including recent Columbus draft picks **Adam Fantilli** (No. 3 in 2023), **Kent Johnson** (No. 5 in 2021) and **Cole Sillinger** (No. 12 in 2021). New head coach (**Dean Evason**) and new general manager (**Don Waddell**) will look to help the team return to the postseason for the first time since 2019-20.

Dallas Stars

With **Joe Pavelski** stepping away, the young core of Stars forwards will be relied on to take on an even larger role in 2024-25. **Jason Robertson**, 25, has led Dallas in points in each of the past two seasons and can become the first Stars player in 16 years to pace the team in points for three straight campaigns. At age 21, **Wyatt Johnston** is already a proven scorer both in the regular season and playoffs. Johnston, who led Dallas with 32 goals in 2023-24, can become the second player in franchise history with multiple 30-goal campaigns before age 22 (**Brian Bellows**: 3x). Despite the departures of many veterans – including **Ryan Suter** and **Radek Faksa**, who both signed with the Central Division rival Blues – the Stars' roster that claimed first place in the Western Conference last season remains largely intact, retaining all but one of its top 13 scorers from 2023-24 (Pavelski).

Detroit Red Wings

After being closest to a playoff spot in the Eastern Conference among teams that did not qualify in 2023-24 (they tied the lowest-ranked playoff team in points but lost on the regulation wins tiebreaker), the Red Wings hope a pair of Stanley Cup-winning veterans will help the franchise return to the Stanley Cup Playoffs for the first time since 2016. Detroit will have a full season from returning three-time Stanley Cup champion **Patrick Kane** and added **Vladimir Tarasenko** via free agency in July, just 10 days after he won his second Cup. The key to the team, however, remains captain **Dylan Larkin**, who can become the first Detroit player since **Henrik Zetterberg** (2005-06 to 2008-09) to record four consecutive 30-goal seasons, as well as young cornerstones in last season's team points leader **Lucas Raymond** (age 22) and star defenseman **Moritz Seider** (age 23).



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Edmonton Oilers

After pushing the Stanley Cup Final to an improbable Game 7 before falling to the Panthers, the Oilers will look to follow in Florida's footsteps by returning to the Final in 2024-25 to re-write the story with a different result (following a third straight year being eliminated by the Cup champions). It is setting up to be a milestone year for **Connor McDavid** (335-647—982 in 645 GP), who sits 53 assists shy of 700 and just 18 points from reaching the 1,000-point milestone. Only four players in NHL history have reached 1,000 points in fewer than 700 games: **Wayne Gretzky** (424 GP), **Mario Lemieux** (513 GP), **Mike Bossy** (656 GP) and **Peter Stastny** (682 GP). McDavid also has a chance to become the fourth player in NHL history to post four consecutive 120-point seasons, in which he would follow Gretzky (13 from 1979-80 to 1991-92), **Guy Lafleur** (5 from 1975-76 to 1979-80) and **Phil Esposito** (5 from 1970-71 to 1974-75).

Florida Panthers

The Panthers fended off the Oilers in Game 7 of the 2024 Stanley Cup Final to complete their "Redemption Tour" and win the franchise's first Stanley Cup. In 2024-25, the Panthers will look to become the [first team to repeat as Stanley Cup champions](#) since the state rival Lightning (2020 & 2021) and the first team to compete in three straight Stanley Cup Final series since Tampa Bay also did so from 2020 to 2022. While Florida did lose some contributors to its championship run, including star defenseman **Brandon Montour**, the team's core remains intact: captain **Aleksander Barkov**, 2023-24 team assists leader **Matthew Tkachuk**, 2023-24 team goals leader **Sam Reinhart** and star goaltender **Sergei Bobrovsky**. Reinhart signed an eight-year contract with the club in July after scoring the Stanley Cup-clinching goal and leading the Panthers with career highs in goals (57) and points (94) during the regular season – only **Pavel Bure** (2 from 1999-00 to 2000-01) has posted [multiple 50-goal seasons](#) with the franchise.

