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CONFERENCE FINAL

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OILERS VS. AVALANCHE

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2022 WESTERN CONFERENCE FINAL #NHLSTATS: COLORADO AVALANCHE VS. EDMONTON OILERS

Playoff History

* This will be the third playoff meeting between the Avalanche and Oilers, following a five-game victory by Colorado in the [1997 Conference Semifinals](#) and a Game 7 triumph by Edmonton in the [1998 Conference Quarterfinals](#). The Nordiques never faced the Oilers in the playoffs before they relocated to Denver in 1995-96, nor did the clubs meet in the postseason during their time together in the WHA.

* **1997 Conference Semifinals**: The first-ever playoff meeting between Colorado and Edmonton opened Friday, May 2, 1997, at McNichols Sports Arena in Denver where the tandem of **Peter Forsberg** (2-1—3) and **Joe Sakic** (0-3—3) combined for six points and **Patrick Roy** (35 saves) outperformed **Curtis Joseph** (32 saves) to claim a [Game 1](#) victory. Roy improved upon that with 42 saves in a [Game 2](#) win but a go-ahead goal by **Ryan Smyth** late in the third period of [Game 3](#) helped Edmonton cut the series deficit. In [Game 4](#), **Claude Lemieux** scored his second game-winning goal of the series – in overtime – to send the series back to Denver with the Avalanche ahead 3-1. Lemieux had a goal in all five games of the series – and seven straight contests overall (tying the [franchise playoff record](#)) – as he collected 1-1—2 in the third period of [Game 5](#), including an assist on the go-ahead, series-clinching goal by **Adam Deadmarsh** with less than 70 seconds remaining in regulation. It was Colorado's sixth straight series win since relocation.

* **1998 Conference Quarterfinals**: Matching up against the Pacific Division champion Avalanche – who finished 15 points ahead of them in the standings – the Oilers won [Game 1](#) by overcoming a multi-goal, third-period deficit with three goals in a span of 3:49. In [Game 2](#), **Peter Forsberg** posted his second straight multi-goal game and matched a [franchise playoff record](#) with five points to help Colorado even the series. The Oilers erased another multi-goal, third period deficit in [Game 3](#) but **Joe Sakic** nixed the comeback with his third career playoff overtime goal. In Game 4, **Claude Lemieux** notched his 19th career [playoff game-winning goal](#) to overtake **Maurice Richard** (18) for second place in Stanley Cup Playoffs history – behind only **Wayne Gretzky** (24) at the time – and give Colorado a 3-1 series lead. From that point on, Oilers goaltender **Curtis Joseph** took over: “Cujo” faced 31 shots in each of the final three contests and allowed only one goal over the three-game span – concluding the series with the first set of back-to-back shutouts in [franchise playoff history](#). Edmonton staged another third-period comeback in [Game 5](#), rode an early **Drake Berehowsky** goal to a [Game 6](#) victory and had defenseman **Janne Niinimaa** provide the series-clinching tally on the road in [Game 7](#).

Top Scorers, No. 1 Picks, Award Winners on Display

* The 2022 Western Conference Final will be the first series in Stanley Cup Playoffs history to feature each of the top four *active skaters* on the career playoff points-per-game list (min. 30 GP), with the Oilers tandem of **Leon Draisaitl** (1.61) and **Connor McDavid** (1.45) set to go head-to-head against Avalanche teammates **Nathan MacKinnon** (1.37) and **Mikko Rantanen** (1.19). Lightning forward **Nikita Kucherov** (1.15), who will play in the 2022 Eastern Conference Final, is the next closest [active skater for career points-per-game in the playoffs](#).

* Expanding to the entire history of the Stanley Cup Playoffs, three players in this series rank among the top six for [career points-per-game \(min. 30 GP\)](#): **Leon Draisaitl** (1.61), **Nathan MacKinnon** (1.37) and **Connor McDavid** (1.45). The balance of the top six is made up of **Wayne Gretzky** (1.84), **Mario Lemieux** (1.61) and **Barry Pederson** (1.53) – none of whom ever faced one another in the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

* This will mark the second time in Stanley Cup Playoffs history that a *final-four series* will feature multiple No. 1 picks on each side, with the Avalanche icing **Nathan MacKinnon** (2013) and **Erik Johnson** (2006) against the Oilers tandem of **Connor McDavid** (2015) and **Ryan Nugent-Hopkins** (2011). The other such series came in the [1977 Semifinals](#) when **Guy Lafleur** (1971) and **Rejean Houle** (1969) helped the Canadiens defeat **Denis Potvin** (1973) and **Billy Harris** (1972) of the Islanders; Montreal went on to win the Stanley Cup.

