

NHL MORNING SKATE: STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS EDITION – APRIL 20, 2024



#NHLStats

STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS

 **Morning Skate**

Saturday, April 20, 2024

Who will it be? The 2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs begin tonight on TBS, Sportsnet & TVA Sports

Familiar foes set for Game 1s: Islanders at Hurricanes (5 ET) and Maple Leafs at Bruins (8 ET)

NHL officially lands in Utah with press conference from Delta Center

* After the full playoff bracket was finalized in the last 81 seconds of regulation play in the 2023-24 regular season, the focus shifts to night one of the 2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs as four teams embark on their championship-seeking journeys Saturday.

* The first night of the playoffs features two matchups between familiar foes: the Islanders and Hurricanes are meeting for the third time in six postseasons, followed by the Maple Leafs and Bruins renewing a 99-year-old rivalry that will now include four playoff series since 2013.

* NHL Commissioner **Gary Bettman** joined **Ryan** and **Ashley Smith**, owners of the new NHL franchise in Utah, for a [press conference at Delta Center](#), where the club will begin play in 2024-25.

 **STATS AND INFORMATION**

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STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS 2024

SCHEDULE · SATURDAY, APRIL 20



VS



GAME 1 · 5 ET

MAX, TRUTV, MSGSN, TBS, BSSO,
SNP, SNW, SNE, SN360, TVAS



VS



GAME 1 · 8 ET

MAX, TRUTV, TBS, NESN,
SN, TVAS, CBC

WATCH THE STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS ON

WHO WILL IT BE?

This year's playoff field includes the winners of the past four Stanley Cups, four clubs that have never won a championship and six looking for their first title in 30-plus years – with all embarking on what will eventually become a two-month journey for two teams that reach the 2024 Stanley Cup Final. The rollercoaster of upsets, overtime games, unsung heroes, and memorable moments begins with two games tonight and six this weekend, with plenty of #NHLStats to keep you in the know before, during and after every game of the 2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs.

- * [#NHLStats Pack: 2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs Cheat Sheet](#)
- * [Clinched: #NHLStats Packs for Teams in the 2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs](#)
- * [Matchups: #NHLStats for Confirmed Series in the 2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs](#)
- * [2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs Interactive Information Guide](#)
- * [#NHLStats: Live Updates – Stanley Cup Playoffs Editions](#)



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THE STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS BEGIN APRIL 20

Watch on ESPN, TNT, Sportsnet and TVA Sports



HURRICANES, ISLANDERS HOPE RECENT SUCCESS, ADDITIONS LEAD TO DEEP RUN

The puck will drop on the first game of the 2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs on Saturday evening, when the Hurricanes host the Islanders in Game 1 at PNC Arena. This will mark the second consecutive postseason the teams face each other ([CAR 4-2 W in 2023 R1](#)) and the third time in six seasons ([CAR 4-0 W in 2019 R2](#)).

STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS
BRACKET CHALLENGE
PRESENTED BY betway

PREDICT THE PLAYOFFS

M3 — [NEW YORK ISLANDERS] — VS — [CAROLINA HURRICANES] — M2

2-1-1 SEASON SERIES **2-1-1**

ROAD TEAM HAS WON 7 OF PAST 8 HEAD-TO-HEAD REGULAR-SEASON GAMES (CAR: 4-0-0; NYI: 3-1-0)

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* The 2023 First Round between these clubs included four one-goal games, two overtime winners by Carolina (**Jesper Fast** in Game 2 & **Paul Stastny** in Game 6) and a goal-differential of one across the entire series (CAR: 16; NYI: 15). **Sebastian Aho** (4-3—7 in 6 GP) led all players on both teams in scoring in the series, finding the score sheet in five of six games including the tying goal in the third period of Game 6 to set the stage for Stastny to score the series-clinching overtime goal.

