

NHL MORNING SKATE – DEC. 21, 2023

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Morning Skate

Thursday, December 21, 2023

Daccord ties franchise record with 42 saves as Kraken gear up for Winter Classic

Vilardi extends goal streak to four games as Jets jump back to first in Central Division standings

McDavid's Oilers versus Hughes' Devils on ESPN+, Hulu highlights 12-game Thursday

* After the [NHL on TNT debuted their holiday album](#) in celebration of the upcoming *2024 Discover NHL Winter Classic*, Kraken goaltender **Joey Daccord** matched his own club record with 42 saves to help Seattle extend its point streak to five games less than two weeks ahead of hosting the contest.

* **Gabriel Vilardi** extended his goal streak to four games to help the Jets launch into top spot in the Central Division while **Dylan Strome** scored the overtime winner to push the Capitals into a Wild Card position.

* **Connor McDavid** and **Jack Hughes**, selected No. 1 overall four years apart, are set to go head-to-head for the second time this season when the Oilers and Devils clash during an ESPN+ and Hulu doubleheader as part of a 12-game Thursday.


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RESULTS

WEDNESDAY

| | | | | |
|---|---|---------------|---|---|
|  | 2 | FINAL ▶ | 5 |  |
|  | 2 | FINAL OT ▶ | 3 |  |
|  | 2 | ◀ FINAL | 1 |  |



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DACCORD MATCHES FRANCHISE RECORD AS KRAKEN GEAR UP FOR WINTER CLASSIC

Joey Daccord stopped 42 of 43 shots he faced and tied a [Kraken record](#) for most saves in a game – equaling the previous benchmark he set Oct. 26 (42 at CAR) to lead Seattle to victory Wednesday. In addition to starring on the ice, Daccord was featured in [Episode 2 of 'Road to the Discover NHL Winter Classic'](#) as the Kraken gear up for their outdoor matchup against the Golden Knights at T-Mobile Park on Jan. 1 (3 p.m. ET; TNT, MAX, SN, TVAS).

* Daccord's career-tying night began by stopping all 20 shots he faced in the first period as he became the second goaltender this season to make 20-plus saves *in the opening frame without allowing a goal*, following Ottawa's **Joonas Korpi** (23 on Oct. 28 at PIT).



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VILARDI LIFTS JETS BACK INTO TOP SPOT IN CENTRAL DIVISION . . .

Gabriel Vilardi (1-2—3) posted his second three-point game in a week (also 1-3—4 on Dec. 13) and extended his career-high goal streak to four games to help the Jets (19-9-3, 41 points) move back into first place in the Central Division. It marked the fourth time in five days that the No. 1 seed in the Central has changed hands, with the Stars (18-8-4, 40 points) and Avalanche (19-11-2, 40 points) also occupying the spot in that span.

* The Jets improved to 7-1-1 (15 points) [since the start of December](#), matching the Flyers (7-0-1), Canucks (7-1-1) and Islanders (6-1-3) for the most points in the League this month.

* Vilardi has recorded 5-5—10 since his four-game goal streak began Dec. 13 – the most points by any player in the NHL [during that span](#). Since returning to the lineup Nov. 30, Vilardi (6-6—12 in 10 GP) [leads all Jets skaters in goals](#) and ranks second on the club in points behind **Nikolaj Ehlers** (5-9—14 in 10 GP).

* The forward also became the first player in *Jets team history* to post a four-game goal streak during his first season with the club and just the seventh different player in *franchise history* to record a run of at least that length during his debut campaign with the Jets/Thrashers.



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LONGEST GOAL STREAKS DURING FIRST SEASON WITH TEAM

JETS/THRASHERS HISTORY

| PLAYER | TEAM | SEASON | GP |
|------------------|------|---------|----|
| MAXIM AFINOGENOV | ATL | 2009-10 | 5 |
| GABRIEL VILARDI | WPG | 2023-24 | 4 |
| ANDREW LADD | ATL | 2010-11 | 4 |
| NIK ANTROPOV* | ATL | 2009-10 | 4 |
| MARIAN HOSSA | ATL | 2005-06 | 4 |
| PETER BONDRA | ATL | 2005-06 | 4 |
| ILYA KOVALCHUK* | ATL | 2001-02 | 4 |

*Antropov and Kovalchuk each posted two four-game goal streaks

... WHILE STROME'S OVERTIME WINNER MOVES CAPITALS INTO WILD CARD SPOT

On a night 19-year-old **Ivan Miroshnichenko** – the Capitals' first-round pick in the 2022 NHL Draft who was [diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma that same year](#) – made his NHL debut, it was fellow rookie **Hendrix Lapierre** (1-1—2) who factored on both Washington goals in regulation before **Dylan Strome** netted the winner in overtime. The Capitals received an emotional pre-game speech from assistant equipment manager **Craig "Woody" Leydig**, which defenseman **Trevor van Riemsdyk** credited as a spark ahead of puck drop.



CCJJ

“Miro's story is inspirational and the pre-game speech got everyone fired up. Lappy played awesome and Miro's throwing his body around. It's a spark for the whole group.”

TREVOR VAN RIEMSDYK ON ROOKIES
IVAN MIROSHNICHENKO & HENDRIX LAPIERRE



* The victory propelled the Capitals (16-9-4, 36 points) ahead of the idle Lightning (15-13-5, 35 points) and into the second Wild Card spot in the Eastern Conference. Six clubs have held a Wild Card spot in the East this month (CAR, DET, NYI, TBL, TOR & WSH).

