NHL MORNING SKATE FROM MILAN – FEB. 20, 2026



* On the one-year anniversary of the 4 Nations Face-Off Final between Team Canada and Team USA, the two countries each skated to victories in the semifinals at the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026 and set up a rematch for the gold medal on Sunday.

* Team Finland (gold in 2022) and Team Slovakia (bronze in 2022) will go head-to-head in the bronze medal game Saturday – two countries that skated to victories in the medal round and two of the three to capture medals at the last Olympics in Beijing.

* Team Canada rallied past Team Finland with a multi-goal, come-from-behind win after the NHL's top-two scoring leaders in 2025-26, **Connor McDavid** and **Nathan MacKinnon**, helped their country advance to the gold medal game in the final seconds of regulation.

* Blue Jackets defenseman **Zach Werenski** assisted on half of Team USA's six goals and helped his country clinch their third appearance in a gold medal game at an Olympics with NHL participation.



ANOTHER DRAMATIC COMEBACK WIN PROPELS CANADA TO GOLD MEDAL GAME

Nearly 48 hours after Golden Knights forward **Mitch Marner** capped Team Canada's come-from-behind, overtime victory in the quarterfinals, it was the combination of three-time Hart Memorial Trophy winner **Connor McDavid** (0-2—2) and 4 Nations Face-Off MVP **Nathan MacKinnon** (1-0—1) that lifted the country – without captain **Sidney Crosby** in the lineup – to the gold medal contest at the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026 thanks to a two-goal rally and go-ahead goal with 36 seconds remaining in regulation.

* Team Canada, the fourth team to register a multi-goal comeback win in an Olympic Games featuring NHL players – and first to do so in the semifinals – looks to remain perfect in gold medal games in that scenario after finishing atop the podium in each of their previous three appearances (2014, 2010 & 2002). Those three gold medals are already the most among all teams, ahead of Team Sweden (2006) and Team Czechia (1998).



* MacKinnon, who returns to action with the Avalanche on Feb. 25, continues his pursuit of his first career Art Ross Trophy in 2025-26 (40-53—93 in 55 GP) – a season that has seen 10 go-ahead goals within the final 45 seconds of regulation. Each of the NHL's past five campaigns has had a double-digit total at this stage of a season (908 GP).

* McDavid, closing in on his ninth career 100-point season and sixth consecutive once the Oilers also resume their season on Feb. 25 (34-62—96 in 58 GP), potted his record-setting fifth consecutive multi-point game and established a single-tournament record for points in Olympic Games involving NHL players (2-11—13 in 5 GP) – breaking a tie with Finland's **Teemu Selanne** (6-5—11 in 2006) and **Saku Koivu** (3-8-11 in 2006).

* The Oilers captain, with a secondary helper on Canada's first tally to kickstart the comeback and the primary on MacKinnon's game winner, became the 12th player with 10-plus career assists during Olympics with NHL involvement despite appearing in just his fifth outing. Every other skater with a double-digit total has played between 14 and 30 career games.



A SIX-GOAL SHOWING FROM TEAM USA SENDS COUNTRY TO GOLD MEDAL GAME

Eleven Americans found the score sheet – including five who tallied multi-point outings – to send Team USA to the gold medal game in an Olympics involving NHL players for the first time since 2010. Their six-goal showing was led by Blue Jackets defenseman **Zach Werenski** (0-3—3) and Devils forward **Jack Hughes** (2-0—2).



* Werenski tied the most points by an American in a playoff game during an Olympics featuring NHL players, matching **Ryan Suter** (0-3—3 on Feb. 19, 2014). He also tied Suter for the most assists by an American defenseman *in any game* during an Olympics with NHL players and finished one back of the record by any blueliner, set by Latvia's **Sandis Ozolinsh** (4 on Feb. 10, 2002). The Blue Jackets veteran entered Milano Cortina 2026 with 20-42—62, the most points by a defenseman before an Olympic break. He tallied 1-1—2 prior to the semifinals, yet with his three-point outing he moved into a tie for second in scoring among blueliners.

* Hughes' first goal of the game came 19 seconds before Golden Knights forward **Jack Eichel** scored, which marked the second-fastest two tallies by Team USA at an Olympics with NHL players (0:15 on Feb. 16, 2010). Hughes tied **Patrick Kane** (Feb. 26, 2010) and **Zach Parise** (Feb. 24, 2010) for the most goals by an American during a playoff game in an Olympics featuring NHL players. With three tallies so far through this tournament, Hughes is one shy of tying Parise (4 in 2010) for the most by a Devils player in a single Olympic Games.

* The other Hughes brother and Wild defenseman, **Quinn**, collected his sixth assist of the tournament, which is tied for the third most among all players behind **Connor McDavid** (11 w/ CAN) and **Lucas Raymond** (8 w/ SWE). He also matched **Duncan Keith** (6 in 2010) for the most by a defenseman in a single Olympics with NHL players. The Wild blueliner will carry a five-game point streak into the gold medal game – when he returns to NHL action on Feb. 26, Hughes will enter with a 10-game point and assist streak from prior to the Olympic break. He entered Milano Cortina 2026 fresh off establishing a franchise record for longest assist streak and an NHL mark for the lengthiest by a defenseman in their first season with a franchise.