Los Angeles Kings

The Kings have reached the postseason in each of the last three campaigns but did not make it out of the First Round (losing to the Pacific Division rival Oilers each time). In the offseason, they added a pair of Stanley Cup champions in defenseman **Joel Edmundson** (2019 STL) and goaltender **Darcy Kuemper** (2022 COL), who returns to Los Angeles after playing for the team in 2017-18. They join champions and veterans **Anze Kopitar**, **Drew Doughty** and **Trevor Lewis** who remain from the Cup-winning teams of 2012 and 2014. **Adrian Kempe** and **Kevin Fiala**, the team's top two scorers from last season, also return and the Kings will look for another year of growth from power forward **Quinton Byfield**, who will be 22 years old at the start of the season after recording his first 20-goal season in 2023-24 while leading Kings forwards with a plus-19 rating.

Minnesota Wild

The 2024-25 campaign will mark the [21st and final season](#) for **Marc-Andre Fleury** and the veteran goaltender will look to backstop the Wild into the postseason after missing in 2023-24 – the first time in 18 years that Fleury missed the playoffs (since 2005-06, his last season as a rookie). Minnesota has appeared in the postseason in 10 of the last 12 seasons, tied for the most among all teams over that span (w/ BOS, WSH, TBL and PIT). Fleury, a three-time Stanley Cup champion (2009, 2016 & 2017 w/ PIT) and Vezina Trophy winner (2020-21 w/ VGK), sits fourth all-time in [games played among goaltenders](#) (and could jump as high as second), ranks second on the [all-time wins list](#) and 12th [all-time in career shutouts](#) with an opportunity to move into the top 10 in 2024-25. Leading scorer **Kirill Kaprizov** is the only player in franchise history with multiple 40-goal seasons and one of four players across the League who has scored 40 goals in each of the last three campaigns.



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Montreal Canadiens

The key to the Canadiens' success hinges on three young forwards: captain **Nick Suzuki** (age 25), **Cole Caufield** (age 23) and **Juraj Slafkovsky** (age 20). Suzuki can become the first Canadiens player to lead the team in points in four consecutive seasons since **Max Pacioretty** (6 from 2011-12 to 2016-17). Caufield has led or co-led the team in goals in two of the past three seasons, while Slafkovsky signed [a long-term extension](#) in July following a season in which the 2022 No. 1 pick established himself with 20 goals and 50 points to go along with increased playing time (17:56 TOI/GP, 4th among MTL forwards). Another emerging difference maker for the Canadiens is top netminder **Sam Montembeault**, who recorded a save percentage of .900 or higher in 70.0% of his starts in 2023-24 (28 of 40), the [highest percentage among NHL goaltenders with at least 20 starts](#).

Nashville Predators

The Predators were already a playoff team with a roster that included a top goaltender (**Juuse Saros**), a Norris Trophy winner (**Roman Josi**: 2019-20), an almost 50-goal scorer (**Filip Forsberg**: 48) and a Conn Smythe Trophy winner (**Ryan O'Reilly**: 2019). General manager **Barry Trotz** bolstered that group further by reeling in multiple big fish via free agency, including Stanley Cup champion and Maurice "Rocket" Richard Trophy winner **Steven Stamkos** (a two-time recipient of both), 2023 Conn Smythe Trophy winner and Stanley Cup champion **Jonathan Marchessault** and minute-munching defenseman **Brady Skjei**. Nashville became the first team in NHL history to add two 40-goal scorers in a single offseason (Stamkos & Marchessault). Saros inked an eight-year contract extension in July after being the busiest goaltender in the NHL in 2023-24, when he became the first in more than 50 years to top NHL goaltenders in games played in three straight seasons.

