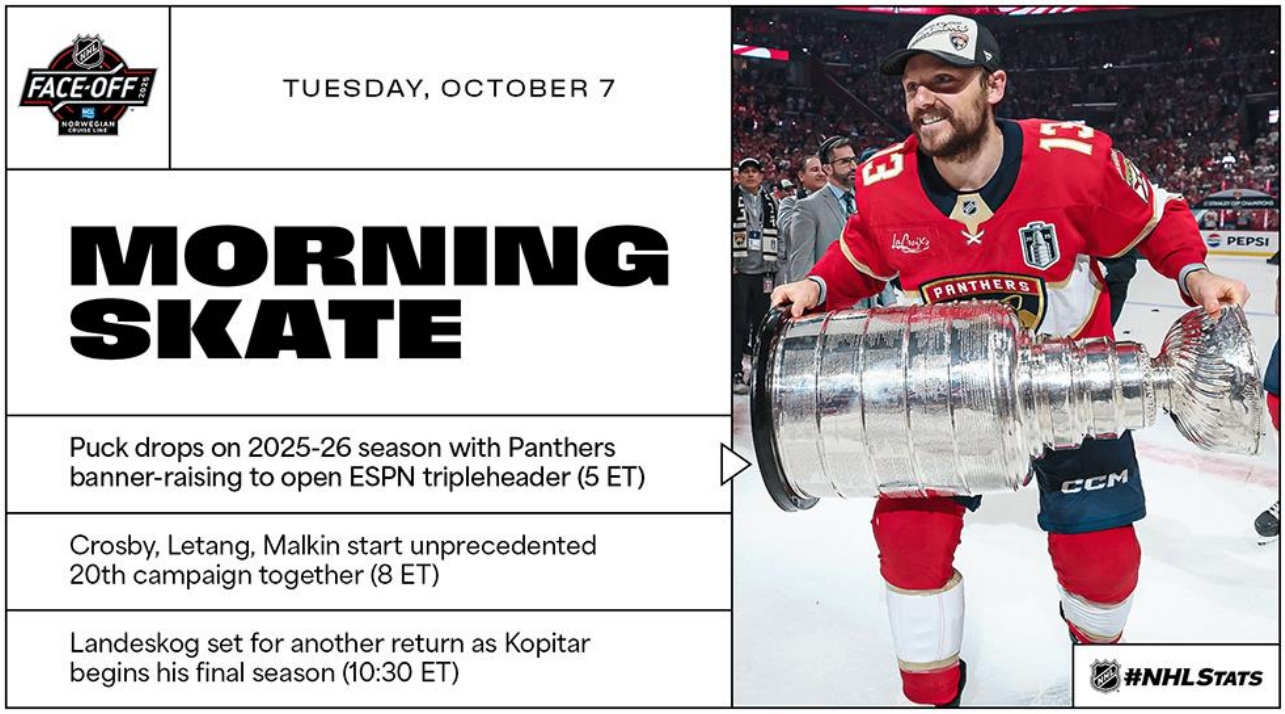
NHL MORNING SKATE: FACE-OFF EDITION – OCT. 7, 2025



STORYLINE-STACKED SEASON STARTS WITH TRIPLEHEADER ON ESPN

Just over 110 days after claiming their second straight Stanley Cup and one day shy of the first anniversary of their only other banner-raising night, the Panthers will commemorate another title before hosting the opening game of the 2025-26 regular season.

* A snapshot of what awaits in the NHL's 108th campaign: thrilling finishes (2024-25 saw a record 560 comeback wins), high-scoring and high-skill (four straight seasons averaging 6.0 goals per game & with an Art Ross Trophy winner securing 120+ points) as well as spirited competition in both League and international play (NHL players will return from the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026 & continue their pursuit of the most-revered trophy in all of sports).

* With players from as many as 20 countries expected to be on opening-day rosters, NHL games will be broadcast live in nearly 200 countries and territories this season. **Click here** for a guide on how to watch and stream games around the world.

