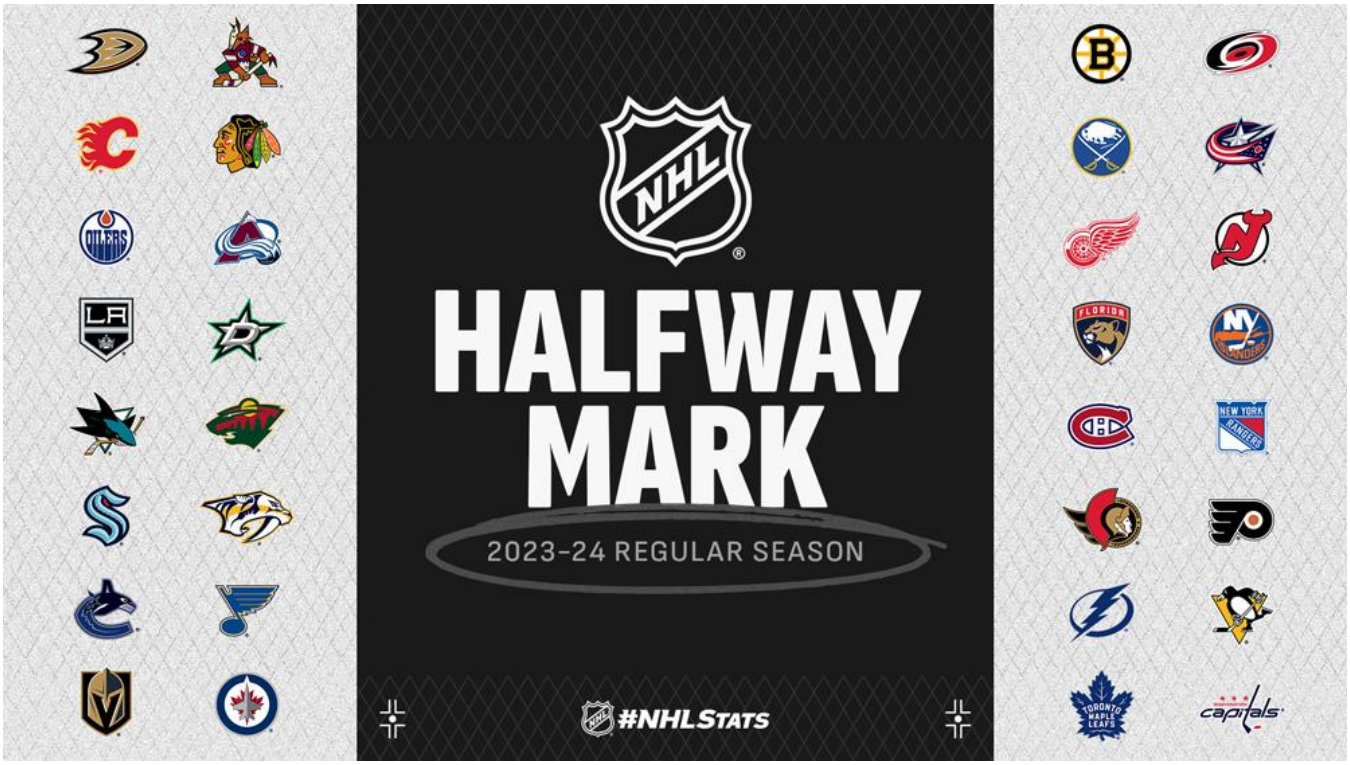
HALFWAY MARK: 2023-24 NHL SEASON



After the League's two newest franchises ushered in 2024 outdoors following a calendar year to remember, the #NHLStats team is delivering another look at storylines entering the second half of the 2023-24 regular season which will hit Saturday when the Devils and Panthers contest the NHL's 656th game. All stats below are entering play Friday, Jan. 12 (through 650 GP).

"WHOA, WE'RE HALFWAY THERE"

* The only player with more points than **Nathan MacKinnon** this season is **Nikita Kucherov**, and according to NHL EDGE the only player to cover more distance than Kucherov is MacKinnon.

* **Connor McDavid** is back in the upper echelon of the scoring race – and the Oilers are back into a playoff spot – but he still trails the League's two 60-point scorers Kucherov and MacKinnon by double digits as he seeks a fourth straight Art Ross Trophy.

* Nine teams that did not qualify for the 2023 Stanley Cup Playoffs either occupy or are within three points of a playoff spot, while the League-leading Jets are one of several squads that strung together a lengthy streak to surge up the standings.

* Over 4,000 goals have been scored so far in 2023-24, with scoring at 6.3 goals-per-game or higher in consecutive seasons for the first time in 30 years (6.4 through 650 GP in 2022-23).

* Nearly half of all games have featured a team overcoming a deficit to win, with the 120 third-period comeback victories tying the most at this stage of a season in NHL history.

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ON THE "EDGE" OF THE HALFWAY MARK

* **Nathan MacKinnon** has skated a League-leading 156.93 miles this season according to NHL EDGE, which is the equivalent of nearly six marathons. **Nikita Kucherov**, who owns a two-point advantage on MacKinnon atop the Art Ross Trophy race, ranks second in the NHL with 151.44 miles.