New Jersey Devils

The Devils acquired the No. 1 goaltender they coveted, adding 2021-22 Vezina Trophy runner-up **Jacob Markstrom** in a trade with the Flames. A top goaltender, along with new coach **Sheldon Keefe**, will look to help lift New Jersey back into the postseason after a one season absence. The Hughes brothers drive the offense both at forward and on defense. Forward **Jack Hughes** already owns the franchise record for [points in a season](#) (99 in 2022-23) and has more goals (114) than any Devils player since [entering the League in 2019-20](#), while defenseman **Luke Hughes** (10-39—49 in 84 GP) sits one shy of the 50-point benchmark. Among defensemen to start their career with the franchise, only two have required fewer than 90 games to reach 50 career points: **Barry Beck** (60 GP with CLR) and **Tapio Levo** (68 GP w/ CLR & NJD).

New York Islanders

The Islanders have made the postseason in five of the past six seasons but have not advanced beyond the opening round since back-to-back appearances in the final four in 2020 and 2021. While New York added a top-six forward in **Anthony Duclair** (24 G in 2023-24), it will continue to rely on a returning cast that includes forwards **Mathew Barzal**, **Bo Horvat**, **Brock Nelson** and defenseman **Noah Dobson** in front of the goaltending tandem of **Ilya Sorokin** and **Semyon Varlamov**. Barzal has led the team in points six times (including 2023-24), tied with **Mike Bossy** (6x) for the second-most in franchise history behind **John Tavares** (7x). In 2023-24, Dobson became the third Islanders defenseman – and [first in 40 years](#) – to record a 70-point season; **Denis Potvin** (7x) is the only blueliner in franchise history to do so in multiple seasons.

New York Rangers

The reigning Presidents' Trophy-winning Rangers have advanced to the Conference Finals in two of the past three seasons, most recently falling to the eventual champion Panthers in 2024. While they did add Stanley Cup champion **Reilly Smith** (2023 w/ VGK) via an offseason trade, New York is set to return the core that has brought recent success, led by **Artemi Panarin** up front, **Adam Fox** on the blue line and anchored by **Igor Shesterkin** in net. They can become the first team to win the [Presidents' Trophy in back-to-back seasons](#) since the Capitals (2015-16 & 2016-17). Panarin had a career-high 120 points in 2023-24, has posted at least 90 points in three consecutive seasons and can become the first player to record multiple 100-point campaigns with the franchise. Panarin's 1.32 point-per-game rate with New York is [the highest of any player](#) in franchise history.



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Ottawa Senators

After a seventh consecutive season outside the playoffs, the Senators were active in the offseason, adding a new head coach (**Travis Green**), trading for a Vezina Trophy-winning goaltender (**Linus Ullmark**) and signing a Stanley Cup-winning veteran forward (**David Perron**). Ullmark will become the third Vezina Trophy winner to play for the Senators (also **Dominik Hasek** and **Tom Barrasso**) and can become the first goaltender to win the award in a season in which they played for the franchise. Captain **Brady Tkachuk** is coming off his third consecutive 30-goal season – only two players in Senators history have reached the 30-goal benchmark in four straight campaigns: **Marian Hossa** (4 from 2000-01 to 2003-04) and **Dany Heatley** (4 from 2005-06 to 2008-09).

Philadelphia Flyers

The Flyers held a playoff spot as late as April 5 last season but missed the postseason for a fourth straight year (by just four points). Philadelphia will look to make up that gap and return to the playoffs, adding highly rated prospect **Mavei Michkov** (No. 7 in 2023) to a forward group that includes returnees **Travis Konecny**, **Owen Tippett** and **Joel Farabee**. A Flyers rookie has yet to claim the Calder Trophy and only three have been the rookie leader in points: **Mikael Renberg** (1993-94), **Brian Propp** (1979-80) and **Bill Barber** (1972-73). Konecny has led the Flyers in points in each of the past three seasons and can join **Bobby Clarke** (6 from 1970-71 to 1975-76) and **Claude Giroux** (4 from 2010-11 to 2013-14) as the only skaters to do so in four straight campaigns.