* **Connor McDavid** (Art Ross: 4x; Ted Lindsay: 3x; Hart: 2x), **Leon Draisaitl** (Art Ross: 1x; Ted Lindsay: 1x; Hart: 1x) and **Nathan MacKinnon** (Calder: 1x; Lady Byng: 1x) have combined for 14 NHL Awards. In addition, MacKinnon (QMJHL) and Draisaitl (WHL) each won a junior championship, with the former also claiming the Memorial Cup in 2013. The three players combined for four playoff MVP awards at the junior level: Draisaitl (WHL & Memorial Cup) and McDavid (OHL) in 2015 and MacKinnon (Memorial Cup) in 2013. MacKinnon (2015) and McDavid (2016) also won gold one year apart at the World Championship.



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Matchup Notes

* The Oilers (4.33) vs. Avalanche (4.30) matchup is the fifth final-four series in Stanley Cup Playoffs history – and first in 34 years – to feature two clubs each entering with an [average goals-per-game](#) of 4.30 or higher. The other such matchups came in the [1988 Conference Finals](#) (DET: 4.82 vs. EDM: 4.78), [1985 Conference Finals](#) (CHI: 6.22 vs. EDM: 4.71), [1981 Semifinals](#) (NYI: 5.44 vs. NYR: 5.20) and [1973 Semifinals](#) (CHI: 4.40 vs. NYR: 4.40).

* The two general managers in this series are linked by one of the fiercest rivalries in NHL history as Colorado's **Joe Sakic** was captain of the Avalanche during their six playoff series from 1996 to 2008 against the Red Wings, who were managed by Edmonton's current GM **Ken Holland** (including 1996 when Holland was part of a managerial triumvirate with **Jim Devellano** and **Scotty Bowman**).

* Oilers defenseman **Tyson Barrie** will face his former team in the playoffs for the first time. Barrie tallied 1-13—14 in 21 career postseason games [with the Avalanche](#) from 2014 to 2019 and now has 1-4—5 over two playoff years [with the Oilers](#) – with his lone goal serving as the go-ahead game-winner in Game 6 of the First Round this year to help Edmonton stave off elimination. In Game 5 of the 2019 First Round in Calgary, Barrie (0-3—3) set an Avalanche/Nordiques franchise record for points by a defenseman in a potential series-clinching game – a feat matched this year by **Cale Makar** (1-2—3 in Game 4 of 2022 R1 at NSH).

* Avalanche defenseman **Josh Manson** is set to face off against his father **Dave Manson**, assistant coach of the Oilers. Josh previously reached the Conference Finals with the Ducks in 2017 when his team fell to the Predators in six games, while Dave played in four career Conference Finals as a member of the Stars, Oilers and Blackhawks. Of the four appearances, Dave's only Conference Finals series win came with Dallas in 2000 when the Stars defeated the Avalanche – the team captained by Colorado's current general manager **Joe Sakic**.

* Colorado won two of three meetings between the clubs in 2021-22, with all three games played over the course of a month. On [March 21](#), **Cale Makar** and **Nathan MacKinnon** connected for the [overtime goal](#) following a 2-on-1 against **Connor McDavid**. On [April 9](#), MacKinnon scored again and netted the shootout winner as the Avalanche tied a franchise record with their 52nd win of the season. On [April 22](#), **Evander Kane** (3-1—4) and McDavid (0-3—3) combined for seven points as Edmonton defeated Colorado to clinch a playoff spot.

* **Nathan MacKinnon** scored a goal in all three games against Edmonton in 2021-22 and has a four-game goal streak against the club dating to Nov. 27, 2019 (4-3—7 in 4 GP).

* **Connor McDavid** has had multiple points in half of the [games he has played against Colorado](#) (8 of 16 GP), including two hat tricks and a career-best six-point showing on [Nov. 14, 2019](#) in Denver. **Leon Draisaitl** had five assists in that game.