* **Rasmus Kupari** (23.95 mph on Oct. 17) had the NHL's fastest max speed this season for over two months, but that distinction has changed hands four times since late December. **Valeri Nichushkin** (23.96 mph on Dec. 21) overtook Kupari but his reign was short-lived as MacKinnon (24.05 mph on Dec. 23) surpassed him just before the holiday break. MacKinnon's lead lasted all of zero game-days as **Brayden Point** (24.15 mph on Dec. 27) took the reins right after Christmas before being dethroned by current leader **Owen Tippett** who clocked in at 24.21 mph in the dying seconds of overtime Wednesday.

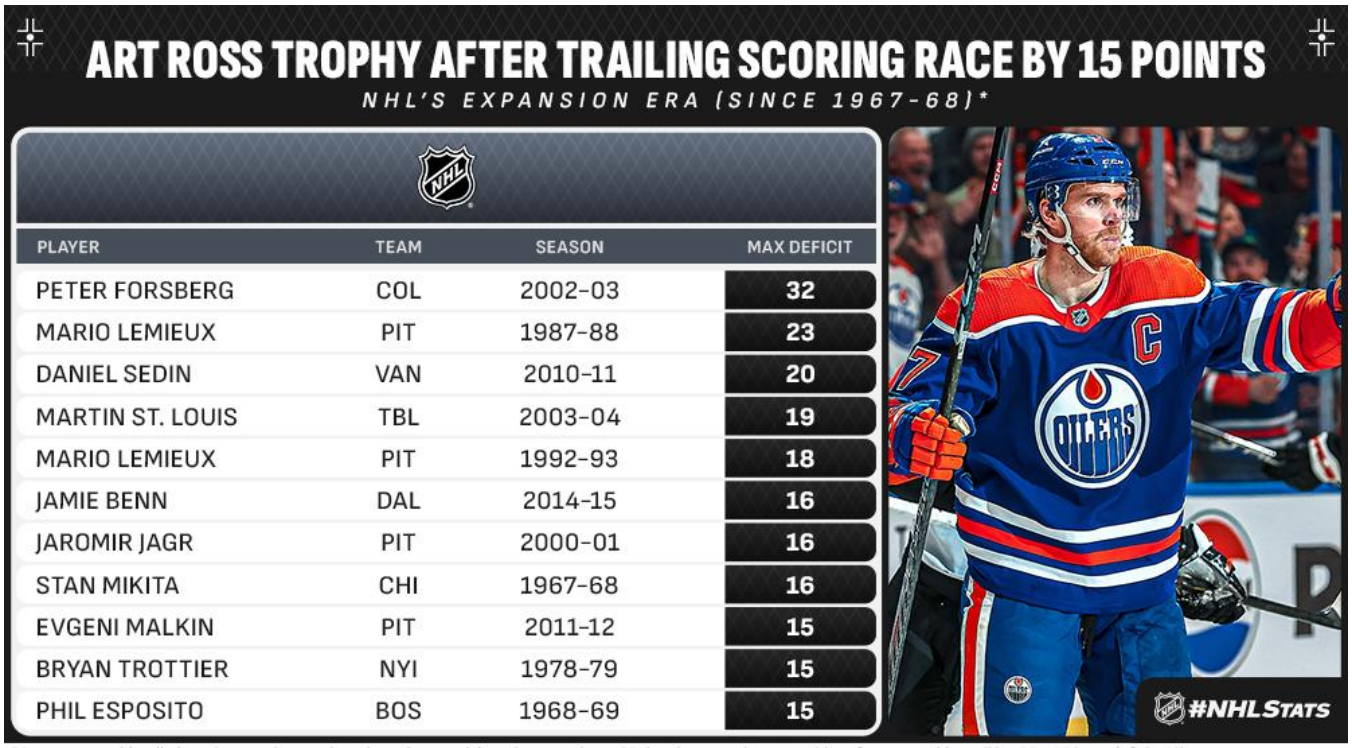
* **Evan Bouchard** has logged 60 shots on goal with a max speed of 90+ mph this season, nearly double the next-closest player (**Alex Ovechkin**: 35). A total of 31 shots clocked at 100+ mph have been recorded during play this season, with **Victor Hedman** (4) and **Radko Gudas** (3) topping the list.

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WILL WE SEE A NEW ART ROSS TROPHY WINNER?

* **Nikita Kucherov** (28-41—69 in 42 GP) leads the Art Ross Trophy race and can become the first player to reach the 70-point mark this season, while **Nathan MacKinnon** (22-45—67 in 42 GP) enters the second half after finding the score sheet in each of Colorado's 23 home games so far. Kucherov won the Art Ross Trophy in 2018-19, while MacKinnon seeks to become the second Avalanche/Nordiques player to top the NHL in points (**Peter Forsberg** in 2002-03).