* It was an eventful regular-season eve involving star players around the League highlighted by **Connor McDavid** signing a two-year contract with the Oilers, **J.T. Miller** being a regular practice participant ahead of his first game as Rangers captain and No. 1 pick **Matthew Schaefer** learning that he will be a member of the Islanders' opening-day roster.



FLORIDA TO RAISE STANLEY CUP BANNER, BEGIN THREE-PEAT HUNT VERSUS CHICAGO

Sam Reinhart and the Panthers will raise their second straight Stanley Cup banner and start the quest to become the sixth team in NHL history with three consecutive championships (and first in more than 40 years) when they host **Connor Bedard** and the Blackhawks – one of three clubs starting Centennial year celebrations in 2025-26.

* Reinhart is one of 21 current Florida players that were part of its Cup-winning roster last season, with that group including **Sam Bennett**, **Aaron Ekblad**, **Brad Marchand** and **Niko Mikkola** who all signed long-term contracts after capturing the championship. Marchand was in the building as the Bruins' captain for the Panthers' first banner-raising night last year.



* Reinhart, who was featured in the ***2025 Stanley Cup Championship Film***, skated with Team Canada alongside Bennett and Marchand during the 4 Nations Face-Off and is set to represent his country again at the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026. Bennett, Ekblad, Marchand and **Carter Verhaeghe** will vie for a roster spot after being invited to Team Canada's orientation camp, as will Bedard who enters his third season as a centerpiece for Chicago.

* Bedard, 20, was the second-youngest player in attendance at Team Canada's camp behind 19-year-old fellow No. 1 pick and North Vancouver native **Macklin Celebrini**. The last time NHL players were in the Olympics (2014), there were five players age 20 or younger who participated including Panthers captain **Aleksander Barkov** as well as fellow NHLers **Zemgus Girgensons**, **Olli Määttä** and **Valeri Nichushkin** (also **Luka Gracnar**).



CROSBY COMMENCES 21ST SEASON, RANGERS START CENTENNIAL YEAR

Sidney Crosby is set to embark on his 21st season and 20th with longtime teammates **Kris Letang** and **Evgeni Malkin** when the Penguins visit new captain **J.T. Miller** and the Rangers. Crosby, Letang and Malkin contested parts of 10 campaigns under Pittsburgh's former head coach **Mike Sullivan**, who was hired by New York this offseason and replaced by **Dan Muse** behind the Penguins' bench.

* Crosby, Letang and Malkin are the highest-scoring trio of teammates with a single franchise in NHL history, combining for 3,703 regular-season points over the past 19 campaigns. They played 11 seasons alongside **Marc-Andre Fleury**, who the trio reunited with and bid farewell to when Fleury manned Pittsburgh's crease during a preseason period on Sept. 27.