Pittsburgh Penguins

The Penguins made a late push for a playoff spot last spring, posting a 10-game point streak in the final month of the season to remain in contention for a playoff spot through their 81st game, but ultimately finished three points outside the bracket. **Sidney Crosby**, **Evgeni Malkin** and **Kris Letang** will enter their 19th season as teammates – the most by any trio in NHL history – with an eye on returning to the playoffs on a roster boosted by additions that include **Kevin Hayes**, **Anthony Beauvillier** and **Matthew Grzelcyk**. After entering the top 10 on the NHL's all-time scoring list in April, Crosby (592-1,004—1,596 in 1,272 GP) now approaches career milestones for goals, points and games played and can overtake **Joe Sakic** (625-1,016—1,641 in 1,378 GP) on the all-time assists and points lists. Crosby, who will represent Canada at the 4 Nations Face-Off in February, can become the first player in NHL history with three 90-point seasons at age 35 or older (after hitting the mark in each of the past two campaigns) and can break a tie with **Wayne Gretzky** (19) for the most point-per-game seasons in League history.

San Jose Sharks

Macklin Celebrini became the first No. 1 pick in franchise history in June and will have a chance to continue a trend that has seen each of the past 20 forwards selected first overall make their NHL debut in their club's ensuing season opener – the last *not* to do so was **Joe Thornton**, whom Celebrini [will live with](#). The Sharks have retooled their roster to flank the 18-year-old with veteran talent, adding returnee **Barclay Goodrow** (a two-time Stanley Cup champion since his last game in teal), forward **Tyler Toffoli** (an eight-time 20-goal scorer), defenseman **Jake Walman** (who led Red Wings blueliners with 12 goals last season), first-round picks **Alexander Wennberg** (No. 14 in 2013) and **Ty Dellandrea** (No. 13 in 2018), along with goaltender **Vitek Vanecek** (who awaits his Sharks debut after being acquired in March). The new-look roster also could include **Will Smith** (No. 4 in 2023) and **Yaroslav Askarov** (No. 11 in 2022; acquired from NSH) and be led by rookie head coach **Ryan Warsofsky**, who will try to help the Sharks end the longest playoff drought in their 32 seasons.

Seattle Kraken

The Kraken will look to return to the playoffs for a second time as they embark on their fourth NHL season, adding players from each of the past two Stanley Cup winners to help them get there: former Panthers teammates **Brandon Montour** and **Josh Mahura**, along with **Chandler Stephenson** (2023 VGK & 2018 WSH). It will be a historic season in Seattle as assistant coach **Jessica Campbell** will become the first woman to serve as an assistant, associate or head coach behind an NHL bench, part of the staff that will support head coach **Dan Bylsma**. Bylsma, an NHL head coach for the first time since 2016-17, and Campbell led the Kraken's AHL affiliate to the Calder Cup Final in each of the past two seasons. **Shane Wright**, who played eight NHL games in both 2022-23 and 2023-24, will aim for a full-time NHL role after being part of both playoff runs with Coachella Valley.



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St. Louis Blues

After making a coaching change in December 2023, the Blues finished as the first team outside the playoff bracket in the Western Conference in 2023-24 and have since dropped the “interim” tag for head coach **Drew Bannister**. **Robert Thomas** led the team in scoring for the first time with a career-best 86 points, the second straight 24-year-old to pace the club after **Jordan Kyrou** in 2022-23 (who ranked second in 2023-24). Thomas can become the first to pace the club in consecutive seasons since **Ryan O’Reilly** (2018-19 and 2019-20) on a roster that includes two pairs of newcomers who are quite familiar with one another: **Ryan Suter** and **Radek Faksa**, teammates with the Stars for three seasons, along with brothers **Pierre-Olivier Joseph** and **Mathieu Joseph**. **Doug Armstrong** will mentor **Alexander Steen** as part of the club’s succession plan for the general manager role as St. Louis seeks a return to the playoffs for the first time since 2021-22 (they have missed the postseason in three straight years only once in franchise history).

