

## NHL MORNING SKATE: STANLEY CUP FINAL EDITION – JUNE 7, 2024



The graphic features two hockey players in action on an ice rink. On the left, an Edmonton Oilers player in a white, blue, and red uniform with the number 29 is skating. On the right, a Florida Panthers player in a red, white, and blue uniform with the number 42 is skating. The background shows the arena's boards with advertisements for Tiger, Hair Club, and Auto. The NHL logo is in the top left corner, and the text 'STANLEY CUP FINAL' is visible. The hashtag #NHLStats is in the top right corner. The main title 'Morning Skate' is in large yellow letters, with the date 'Friday, June 7, 2024' in a yellow box to the right. Below the title are three white boxes with black text containing key news items.

**Morning Skate** Friday, June 7, 2024

- Panthers battled back from injury woes to reach second straight Final
- Oilers climbed from 31st place in NHL standings en route to Stanley Cup Final
- Top-scoring defensemen Bouchard, Forsling among players read for Media Day on Friday

\* Before the Oilers and Panthers take to the ice for the 2024 Stanley Cup Final, the players take to the podium for Media Day today at Amerant Bank Arena. Ahead of that, #NHLStats tracks each team's regular season journey – which saw both the Panthers and Oilers hit their stride in late December.

\* The latest #NHLStats Player Spotlight features keyed in on two star defensemen: Edmonton's **Evan Bouchard**, who is within striking distance of two Stanley Cup Playoffs records held by his assistant coach, and Florida's **Gustav Forsling**, who is two points back of [breaking a franchise mark set just last year](#).

\* Before the puck drops Saturday in Florida, the “pup drops” Friday on ESPN+ and NHL Network for the U.S. premiere of the first-ever *Stanley Pup* (8 p.m. ET) – which features the likes of adoptable dogs **Sergei Bobruffsky** and **Connor McDoodle**.



The graphic features the Stanley Cup trophy on the left, with the text "20 24" on its sides. Below the trophy is the text "STANLEY CUP FINAL" and the NHL logo. To the right, a list of seven games is shown, each with the team logos (Oilers and Panthers) and the date and time. At the bottom, there are logos for ABC, ESPN+, Sportsnet, CBC, and TVA Sports, followed by the text "2024 STANLEY CUP FINAL MEDIA DAY • FRIDAY, JUNE 7" and a small note "\*IF NECESSARY".

Game	Home Team	Away Team	Date	Time
GAME 1	Oilers	Florida	JUNE 8	8:00 PM ET
GAME 2	Oilers	Florida	JUNE 10	8:00 PM ET
GAME 3	Florida	Oilers	JUNE 13	8:00 PM ET
GAME 4	Florida	Oilers	JUNE 15	8:00 PM ET
* GAME 5	Oilers	Florida	JUNE 18	8:00 PM ET
* GAME 6	Florida	Oilers	JUNE 21	8:00 PM ET
* GAME 7	Oilers	Florida	JUNE 24	8:00 PM ET

2024 STANLEY CUP FINAL MEDIA DAY • FRIDAY, JUNE 7

\*IF NECESSARY

## **PANTHERS PERSEVERE THROUGH EARLY INJURY WOES, REACH SECOND STRAIGHT FINAL**

When the Panthers opened their 2023-24 schedule with a 2-0 loss to the Wild on Oct. 12, only 10 of the 20 players that dressed for the team during their run to the 2023 Stanley Cup Final were in the lineup, with key players like **Brandon Montour**, **Aaron Ekblad** and **Sam Bennett** sidelined due to injury. The absences played a role in the club's fall to seventh place in the Atlantic Division following a loss to **Connor Bedard** and the Blackhawks on Nov. 4 (5-4-1, 11 points).

\* Two nights later, clutch scorer **Carter Verhaeghe** netted an overtime winner against Columbus that triggered a five-game winning streak and 7-1-0 run that coincided with the returns of Montour and Ekblad on Nov. 17. That eight-game stretch ended with a 5-3 victory against [Edmonton on Nov. 20](#), in which Bennett scored his first goal of the season and Verhaeghe tallied 1-1—2 against **Calvin Pickard** to help defeat the Oilers, who were skating in their fourth game with **Kris Knoblauch** as head coach.

\* By U.S. Thanksgiving, the Panthers ranked second in the Atlantic Division, a position they would maintain (at minimum) for all but two weeks for the balance of the season. After another [victory against the Oilers on Dec. 16](#) – this time a 5-1 decision that included two Verhaeghe goals and 38 saves by **Sergei Bobrovsky** (against a streaking **Connor McDavid**, no less) – the Panthers dropped two in a row before really finding their footing.

\* With the Panthers lined up in a Stanley Cup Final rematch against the Golden Knights in their last game before Christmas, Verhaeghe continued his timely contributions by netting the [go-ahead game-winning goal on home ice](#). That victory was the start of a season-best [nine-game winning streak](#) for Florida which included two wins against Vegas and two against clubs they would eventually eliminate from the postseason (TBL & NYR).