* Lapierre, who idolized **Alex Ovechkin** as a kid and was called up by the Capitals alongside Miroshnichenko on Dec. 19, notched the second multi-point game of his career (also Nov. 18). He became Washington's third rookie in the past five years to record two-plus points multiple times in a season following **Connor McMichael** (2x in 2021-22) and **Travis Boyd** (2x in 2018-19).

* Ovechkin assisted on Strome's game-winning goal in the extra frame as the latter scored his team-leading 13th tally of the season. Strome is on pace to finish 2023-24 first in goals for the Capitals – a distinction Ovechkin has held in every campaign since 2005-06 (tied in 2016-17).




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OVECHKIN FACTORS ON OVERTIME WINNER

Alex Ovechkin (25-14-39) tied Evgeni Malkin (13-26-39) for the second-most overtime points in NHL history, behind only Sidney Crosby (20-23-43).

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QUICK CLICKS

- * [NHL Network Announces 2024 IIHF World Junior Championship Broadcast Schedule](#)
- * [Jaromir Jagr starts 36th season, has assist in Kladno loss](#)
- * [Winter Classic, Kraken's struggles discussed on 'NHL @TheRink' podcast](#)
- * [T-Mobile Park allows for smooth construction of Winter Classic rink](#)
- * [Wednesday edition of #NHLStats: Live Updates](#)

PAIR OF DOUBLEHEADERS, MacKINNON'S STREAKS HIGHLIGHT 12-GAME THURSDAY

A 12-game Thursday in the NHL features a pair of doubleheaders on Sportsnet One in Canada and on ESPN+ and Hulu in the U.S., while elsewhere **Nathan MacKinnon** will look to extend a pair of 16-game point streaks.



SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21

7:00 PM ET



MSG-B, SNO

7:00 PM ET



MNMT, BSOH

7:00 PM ET



BSMW, BSFL

7:00 PM ET



BSSO, NBCSP

7:00 PM ET



SN-PIT, BSSO, SNE, SN1

7:00 PM ET



SCRIPPS, BSSUN

7:30 PM ET



HULU, ESPN+, SNW

8:00 PM ET



BSSW, SNP

8:00 PM ET



BSWIX, BSNX, TSN2, RDS

9:00 PM ET



ALT, TSN5, RDSI

10:00 PM ET



BSSC, SNW, SNO, SNE, SN1

10:30 PM ET



HULU, ESPN+



* Three of the NHL's top eight [highest-scoring players since the start of last season](#) will share the ice when **Connor McDavid** (1st; 194 points), **Leon Draisaitl** (3rd; 162 points) and **Jack Hughes** (t-8th; 137 points) face off in an Oilers-Devils matchup broadcast on ESPN+ and Hulu. Edmonton (8-3-0; .727 P%) ranks second in the Western Conference and third in the NHL in [points percentage since U.S. Thanksgiving](#) thanks in large part to the efforts of McDavid, who leads the League in [points per game over that span](#) (5-20—25 in 11 GP; 2.27 P/GP).

* Despite missing five games due to injury, Hughes is on pace for his first career 100-point campaign and leads New Jersey in goals, assists (tied) and points (14-24—38 in 25 GP) – well on his way to becoming the fastest in franchise history to 40 points in a season. Hughes' 1.52 points-per-game rate in 2023-24 is tied with McDavid (11-30—41 in 27 GP) for the second highest behind NHL scoring leader **Nikita Kucherov** (22-32—54 in 32 GP; 1.69 P/GP).




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**HUGHES APPROACHING
FRANCHISE BENCHMARK**

Jack Hughes can become the first player in franchise history to reach the 40-point mark in 30 games or fewer in a season. The current benchmark is 31 contests, set by Zach Parise in 2008-09.



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* After establishing a new career-high point streak in his last outing, MacKinnon skates into Thursday looking to find the score sheet in his 17th straight home contest to start 2023-24 and become the fourth different player in franchise history – and second in *Avalanche team history* – to [post a run of at least 17 games](#) at any point in a season. MacKinnon, who paces [all skaters in regular-season scoring in 2023](#) (48-77—125 in 79 GP), will also aim to become the first player not named McDavid or Draisaitl to lead the League in points in a calendar year since 2017.

LONGEST SEASON-OPENING HOME POINT STREAKS

NHL HISTORY



| PLAYER | TEAM | SEASON | GP |
|------------------|------|---------|-----|
| WAYNE GRETZKY | LAK | 1988-89 | 40 |
| BOBBY ORR | BOS | 1974-75 | 25 |
| WAYNE GRETZKY | EDM | 1983-84 | 23 |
| PHIL ESPOSITO | BOS | 1973-74 | 23 |
| BERNIE FEDERKO | STL | 1983-84 | 20 |
| WAYNE GRETZKY | EDM | 1982-83 | 20 |
| NEAL BROTEN | MNS | 1989-90 | 18 |
| MATS SUNDIN | QUE | 1992-93 | 17 |
| PETER STASTNY | QUE | 1980-81 | 17 |
| TOE BLAKE | MTL | 1944-45 | 17 |
| NATHAN MACKINNON | COL | 2023-24 | 16* |



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*Seven others at 16 GP



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