* Both clubs are hoping in-season additions help push their franchise deeper into the postseason. Carolina added Stanley Cup champions **Jake Guentzel** and **Evgeny Kuznetsov** before the trade deadline. Guentzel, whose 0.59 goals per game rate in the playoffs is the [second highest among active skaters](#) (tied; min. 10 GP), shared the team lead in points [from March 7 \(the day he was acquired\) onward](#). **Patrick Roy**, who won four Stanley Cups on the ice, began his tenure as Islanders head coach Jan. 21 and can become the second person to win the Cup as both a goaltender and head coach (he would join **Lester Patrick** who [famously made one NHL appearance as a goaltender](#)).

* The Hurricanes (7) and Islanders (6) are among the League leaders in series wins over the past five playoff years (since 2019). Over that five-season span, Carolina advanced past the opening round four times and made two trips to the Conference Finals (2019 & 2023) while New York advanced past the opening round three times, earning a spot in the Conference Finals/Semifinals twice (2020 & 2021).

MOST STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS SERIES WINS
SINCE 2019

TEAM	SERIES WINS
TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING	11
VEGAS GOLDEN KNIGHTS	8
CAROLINA HURRICANES	7
COLORADO AVALANCHE	7
NEW YORK ISLANDERS	6
DALLAS STARS	6

PHOTOS: TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING (top), NEW YORK ISLANDERS (bottom)

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ALL EYES ON PASTRNAK, MATTHEWS IN ORIGINAL SIX SHOWDOWN

An Original Six rivalry in primetime on Saturday to help open the Stanley Cup Playoffs will pit two of the League’s 100-point scorers against each other as 69-goal and 107-point Maple Leafs forward **Auston Matthews** leads his Maple Leafs into Beantown to face off against 47-goal and 110-point forward **David Pastrnak** and the Bruins. Both with at least one 60-goal season and [Maurice “Rocket” Richard Trophy](#) to their credit, Matthews and Pastrnak will go head-to-head in a playoff series for the third time (also 2018 R1 & 2019 R1).

STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS
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TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS VS BOSTON BRUINS

PREDICT THE PLAYOFFS

A3 [TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS] VS [BOSTON BRUINS] A2

0-2-2 SEASON SERIES 4-0-0

BOSTON HAS WON 7 OF PAST 8 HEAD-TO-HEAD GAMES, OUTSCORING TORONTO 26-15 IN REGULATION/OVERTIME

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* This will mark the 17th playoff series between the rivals and fourth in the past 11 years, a well-documented stretch in which the Bruins have claimed three Game 7 victories against the Maple Leafs (2013 CQF, 2018 R1 & 2019 R1). Toronto and Boston have split their 16 previous series, though the Bruins have won all six series between the clubs during the NHL's expansion era (since 1967-68). Five of those series have gone to Game 7, including the last time Toronto advanced in a head-to-head during the [1959 Semifinals](#). [Click here](#) for more notes on this matchup.

* Pastrnak has tallied 19 points in 14 career playoff games against the Maple Leafs (2-4—6 in 2019 & 5-8—13 in 2018), finding the score sheet in eight of those contests and posting multiple points six times. Matthews led all players with five goals the last time these clubs met in the postseason (5-1—6 in 2019 & 1-1—2 in 2018) and has 19 points in 19 total head-to-head games dating to that 2019 First Round matchup (15-4—19, including both goals in [Toronto's last win against Boston](#)).

* Since the start of the 2014-15 regular season (the campaign in which Pastrnak made his League debut), the tandem of Matthews (390) and Pastrnak (383) rank second and third, respectively, in terms of total goals including playoffs. The only player with more in that span is **Alex Ovechkin** (472). Matthews ranks second during that timeframe despite entering the League two years later.