* **Connor McDavid** (16-40—56 in 36 GP) has found the score sheet in 21 of 22 games since Nov. 20 and sits eighth in the Art Ross Trophy race. He ranked outside of the top 100 in the NHL entering play Nov. 20.



* **Quinn Hughes** (11-40—51 in 42 GP) has a three-point edge on **Cale Makar** (9-39—48 in 37 GP) atop the scoring race among defensemen and both blueliners are on pace to conclude the campaign with a triple-digit total. It would mark the first season in NHL history to feature multiple defensemen with 100 points.

* Makar (1.30 P/GP), Hughes (1.21 P/GP), **Evan Bouchard** (1.03 P/GP) and **Noah Dobson** (1.02 P/GP) are all averaging at least one point per game. This season also featured the first five-point *period* by a blueliner in NHL history, achieved by veteran and reigning Bill Masterton Memorial Trophy winner **Kris Letang** during his League record-tying six-assist showing on Dec. 27.

* **Connor Bedard** (15-18—33 in 39 GP), who is set to be sidelined for a few weeks, has a nine-point lead on **Marco Rossi** (12-12—24 in 40 GP) and **Adam Fantilli** (11-13—24 in 42 GP) for the most among NHL rookies. **Luke Hughes** (7-16—23 in 39 GP) paces rookie blueliners for goals and points.

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2024 PLAYOFFS TRENDING TOWARD MORE TURNOVER

* Vancouver (28-11-3, 59 points) leads the Pacific Division, while Philadelphia (21-14-6, 48 points) and Nashville (22-18-1, 45 points) occupy Wild Card spots in the Eastern and Western Conference, respectively, after all three clubs missed the playoffs last season. Six other teams that did not reach the postseason last year are within three points of a playoff spot: Pittsburgh, Detroit, Washington, St. Louis, Calgary and Arizona.

* The Jets (12-0-2 since Dec. 13) and Kraken (10-0-2 since Dec. 12) recorded franchise-record point streaks to move into first place in the League standings and within striking distance of the Western Conference's final Wild Card spot, respectively. Winnipeg ranked 10th in the NHL before its run began, while Seattle sat five points back of the "playoff line" in its conference entering play Dec. 12.

* Florida (9-0-0 since Dec. 23) and Edmonton (9-0-0 since Dec. 21) each earned nine straight wins to surge up

the standings, with the Panthers leapfrogging the Maple Leafs for second place in the Atlantic Division and the Oilers overtaking six clubs to claim the first Wild Card spot in the Western Conference.

* Entering the final six games of the first half, four teams own active winning streaks of eight or more contests (EDM, FLA, WPG & SEA) – a first in NHL history at any point in a season.

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GOALS GALORE

* League goals leader **Auston Matthews** (33-15—48 in 38 GP) became the fastest Maple Leafs player in the NHL's expansion era (since 1967-68) to reach 30 in a season. He can capture the Maurice "Rocket" Richard Trophy for a third time in four seasons. Matthews and **Nikita Kucherov** are two of seven players on pace to conclude the campaign with 50 goals (also **Artemi Panarin**, **David Pastrnak**, **Sam Reinhart**, **Zach Hyman** & **Brock Boeser**), which would be the most 50-goal scorers in a season since 1995-96 (8).

* AstraZeneca, which will donate $5,000 to the Hockey Fights Cancer Fund of the V Foundation for every hat trick this season, is officially more than halfway to its donation goal thanks to **Jordan Kyrou** and **Yegor Sharangovich** scoring the 50th and 51st three-goal performance of the campaign Thursday. The 51 hat tricks are the most at this stage in a season since 1995-96 (51).

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P3 COMEBACK WINS AT HIGHEST RATE IN NHL HISTORY

* The 120 third-period comeback wins are tied with 2013-14 for the most at this stage of a season in NHL history.

* The 280 total comeback wins are the League's fifth-highest total through 650 games behind 2018-19 (293), 2005-06 (287), 2022-23 (285) and 2016-17 (281).

* The 80 multi-goal comeback wins are tied for the fourth most at this stage behind 1985-86 (89), 2018-19 (87) and 1986-87 (84).

* The 25 third-period multi-goal comeback wins are tied for the third most through 650 games behind 2022-23 (34) and 2019-20 (33).

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ATTENDANCE, RATINGS REMAIN STRONG

* NHL teams are playing to 96.4% capacity in 2023-24, the highest rate at this stage over the past 10 seasons.

* Over 34,926,000 fans across North America have tuned in to watch NHL games. Across both ESPN and TNT, audiences are up 26% from this point last year; in Canada, Hockey Night in Canada is up 2% and Scotiabank Wednesday Night Hockey is up 10% YOY.

* The second quarter of the NHL season was highlighted by the Kraken blanking the reigning Stanley Cup-champion Golden Knights before a sold-out crowd of 47,313 in the *2024 Discover NHL Winter Classic* at T-Mobile Park as well as several cultural celebration and theme nights, with NHL.com tracking many of those initiatives in

its running blog which can be found at NHL.com/community. Detailed below is one storyline per week to watch for in the third quarter.



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