\* From Dec. 23 onward, Florida won 34 of its final 50 games to tie for second in the NHL for [wins over that span](#) – with Stanley Cup Final opponent Edmonton (34-12-5; .716 P%) – while its .720 points percentage ranked second behind Carolina (35-11-3; .745 P%).

\* Florida's rise in the standings and eventual division crown (secured in their 82nd game) also benefited from a [franchise-record 11-game road winning streak](#) that fell one game short of [the longest in NHL history](#). They now are one of six franchises since 1993-94 – their inaugural NHL season – to make back-to-back trips to the Final.

## CONSECUTIVE STANLEY CUP FINAL APPEARANCES

SINCE 1993-94

TEAM	SPAN OF YEARS	CUPS WON
PITTSBURGH PENGUINS	2016-17 & 2008-09	3
DETROIT RED WINGS	2008-09 & 1997-98	3
TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING	2020-22	2
NEW JERSEY DEVILS	2000-01	1
DALLAS STARS	1999-00	1
FLORIDA PANTHERS	2023-24	TBD



### OILERS REBOUND FROM EARLY-SEASON DISAPPOINTMENT EN ROUTE TO FINAL BERTH

It was at 1:05 a.m. ET on Nov. 10 when Edmonton's 12th game of the season ended with a defeat against the Sharks that sent the Oilers to a 2-9-1 start. A hat trick by **Zach Hyman** ([one of his four](#) during a 54-goal campaign) got Edmonton back in the win column two nights later, but a coaching change followed and the club won its first two decisions under rookie head coach **Kris Knoblauch**.

\* Three straight losses then dropped the Oilers to 30th in the NHL standings at U.S. Thanksgiving (5-12-1, 11 points), but they returned with eight straight wins including a victory against Vegas in their first meeting since the 2023 Second Round when the Oilers were eliminated by the eventual Stanley Cup champions for the second consecutive year (also 2022 CF vs. COL).

\* Another trio of defeats (including one vs. FLA) ended that winning streak only to serve as the prequel for another, this time a franchise record-setting 16-0-0 run that put the Oilers within one game of tying the [NHL record](#). Edmonton's [36-12-5 run from Dec. 21 onward](#) moved them from 13th place in the Western Conference (seven points back of a playoff spot and 20 back of the No. 1 team in the Pacific Division) to a second-place finish in their division (five points back of a division title) and home ice in the First Round.

\* After the first week of the season, the Oilers found their lowest points on Nov. 23 when they were 10 points back of the lowest-ranked playoff team and Nov. 14 when they ranked 31st in the NHL standings.

\* Fast forward to the eve of the Stanley Cup Final, where the Oilers are set to make their first appearance in 18 years with hopes of a storybook ending alike one seen five years ago. In 2018-19, the Blues rose from last place in January 2019 to a championship (the [only team in the NHL's expansion era](#) to achieve such a feat).

\* The Oilers' rebound from a 10-point deficit in the Western Conference playoff bracket made them the third team in NHL history to reach the Stanley Cup Final after being that far out of the race. One of the previous two won the Cup: the [2018-19 Blues](#). The other instance was in [1958-59 when the Maple Leafs](#) emerged from an "Original Six" regular season to reach the Final, where they lost in five games.

**HOW FAR THEY'VE COME**

The Oilers are the 5th team in NHL history to participate in the Stanley Cup Final after posting a winning streak of 12+ games during the regular season. Also: 1981-82 Islanders (15 GP), 1929-30 Bruins (14 GP), 2000-01 Devils (13 GP) & 1967-68 Canadiens (12 GP).

STANLEY CUP FINAL 2024

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### **OFFENSE FROM THE DEFENSE BOLSTERING PANTHERS AND OILERS**

Defensemen **Evan Bouchard** (6-21—27 in 18 GP) and **Gustav Forsling** (4-7—11 in 17 GP) have found their names all over the score sheet during the 2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs and enter the Final as two of the four-highest scoring defensemen this postseason. Edmonton's breakout defenseman in Bouchard is [set to go head-to-head](#) against one of the NHL's best puck-possession and shutdown players at the position in Forsling – with the NHL's ultimate prize on the line.

**MOST SHOTS OF 90+ MPH**  
2024 STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS


**STANLEY CUP FINAL 2024**

PLAYER	TEAM	SHOTS
EVAN BOUCHARD	EDM	22
GUSTAV FORSLING	FLA	9
BRANDON MONTOUR	FLA	7
J.T. MILLER	VAN	5
CODY CECI	EDM	4
ROMAN JOSI	NSH	4
VICTOR HEDMAN	TBL	4
MIRO HEISKANEN	DAL	4




\* Bouchard's totals through 18 games this postseason have the No. 10 selection from the 2018 NHL Draft within striking distance of NHL history. He has found the score sheet in each of his past four games dating to Game 3 of the Western Conference Final and will begin the Stanley Cup Final needing four assists to equal the [most by a defenseman in a single postseason](#) and 10 points to match the [highest point total by a blueliner in one playoff year](#) – both benchmarks held by his assistant coach, **Paul Coffey**.