MOST GOALS, INCLUDING PLAYOFFS

SINCE 2014-15



STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS 2024

PLAYER	GP	GOALS
ALEX OVECHKIN	836	472
AUSTON MATTHEWS	612	390
DAVID PASTRNAK	751	383
LEON DRAISAITL	768	378
CONNOR MCDAVID	694	364
NIKITA KUCHEROV	813	363
STEVEN STAMKOS	773	359
NATHAN MACKINNON	779	353
SIDNEY CROSBY	807	348
BRAD MARCHAND	809	346



RECAPPING A REGULAR SEASON FOR THE AGES

From an Art Ross Trophy race that went down to the wire to a 69-goal Maurice “Rocket” Richard-winning performance, the 2023-24 regular season had it all. It was the first season in 31 years with three 130-point players, which featured the highly anticipated debut of an 18-year-old No.1 pick, the highest goal total by any skater in 28 years and a dramatic playoff race in which five teams separated by three points battled for two remaining playoff spots within their final two contests of the campaign. For more #NHLStats and storylines on the 2023-24 season, [click here](#).

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NHL OFFICIALLY LANDS IN UTAH AS RYAN AND ASHLEY SMITH HOST PRESS CONFERENCE

One day after it was announced that the NHL's Board of Governors approved the establishment of a franchise beginning with the 2024-25 season in Utah, **Ryan** and **Ashley Smith** – leaders of the new owners Smith Entertainment Group – welcomed NHL Commissioner **Gary Bettman** for a press conference inside the Delta Center, which was [decked out with “NHL in Utah” branding](#). [Click here](#) to watch the full press conference.

* On Wednesday, [a free event](#) will be held at the Delta Center to welcome the team and celebrate the NHL in Utah (4 p.m. MT on April 24) – with preseason ticket vouchers for the first 5,000 fans.



NHL LAUNCHES NEW GERMAN-LANGUAGE PODCAST

The NHL launched a German-language NHL-driven podcast on [NHL.com/de](#) Friday. Relying on years of media experience, hosts **Christian Rupp** and **Stefan Ustorf** will offer in-depth insight on the 2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs, engage with current and former players, all while serving listeners with the most reliable hockey talk in the space. This new podcast endeavors to satisfy a growing appetite for more specialized content around favorite teams and players in one of the League's key and fast-growing markets.

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WEEKLY PODCAST ROUNDUP

NHL Fantasy on Ice (4/15): 2023-24 fantasy awards; surprises & disappointments

NHL Draft Class (4/17): Dan Marr, VP, NHL Central Scouting; Final Rankings

NHL @TheRink (4/17): Tom Gulitti joins; Stanley Cup Playoffs primer & predictions

The Chirp (4/18): Darren Dreger joins; Coaching Carousel, Sid's future, Playoff storylines

NHL Fantasy on Ice (4/18): Fantasy playoff pool preview: rankings, sleepers, X-factors

NHL Fantasy on Ice (4/18): NHL + Action Network Collab: Stanley Cup Playoffs betting preview

La Tasse de Café LNH (4/19): Place aux séries éliminatoires de la Coupe Stanley!

QUICK CLICKS

* [NHL EDGE stats: 2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs](#)

* [Andrei Svechnikov](#) healthy for Hurricanes, ready for Playoffs after missing out last season

* [Commissioner Bettman](#) reaffirms commitment to Phoenix market

* [Jacob Trouba](#), mother in AstraZeneca 'Get Body Checked Against Cancer' campaign

* Viewership is up on [ESPN](#) and on [TNT](#)

* [Best Season Yet = Record Audiences, Record Fan Engagement](#)



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BEST SEASON YET = RECORD AUDIENCES, RECORD FAN ENGAGEMENT

- The 2023-24 regular season is the **most-watched regular season since 2015-16** and the most-watched regular season on cable in **30 years in the U.S.**
- More than **58.6 million fans across North America** tuned into NHL games during the 2023-24 regular season
- Across TNT, ESPN, and ABC the NHL is **up 8% over last season** (504,000 average viewers)
- On cable (across ESPN/TNT), the NHL is **up 8% YOY** (410,000 average viewers)
- In Canada, Hockey Night in Canada is **up 7% YOY** (1.265 million average viewers)
- In-arena, the NHL set an **all-time record for total attendance** in a single season, with 22,873,142 fans taking in NHL games live during the 2023-24 regular season (97% capacity) - more than any other in the League's 106-year history.



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