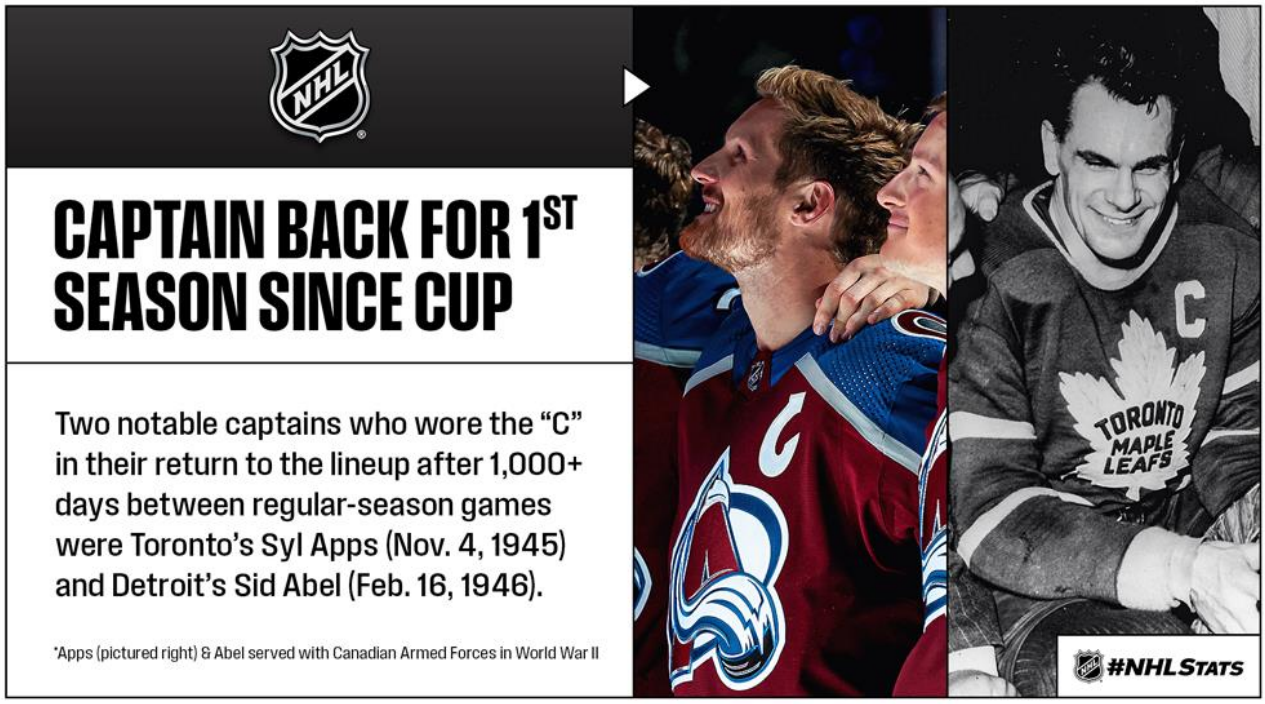
* Crosby starts the season needing 37 points to pass **Mario Lemieux** (1,723) for the most in franchise history and for eighth place on the League's all-time list. Crosby, who is set to tie **Steve Yzerman** as the longest-tenured captain in NHL history, also needs two assists to leapfrog Yzerman (1,063) for the ninth most all-time.

* Miller leads the Rangers into their Centennial year celebrations after being named the 29th captain in franchise history. Miller, who began his second stint with New York just before playing against Crosby at the 4 Nations Face-Off, attended Team USA's orientation camp for the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026 alongside teammates **Adam Fox** and **Vincent Trocheck**. Sullivan was named Team USA's head coach and Rangers assistant **David Quinn** will serve in the same capacity for the Americans.