TEAM CANADA, USA WILL MEET FOR A CHANCE AT OLYMPIC GOLD AGAIN

Team Canada and Team USA each captured a berth into the gold medal game at Milano Cortina 2026 on the one-year anniversary of the 4 Nations Face-Off championship game, where **Connor McDavid**

scored 8:18 into overtime to lift the Canadians past their longtime international hockey rivals. The contest will feature 27 different NHL teams represented between the two countries.



* Sunday's gold medal game will be the sixth all-time meeting between Team Canada and Team USA in the Winter Olympics with NHL involvement, following the 2014 semifinals, 2010 gold medal game, 2010 round robin, 2002 gold medal game and 1998 round robin.

* Team Canada has its sights on a fourth gold medal in Olympics featuring NHL players – the most among all countries. Team Sweden (2006) and Team Czechia (1998) are the only other countries to finish atop the podium in that scenario.

* Team USA will be appearing in its third gold medal game during Olympics involving NHL players (also 2010 & 2002). They hold the second-most appearances in that scenario behind Team Canada which will be making its fourth. They have only won gold at an Olympics twice ever: 1980 and 1960.

TEAM FINLAND, SLOVAKIA SET FOR BRONZE MEDAL REMATCH FROM 2010 OLYMPICS

Team Finland and Team Slovakia will meet for a shot at an Olympic medal for the second time with NHL players following 2010, when the Finns captured bronze in what was the only meeting between the two countries at an Olympics with NHL players prior to their Group B matchup earlier at Milano Cortina 2026 (4-1 W for SVK).



* In their bronze medal game in 2010, Team Slovakia took a 3-1 lead into the third period before Team Finland spurred a rally that saw it score four unanswered goals, highlighted by the tying and go-ahead markers by **Olli Jokinen**. Team Finland would end up capturing bronze with a 5-3 win in what would be the only multi-goal, third-period comeback victory at an Olympics with NHL participation before the Finns did it again in the quarterfinals at Milan (3-2 OT W vs. SUI).

* Team Slovakia won the most recent bronze medal at the Olympics when Canadiens forward **Juraj Slafkovský** scored the medal-clinching goal in 2022 – the same year Team Finland won gold. The Finns, however, won bronze in the last two Olympics featuring NHL players, a 5-0 victory over Team USA in 2014 and a 5-3 win over Team Slovakia in 2010.



WHAT'S TRENDING: MILANO CORTINA 2026

With all 32 NHL teams represented in the semifinals, many trends from the NHL regular season have carried over into the Olympic tournament:

* The eight comeback wins are the second most in a single Olympic tournament featuring NHL players, behind 1998 (12). **41% of NHL games this season have been comeback wins.**

* The three third-period comeback wins are the second most in a single Olympic tournament featuring NHL players, behind 1998 (5). **16% of NHL games this season have been third-period comeback wins.**

* Team Canada became the first team to register multiple comeback wins in the playoff round of a single Olympic tournament featuring NHL players. **Canadiens captain Nick Suzuki has watched his club register an NHL-leading 19 comeback wins this season.**

* The four one-goal games through the quarterfinals and semifinals combined are tied for the most in a single Olympic tournament with NHL players, alongside 2002. **45% of NHL games this season have been decided by one goal**.

* Team USA scored six goals in a semifinals contest that featured 8. The goals-per-game rate at the 2026 Olympics is 6.4, which is nearly identical to the **2025-26 NHL season average (6.2)**.

QUICK CLICKS

* **Sidney Crosby** could return for Team Canada in Olympic gold medal game
* Women's gold medal in hockey an inspiration to **Hughes** family, men's team ahead of semis
* Finland's effort bold, but it won't play for gold at Olympics
* **Mark Messier**, **Tom Brady**, **Billie Jean King** attend women's 2026 Olympics gold medal game

ICYMI: PODCAST ROUND UP

* **Never Offside with Julie & Cat** (Feb. 20): Jarvis' buddies join; Olympic obsessions, BTS in Milan
* **NHL Unscripted with Virk and Demers** (Feb. 19): Daccord Breaks Down the Olympic Semis
* **NHL @TheRink** (Feb. 19): From Milan; Olympic Quarterfinal Reaction, Crosby Injury
* **100% Hockey with Millard & Shannon** (Feb. 19): The Final Four Are Set — Olympic Breakdown
* **La Tasse de Café LNH** (Feb. 18): Olympiques: Le Canada survit aux quarts de finale
* **100% Hockey with Millard & Shannon** (Feb. 18): Quarterfinal Pressure — Canada, USA Advances
* **100% Hockey with Millard & Shannon** (Feb. 17): Olympic Quarterfinal Preview
* **100% Hockey with Millard & Shannon** (Feb. 16): Off Day Before Elimination
* **NHL Schlagschuss** (Feb. 16): Spezial: Olympische Winterspiele 2026
* **NHL Längs Sargen** (Feb. 16): Nu höjs OS-insatserna
* **La Tasse de Café LNH** (Feb. 15): Olympiques: Place aux choses sérieuses!
* **100% Hockey with Millard & Shannon** (Feb. 15): Canada's Strength, USA's Challenge
* **100% Hockey with Millard & Shannon** (Feb. 14): Olympic Standings Shift & Goal Differential
* **100% Hockey with Millard & Shannon** (Feb. 13): Olympic Hockey Coverage with Ken Hitchcock