



# NEWS RELEASE



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## NHL ANNOUNCES RETURN TO PLAY PLAN FOR 2019-20

*24 Teams Will Restart Play, Compete for Stanley Cup*

*2 “Hub” Cities Will Play Host to Games*

*Protocol for Players’ Return to Training Outlined*

*Draft Lottery to Assign Top 15 Picks in 2020 NHL Draft*

**NEW YORK (May 26, 2020)** – The National Hockey League announced today a Return To Play Plan for the 2019-20 season, highlighted by a modified competitive format in which 24 teams will return to play and vie for the Stanley Cup at two “hub” cities beginning later this summer. The Plan also includes an outline for the return of NHL players to their Club training facilities (Phase 2) and formal training camp (Phase 3), as well as information regarding the 2020 NHL Draft Lottery.

Today’s announcement follows approval of the Plan by the League’s Board of Governors and the National Hockey League Players’ Association.

The NHL paused its season on March 12 from concerns over the coronavirus, having played 85 percent of the 2019-20 regular-season schedule that started in early October (1,082 of 1,271 games).

“At the pause, we committed to resuming play only when appropriate and prudent,” said Commissioner **Gary Bettman**. “We are hopeful the Return To Play Plan will allow us to complete the season and award the Stanley Cup in a manner in which the health and safety of our players, on-ice officials, team staff and associated individuals involved are paramount. Accordingly, an essential component of the Plan is a rigorous, regular schedule of testing.

“On the hockey side, the return-to-play format reflects the League’s extraordinary competitive balance while honoring the tradition and integrity of the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

“The Return To Play Plan is the result of weeks of constructive dialogue with the National Hockey League Players’ Association and we are grateful for their cooperation. We also thank our consulting health experts and the local, regional and national authorities who are helping steer us through a complex set of issues.”

Following are details of the Return To Play Plan:

### **Regular Season**

\* The 2019-20 regular season is declared concluded through games of March 11. The 189 games originally scheduled from March 12 – April 4 will not be played.

\* 24 teams will resume play: the top 12 in each Conference on the basis of points percentage at the pause (through games of March 11).

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## **Timeline**

\* Since the League's pause on March 12, the League has been in Phase 1 with teams having been instructed to self-isolate as much as possible.

### **Phase 2 – Early June**

\* In early June, it is expected that teams will be permitted to return to home facilities for small group, voluntary, and on- and off-ice training.

### **Phase 3 – Not Earlier than First Half of July**

\* Not earlier than first half of July, formal training camps will begin after guidance from medical and civil authorities.

### **Phase 4 – Timing TBD**

\* 24 teams in 2 "hub" cities will compete in Seeding Round Robins, a Qualifying Round and Conference-based Stanley Cup Playoffs.

\* The 2 "hub" cities will be selected from among the following:

- Chicago, IL
- Columbus, OH
- Dallas, TX
- Edmonton, AB
- Las Vegas, NV
- Los Angeles, CA
- Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN
- Pittsburgh, PA
- Toronto, ON
- Vancouver, BC

\* Each Conference is assigned a "hub" city with secure hotels, arena, practice facilities and in-market transportation.

\* Teams will be limited to 50 personnel in the "hub" city with only a small number of support staff permitted to enter the event areas.

\* Timing and sites will be determined at a future date and will be dependent on COVID-19 conditions, testing ability and government regulations.

## **Competitive Format**

\* In each Conference, teams seeded by points percentage.

**Round Robin:** The top 4 teams play for First Round seeding (regular-season overtime rules in effect)

**Qualifying Round:** The remaining 8 teams play best-of-5 series to advance to the First Round (playoff overtime rules in effect)

**First Round and Second Round:** Format (seeding vs. bracket) and series lengths to be determined

**Conference Finals and Stanley Cup Final:** Best-of-7 series

\* The winners from the Qualifying Round play the top 4 seeds in the First Round. Individual First Round series matchups remain to be determined.

### City 1

Team	Conf. Rank	P%
Boston Bruins	1	.714
Tampa Bay Lightning	2	.657
Washington Capitals	3	.652
Philadelphia Flyers	4	.645
Pittsburgh Penguins	5	.623
Carolina Hurricanes	6	.596
New York Islanders	7	.588
Toronto Maple Leafs	8	.579
Columbus Blue Jackets	9	.579
Florida Panthers	10	.565
New York Rangers	11	.564
Montreal Canadiens	12	.500

### City 1 – Round Robin for Seeding in First Round

1. Boston Bruins
2. Tampa Bay Lightning
3. Washington Capitals
4. Philadelphia Flyers

### City 1 – Best-of-5 Qualifying Round

- #5 Pittsburgh Penguins vs. #12 Montreal Canadiens
- #6 Carolina Hurricanes vs. #11 New York Rangers
- #7 New York Islanders vs. #10 Florida Panthers
- #8 Toronto Maple Leafs vs. #9 Columbus Blue Jackets

### City 2

Team	Conf. Rank	P%
St. Louis Blues	1	.662
Colorado Avalanche	2	.657
Vegas Golden Knights	3	.606
Dallas Stars	4	.594
Edmonton Oilers	5	.585
Nashville Predators	6	.565
Vancouver Canucks	7	.565
Calgary Flames	8	.564
Winnipeg Jets	9	.563
Minnesota Wild	10	.558
Arizona Coyotes	11	.529
Chicago Blackhawks	12	.514