\* Forsling was a fifth-round pick in the 2014 NHL Draft (No. 126 by VAN) who was then traded to Chicago (122 GP) and Carolina (DNP in NHL). In January 2021, Forsling was claimed off waivers by Florida and the 27-year-old is now set to appear in his second straight Stanley Cup Final with the club. Forsling has been key to the team's success at both ends of the rink and secured their spot in the Eastern Conference Final when he became the second player in franchise history with a go-ahead series-clinching goal in the final 2:00 minutes of regulation (1:33 left in Game 6 of 2024 R2).



**CHASING DOWN  
FRANCHISE HISTORY**

Gustav Forsling (4-7-11 in 17 GP), who signed an eight-year contract extension in March, needs one assist and two points to match franchise records by a defenseman in a single postseason.

STANLEY CUP FINAL 2024

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### **2024 NHL SCOUTING COMBINE UNDERWAY**

The 2024 NHL Scouting Combine presented by adidas is underway in Buffalo. The 100 invited prospects have been meeting with clubs since they arrived Sunday and began testing today, which will continue through to Saturday. The prospects also do interviews with national broadcasters and NHL.com. **Zeev Buium**, the No. 4-ranked North American skater, is among the cohort and [spoke to NHL.com about his competitiveness and desire to win](#). Buium won a national championship with the Univ. of Denver and as a freshman led the NCAA in scoring by a defenseman after posting (11-39-50 in 42 GP). He also helped Team USA win a gold medal at the 2024 World Junior Championship.



**SCOUTING  
COMBINE | 24**

**"I'm a highly competitive kid  
and I want to win and I have  
won."**

Zeev Buium, No. 4-ranked North American Skater

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### **COMBINE QUICK CLICKS**

- \* [Macklin Celebrini](#), set for testing at combine, has 'certain look' of future NHL star
- \* [Macklin Celebrini](#) talks support group, handling expectations on 'NHL Draft Class' podcast
- \* [Konsta Helenius](#) shows confidence at combine, 'very close' to playing in NHL
- \* [Eriks Mateiko's](#) World Juniors experience raising profile ahead of 2024 NHL Draft

### **GET READY FOR 'PUP' DROP: FIRST-EVER "STANLEY PUP" PREMIERES TONIGHT**

Before the puck drops on the 2024 Stanley Cup Final, there is important business to attend to for the likes of **Sergei Bobruffsky** and **Connor McDoodle**: the first-ever **Stanley Pup**. The 90-minute program created by NHL Productions and Michael Levitt Productions premieres tonight in the U.S. on NHL Network and ESPN+ (8 p.m. ET) and Saturday in Canada on Sportsnet (6 p.m. ET). *Stanley Pup* will re-air June 14 at 7 p.m. ET on Monumental Sports Network. [Click here](#) ahead of the friendly canine competition to meet the full roster of Stanley Pup dogs, comprised of an all-star lineup of [adoptable dogs](#) from Petco Love's partner animal shelters and rescues nationwide.



June 7 at 8PM ET

June 8 at 6PM ET

Thank You to Our Partners!



**KEEPER OF THE CUP HOSTS 'ASK ME ANYTHING' BEFORE STANLEY CUP FINAL**

The Keeper of the Cup is on the ground in Sunrise, Florida, for the Stanley Cup Final and ready to talk hockey:

"It's **Philip Pritchard** here! Growing up I think I was like every other kid that put on skates and dreamt of winning the Stanley Cup. While my life in hockey didn't turn out exactly as expected, I did end up with the ultimate dream job. Since 1988, I have had the incredible honor of traveling the world as the "Keeper of the Cup." Do you want to know how the Stanley Cup made it to the Great Wall of China? Or how many countries I have visited with the Stanley Cup? Ever wonder what happens the night a team wins the Cup? I'll answer these questions and more [Friday, June 7 at 4 p.m. ET on reddit, r/hockey](#). The Stanley Cup Final starts in Florida on Saturday, but let's chat before then. I've got stories for days about all the Cup's adventures over the years, so go ahead, ask me anything!"



@PR\_NHL @PR\_NHL #NHLStats



## QUICK CLICKS

- \* [NHL, Labatt announce multiyear Canadian partnership](#)
- \* [Meet the Oldest Living NHL Player at 101 Years Old, \*\*Steve Wojciechowski\*\*](#)
- \* [NHL Network to feature wall-to-wall coverage of Stanley Cup Final](#)
- \* [Prime Video announces NHL docuseries chronicling life on, off ice](#)