Tampa Bay Lightning

The Lightning made significant changes to their roster in the offseason, parting ways with 11-season captain **Steven Stamkos** and 26-year-old defenseman **Mikhail Sergachev** while welcoming many newcomers including four-time 30-goal scorer **Jake Guentzel**, seven-time 20-goal scorer **Cam Atkinson** and returnee veteran defenseman **Ryan McDonagh**. **Nikita Kucherov** set career highs in goals (44), assists (100) and points (144) in 2023-24 en route to winning his second Art Ross Trophy to help the Lightning to their franchise-record seventh straight playoff appearance (though they qualified as a Wild Card team for the first time). Kucherov can claim his third Art Ross Trophy and win in consecutive seasons – both feats achieved by only one active player (**Connor McDavid**) – and climb into second place on the franchise points list. **Victor Hedman**, now the longest-serving player on the roster and re-signed through the 2028-29 season, is likely to set franchise records for career games played and assists in 2024-25, while **Andrei Vasilevskiy** (293 W in 477 GP) is on track to become the fastest goaltender in NHL history to 300 career wins (the current record holder is **Jacques Plante** at 521 GP).

Toronto Maple Leafs

Stanley Cup-winning head coach **Craig Berube** will look to help the Maple Leafs end the longest wait in NHL history for a championship as the core of **Auston Matthews**, **Mitch Marner**, **William Nylander**, **John Tavares** and **Morgan Rielly** try to help Toronto to its ninth straight playoff appearance – which would be its longest run since its last championship in 1967. Matthews scored a franchise-record 69 goals in 2023-24 – the most by any player since 1995-96 – to capture his third Maurice “Rocket” Richard Trophy and finish with at least a share of the team lead in goals for the sixth time (and fifth straight season). Matthews can become the ninth player in League history to [lead the NHL in goals at least four times](#) (**Alex Ovechkin**, 9x, is the only active player to do so). Veteran blueliner **Chris Tanev** along with 2024 Stanley Cup winners **Oliver Ekman-Larsson** and **Anthony Stolarz** will look to help support a defensive effort that could see **Joseph Woll** as the team’s starting goaltender following a breakout rookie campaign in 2023-24.

Utah Hockey Club

For the third time in eight seasons, the NHL will begin play in a new city and state as the Utah Hockey Club contest their inaugural season. Utah will create its own history beginning with its inaugural season, but many members of the now-inactive Coyotes franchise will help blaze this new trail, including veteran **Clayton Keller** and three players who have yet to celebrate their 23rd birthday: sophomore forward **Logan Cooley** (age 20), third-year forward **Dylan Guenther** (age 21) and forward **Josh Doan** (age 22), who has nine points in 11 career games but is vying to crack the lineup for his first complete NHL season. Keller led the Coyotes in points in five of their final seven seasons, including three in a row from 2021-22 to 2023-24. Since 1967-68, new franchises hold a record of 7-17-3 in their first regular-season game, with the wins by Vegas ([2017-18](#)), Ottawa ([1992-93](#)), Tampa Bay ([1992-93](#)), Atlanta Flames ([1972-73](#)), Buffalo ([1970-71](#)), Los Angeles ([1967-68](#)) and Oakland Seals ([1967-68](#)). Utah has enlisted the services of three recent Stanley Cup champions to help them reach the playoffs in their first season (**Mikhail Sergachev**, **Ian Cole** and **Kevin Stenlund**). Since 1968-69, three franchises have qualified for the playoffs in their first season as an NHL franchise: Vegas (lost in 2018 SCF), Edmonton (lost in 1980 PRLM) and Hartford Whalers (lost in 1980 PRLM).