### City 2 – Round Robin for Seeding in First Round

1. St. Louis Blues
2. Colorado Avalanche
3. Vegas Golden Knights
4. Dallas Stars

## City 2 – Best-of-5 Qualifying Round

#5 Edmonton Oilers vs. #12 Chicago Blackhawks  
 #6 Nashville Predators vs. #11 Arizona Coyotes  
 #7 Vancouver Canucks vs. #10 Minnesota Wild  
 #8 Calgary Flames vs. #9 Winnipeg Jets

### 2020 NHL Draft Lottery

The NHL Draft Lottery will determine the order for the first 15 selections of the 2020 NHL Draft. The picks will be awarded to the seven teams that do not resume play and the eight teams that do not advance from the Qualifying Round (or the teams that acquired their first-round picks).

#### Phase 1

\* Phase 1 of the Draft Lottery will be conducted prior to the Qualifying Round on Friday, June 26.

\* Three draws: First Draw (first overall pick), Second Draw (second overall pick) and Third Draw (third overall pick).

\* Clubs entered: The seven teams that do not return to play, ranked in inverse order of their points percentage at the time of the regular-season pause, and eight “place-holders” to represent the to-be-determined Qualifying Round teams that will not advance, thus maintaining previously-established odds.

Team	P%	Odds
1. Detroit Red Wings	.275	18.5%
2. Ottawa Senators	.437	13.5%
3. Ottawa Senators*	.437	11.5%
4. Los Angeles Kings	.457	9.5%
5. Anaheim Ducks	.472	8.5%
6. New Jersey Devils	.493**	7.5%
7. Buffalo Sabres	.493**	6.5%
8. Team A	n/a	6.0%
9. Team B	n/a	5.0%
10. Team C	n/a	3.5%
11. Team D	n/a	3.0%
12. Team E	n/a	2.5%
13. Team F	n/a	2.0%
14. Team G	n/a	1.5%
15. Team H	n/a	1.0%

\* Acquired in a trade with San Jose Sharks (.450 points percentage)

\*\* Buffalo Sabres ranked higher than New Jersey Devils on the basis of higher regulation/OT win percentage (Buffalo, .406 ROW%; New Jersey, .348 ROW%)

#### First Draw

\* If the winning team of the First Draw is from the #1-7 group, that team wins the right to the first overall pick in the 2020 NHL Draft.

\* If the winning team of the First Draw is from the #8-15 group, the right to the first overall pick will be determined in Phase 2 of the Draft Lottery.

\* After the First Draw, the winning team (from either the #1-7 group or the #8-15 group) will no longer be eligible for the Second or Third Draws. All number combinations originally assigned to this team will become “Re-Draw Combinations” for the Second and Third Draws. The remaining teams’ odds will increase on a proportionate basis for the Second Draw based on which team wins the First Draw.

### **Second Draw**

\* If the winning team of the Second Draw is from among the #1-7 group, that team wins the right to the second overall pick in the 2020 NHL Draft.

\* If the winning team of the Second Draw is from the #8-15 group, the right to the second overall pick will be determined in Phase 2 of the Draft Lottery.

\* After the Second Draw, the winning team (from either the #1-7 group or the #8-15 group) will no longer be eligible for the Third Draw. All number combinations originally assigned to this team will become “Re-Draw Combinations” for the Third Draw. The remaining teams’ odds will increase on a proportionate basis for the Third Draw based on which team wins the Second Draw.

### **Third Draw**

\* If the winning team of the Third Draw is from among the #1-7 group above, that team wins the right to the third overall pick in the 2020 NHL Draft.

\* If the winning team of the Third Draw is from the #8-15 group, the right to the third overall pick will be determined in Phase 2 of the Draft Lottery.

### **If All Three Draws Are Won by Teams in #1-7 Group . . .**

\* The winning teams receive the respective top three selections in the 2020 NHL Draft. The remaining four teams in the #1-7 group not selected in the three draws are assigned NHL Draft positions 4 through 7 in inverse order of their points percentage at the time of the regular-season pause. The next eight Draft positions (8 through 15) will be assigned to the eight teams that do not advance from the Qualifying Round, in inverse order of their points percentage at the time of the regular-season pause. In these circumstances, Phase 2 of the Draft Lottery would not be necessary.

### **If Any of the Three Draws Are Won by Teams in the #8-15 Group**

\* The Draws for the corresponding selections will be conducted during Phase 2 among only the eight Qualifying Round teams that failed to advance.

### **Phase 2**

\* Phase 2 of the Draft Lottery, if necessary, will be conducted between the Qualifying Round and First Round.

\* Phase 2 participants: the eight teams that do not advance from the Qualifying Round (or the teams that acquired their first-round picks).

\* Following each Phase 2 draw, the winning team will be assigned the corresponding Top 3 selection and, if another Phase 2 draw is necessary, that team’s numbered lottery ball will be removed.

\* When all Phase 1 and Phase 2 draws are completed and the Top 3 selections in the 2020 NHL Draft assigned, the remaining selections in the Top 15 will be assigned to the 12 teams that did not win a draw in inverse order of their points percentages at the time of the season's pause.

\* In each Phase 2 draw, all participants will have the same odds.

### (5/26/20)