KOPITAR EMBARKS ON FINAL SEASON, LANDESKOG SET FOR ANOTHER RETURN

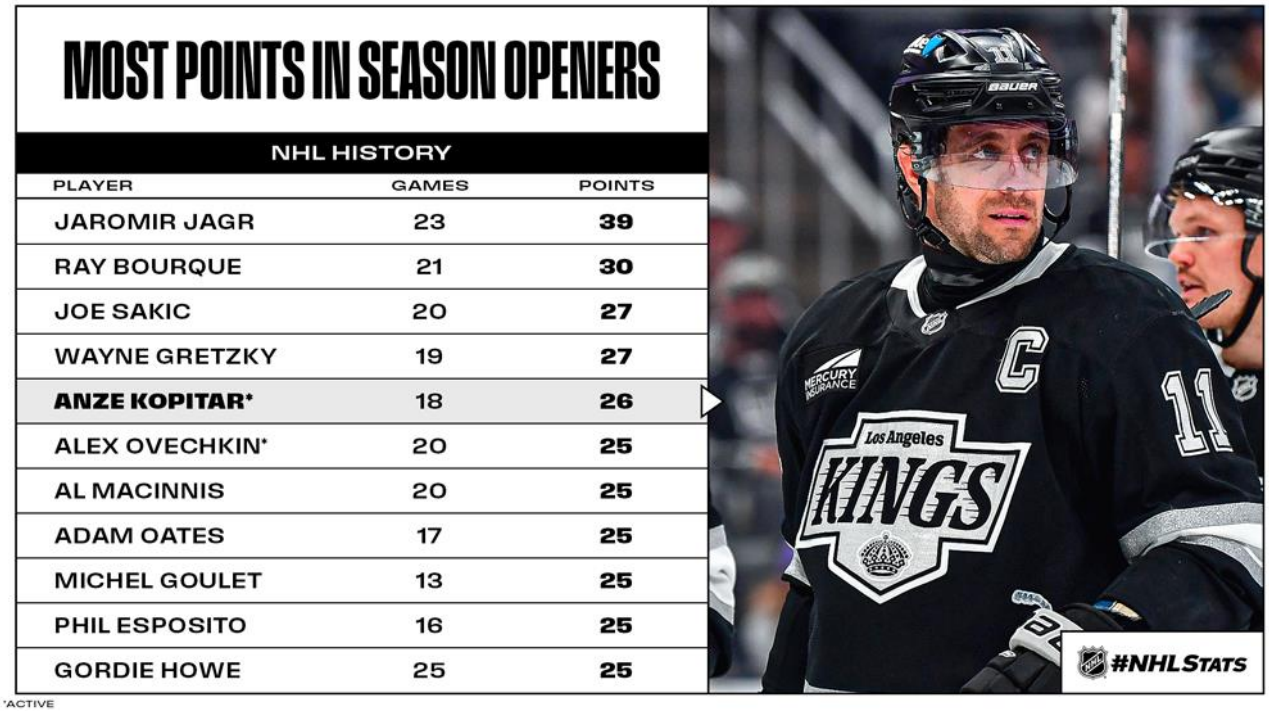
Gabriel Landeskog, who made his long-awaited return to Colorado's lineup in Game 3 of the 2025 First Round, will play his first regular-season contest in more than 1,300 days when the Avalanche clash with **Anze Kopitar** and the Kings. The game will mark the start of the 20th and final campaign for Kopitar, who announced that he will retire at the end of the season.



* Landeskog will be joined by decorated teammates **Nathan MacKinnon** and **Cale Makar** as well as new Colorado defenseman **Brent Burns**, who needs three contests to reach 1,500 in his career and 75 to become the second player in NHL history with a 1,000-game "Ironman" streak. Burns also requires