* **Connor McDavid** (9-15—24; 1.71 P/GP) and **Nathan MacKinnon** (6-10—16; 1.14 P/GP) are each averaging more than a point-per-game in their 14 head-to-head meetings in the regular season, with the Oilers holding an 8-4-2 advantage in those contests (COL: 6-7-1).

* **Mike Smith** has a career record of 13-1-5 [against the Avalanche](#) – the only club he has fewer than two regulation losses against – including a 2-0-1 mark in an Oilers sweater. **Darcy Kuemper** owns a 10-2-4 record in 16 career regular season [appearances against the Oilers](#), going 2-1-0 with the Avalanche.

* **Darcy Kuemper** (6-1-0, 1.42 GAA, .947 SV%, 2 SO) holds the edge in seven career meetings against **Mike Smith** (1-4-2, 2.59 GAA, .920 SV%), though they have split their two head-to-head matchups since joining the Avalanche and Oilers, respectively.

* **Evander Kane** and **Connor McDavid** each have seven career goals in 12 games played against **Darcy Kuemper**, tied for the most among any NHL player (San Jose's **Tomas Hertl** has 7 G in 15 GP vs. Kuemper).



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Conference Finals Experience

* The Oilers outweigh the Avalanche in terms of Conference Finals/Stanley Cup Semifinals experience, entering with 10 players who have skated in the round to Colorado's six.

* Now with Colorado, **Artturi Lehkonen** scored the series-clinching overtime goal against Vegas in [Game 6 of the 2021 Stanley Cup Semifinals](#) to send Montreal into the Stanley Cup Final for the first time since 1993.

* The Avalanche are in the 2022 Conference Finals thanks to the [late-game heroics](#) by **Darren Helm** in Game 6 of the Second Round. Helm's goal in that contest was the second series-clinching goal of his NHL career – and it came exactly 13 years after his first, in [Game 5 of the 2009 Conference Finals](#) with Detroit. In that contest, Helm scored in overtime to put Detroit into the Final for a second straight year and eliminate a Chicago team that included **Duncan Keith**, who was in the Stanley Cup Playoffs for the first time.

* **Duncan Keith** is the only current Oilers player with a winning goal in the Conference Finals, notching his in [Game 1](#) of Chicago's matchup against Los Angeles in 2014. The only active defensemen with more career points in the final four than Keith (3-15—18 in 27 GP) are **Victor Hedman** (6-22—28 in 41 GP) and **Ryan McDonagh** (4-15—19 in 39 GP).

* Edmonton's **Mike Smith** is the only goaltender between the two clubs with Conference Finals experience, [making three appearances](#) (including one start) [in 2011](#) with the Lightning (vs. BOS) and [made all five starts](#) for the Coyotes [in 2012](#) (vs. LAK).

Edmonton Oilers

Player	Pos.	GP	G	A	P	GWG	OTG	Conference Finals Appearances
Duncan Keith	D	27	3	15	18	1	0	2009, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2015 CHI
Derick Brassard	F	23	6	6	12	0	0	2014 & 2015 NYR, 2017 OTT, 2020 NYI
Kyle Turris	F	7	1	3	4	0	0	2017 OTT
Cody Ceci	D	7	0	0	0	0	0	2017 OTT
Evander Kane	F	6	0	1	1	0	0	2019 SJS
Slater Koekkoek	D	6	0	1	1	0	0	2016 TBL
Warren Foegele	F	4	0	0	0	0	0	2019 CAR
Josh Archibald	F	3	0	0	0	0	0	2017 PIT
Brett Kulak	D	1	0	0	0	0	0	2021 MTL

Player	Pos.	GP	W	L	GAA	SV%	SO	Conference Finals Appearances
Mike Smith	G	8	2	5	2.06	.940	1	2011 TBL, 2012 PHX

Colorado Avalanche

Player	Pos.	GP	G	A	P	GWG	OTG	Conference Finals Appearances
Andrew Cogliano	F	15	1	4	5	0	0	2015 & 2017 ANA, 2020 DAL
Darren Helm	F	11	2	0	2	1	1	2008 & 2009 DET
Andre Burakovsky	F	6	2	0	2	0	0	2018 WSH
Devon Toews	D	6	1	1	2	0	0	2020 NYI
Artturi Lehkonen	F	6	1	0	1	1	1	2021 MTL
Josh Manson	D	6	0	1	1	0	0	2017 ANA

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