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Vancouver Canucks

Led by award-winning performances from **Quinn Hughes** (Norris Trophy in first season as captain) and **Rick Tocchet** (Jack Adams Award in first full season as head coach), the Canucks came within one win of the 2024 Conference Finals after claiming their first division title in more than a decade. They now seek consecutive playoff appearances for the first time in a dozen years (5 from 2008-09 to 2012-13, a stretch that included division titles each year). Hughes can become the first in nearly a decade to repeat as the NHL's defensive points leader (**Erik Karlsson**: 3 from 2013-14 to 2015-16) and can set franchise records for [assists](#) and [points](#) by a defenseman. Other notable achievements to monitor in 2024-25 include **J.T. Miller** and **Elias Pettersson** vying for four straight 30-goal seasons (last achieved for Vancouver 19 years ago by **Markus Naslund**), **Brock Boeser** eyeing back-to-back 40-goal campaigns (last done for the club 22 years ago, by Naslund) and Miller aiming to join **Pavel Bure** (1992-93 & 1993-94) as the only Canucks with consecutive 100-point seasons. **Thatcher Demko**, the 2023-24 Vezina Trophy runner-up, was the NHL wins leader [before an injury in March](#) and had a career-high 35 wins.

Vegas Golden Knights

Vegas parted ways with **Jonathan Marchessault** – the club's top goal scorer in each of the past three seasons, 2023 Conn Smythe Trophy winner and franchise leader in career games, goals, assists and points – as well as **Chandler Stephenson** and **Alec Martinez**, and now will lean on the likes of **Jack Eichel**, **Mark Stone**, **Tomas Hertl** and **William Karlsson** to track down a playoff spot for the seventh time in eight NHL seasons. The club also will rely on a new goaltending tandem in 2024-25 following the additions of **Ilya Samsonov** and **Akira Schmid** and departure of **Logan Thompson** (42 GS), who split starting duties with **Adin Hill** (35 GS) last season. The evolving roster could lead to more regular roles for younger players, including a trio of Vegas draftees in 23-year-old forward **Pavel Dorofeyev** (13-11—24 in 47 GP as a rookie in 2023-24), 23-year-old defenseman **Kaedan Korczak** (1-10—11 in 37 GP) and 22-year-old forward **Brendan Brisson** (2-6—8 in 15 GP).

Washington Capitals

After capping a frenetic finish to the playoff race in 2023-24 by clinching the final seed with a win during their last game of the regular season, the Capitals made significant changes to bolster their lineup around captain **Alex Ovechkin** (853) – who enters his 20th season only 42 goals from surpassing **Wayne Gretzky** (894) for the most in NHL history. Ovechkin's chase of the all-time goals record – and Washington's pursuit of its first series win since winning the 2018 Stanley Cup – will continue under a new general manager (**Chris Patrick**), with offensive support from new forwards **Pierre-Luc Dubois** and **Andrew Mangiapane** (who have a combined 254 career goals) and be defended by blueline additions **Matt Roy** and **Jakob Chychrun** along with Cup-winning goaltender **Logan Thompson**. Ovechkin, who will be 39 when the 2024-25 season begins, has scored 30-plus goals in each of the past three campaigns and already is the NHL record holder for career 40-goal seasons (13) and 30-goal seasons (18). Ovechkin can become the fourth player in NHL history to post a 30-goal season at age 39 or older – after **Gordie Howe** (3x; 44 in 1968-69, 39 in 1967-68 and 31 in 1969-70), **Johnny Bucyk** (36 in 1975-76) and **Teemu Selanne** (31 in 2010-11) – during what will be the 50th campaign in Capitals history.

Winnipeg Jets

Backed by now two-time Vezina Trophy winner **Connor Hellebuyck**, the Jets allowed a League-best 199 goals against in 2023-24 and challenged for the Central Division title down to the final week of the season before an eventual fourth place finish in the overall NHL standings (the second-best ranking in franchise history). The Jets will look to build upon that finish in the franchise's 25th season (14 in Winnipeg, 11 in Atlanta), led by a new head coach (**Scott Arniel**) and their top goal scorers from 2023-24: **Kyle Connor** (34), **Nikolaj Ehlers** (25), **Mark Scheifele** (25) and **Gabriel Vilardi** (22). In 2024-25, Connor can tie the [franchise record for career 30-goal seasons](#) and Scheifele will have a shot at the [franchise career goals record](#). Hellebuyck (275 W in 505 GP) is on track to become the fastest U.S.-born goaltender in NHL history to 300 career wins (**Ryan Miller** holds the current mark at 566 GP).

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