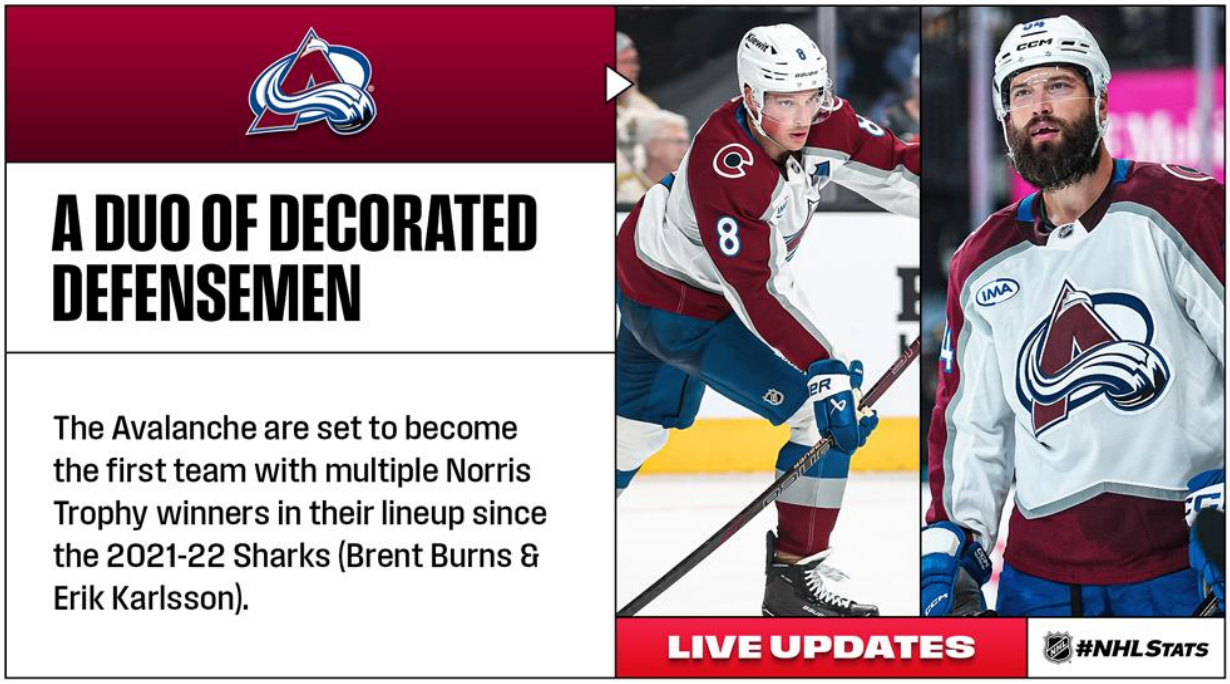
four goals to pass **Nicklas Lidstrom** (264) for eighth place on the League's all-time list among defensemen and six points to leapfrog **Bobby Orr** (915) for the 11th most by a blueliner in NHL history.

* Kopitar can also reach the 1,500-game milestone this season and needs 30 points to dethrone **Marcel Dionne** (1,307) atop the Kings' all-time list. Kopitar's 26 career points in campaign-opening games are the fifth most in League history behind **Jaromir Jagr**, two former Avalanche skaters and another Kings captain.



#NHLSTATS: LIVE UPDATES RETURNS FOR THREE-GAME OPENING NIGHT

Tuesday's edition of #NHLStats: Live Updates features more notes ahead of opening night, including **Cale Makar** (2024-25 & 2021-22) and **Brent Burns** (2016-17) primed to become the second set of James Norris Memorial Trophy winners to play at least one game together with the Avalanche/Nordiques (also **Rob Blake** & **Ray Bourque** in 2000-01). Burns was also part of the last instance for any team.



SEASON-OPENING QUICK CLICKS

* 2025-26 NHL Season-Opening Information from #NHLStats
* Approaching Milestones
* Season Openers
* Season Preview
* #NHLStats for NHL Players Heading to Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026



SECOND SEASON OF FACEOFF: INSIDE THE NHL NOW STREAMING ON PRIME VIDEO

Season 2 of ***FACEOFF: Inside the NHL*** premiered exclusively on Prime Video in more than 240 countries and territories worldwide. All six episodes of the critically-acclaimed docuseries continued to give unprecedented access to the NHL's biggest teams and most-compelling characters:

* **Episode 1:** Olympic-bound brothers Brady and Matthew Tkachuk
* **Episode 2:** Meredith Gaudreau and her late husband's teammates Sean Monahan, Zach Werenski
* **Episode 3:** Veterans Sidney Crosby and Anze Kopitar with young star Quinton Byfield
* **Episode 4:** William Nylander and Brendan Shanahan's "Shanaplan"
* **Episode 5:** Seth Jarvis and the Hurricanes hoping for more success
* **Episode 6:** Matthew Tkachuk and Brad Marchand facing Zach Hyman's Oilers in 2025 Final



QUICK CLICKS

* Milestones Within Reach This Week
* **Chris Pronger**, **Christine Simpson** join 'Prime Monday Night Hockey' team
* NHL Network's signature programming returns for 2025-26 season
* **Zdeno Chara** to have No. 33 retired by Bruins on Jan. 15
* Panthers receive Stanley Cup rings in championship celebration



Photos via X/@FlaPanthers