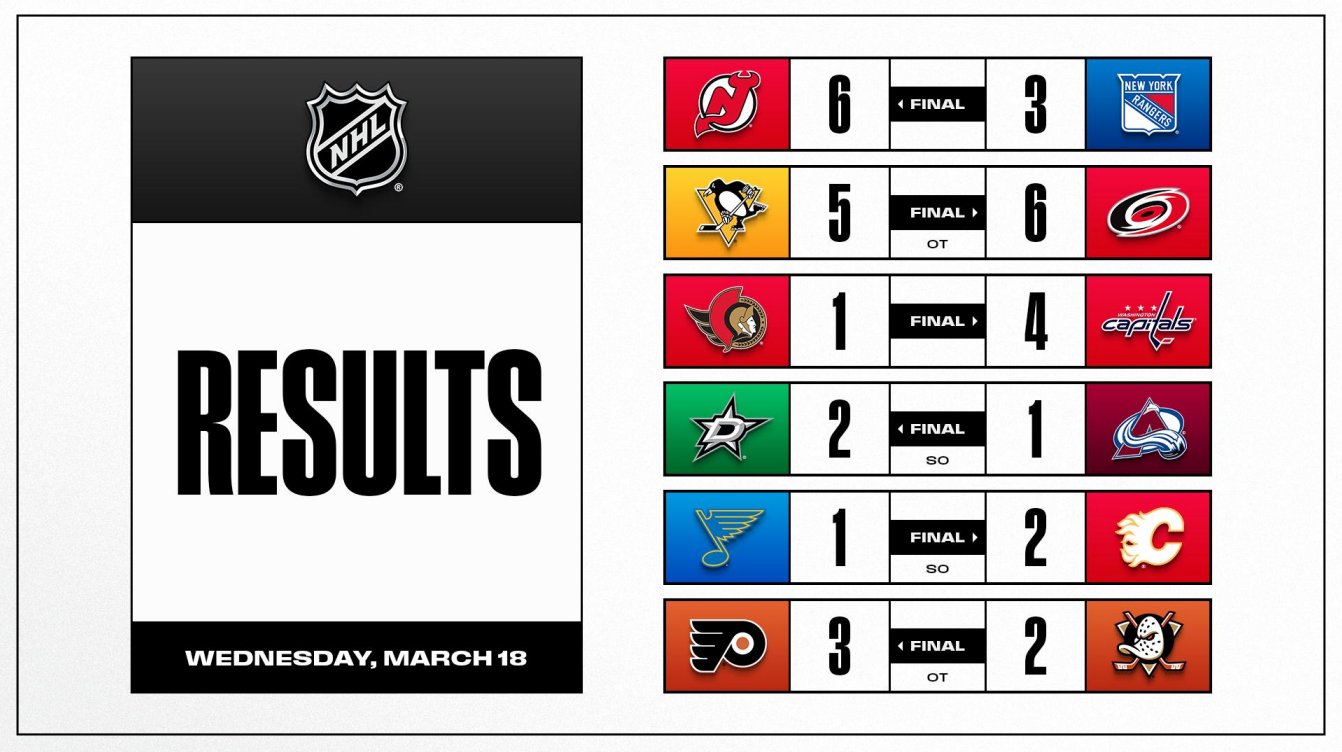
NHL MORNING SKATE – MARCH 19, 2026



* The Hurricanes outlasted the Penguins in a third period that featured a record-tying four game-tying goals. Carolina earned the NHL's 67th comeback win in the final five minutes of regulation, which tied the second most in an entire season in League history with 230 games still left to contest in 2025-26.

* The Stars defeated the Avalanche in a shootout to move within two points of Colorado at the top of the League standings. Overall, four contests required extra time Wednesday, bringing this season's total to 281 – the most at this stage of a campaign (1,082 GP) in NHL history.

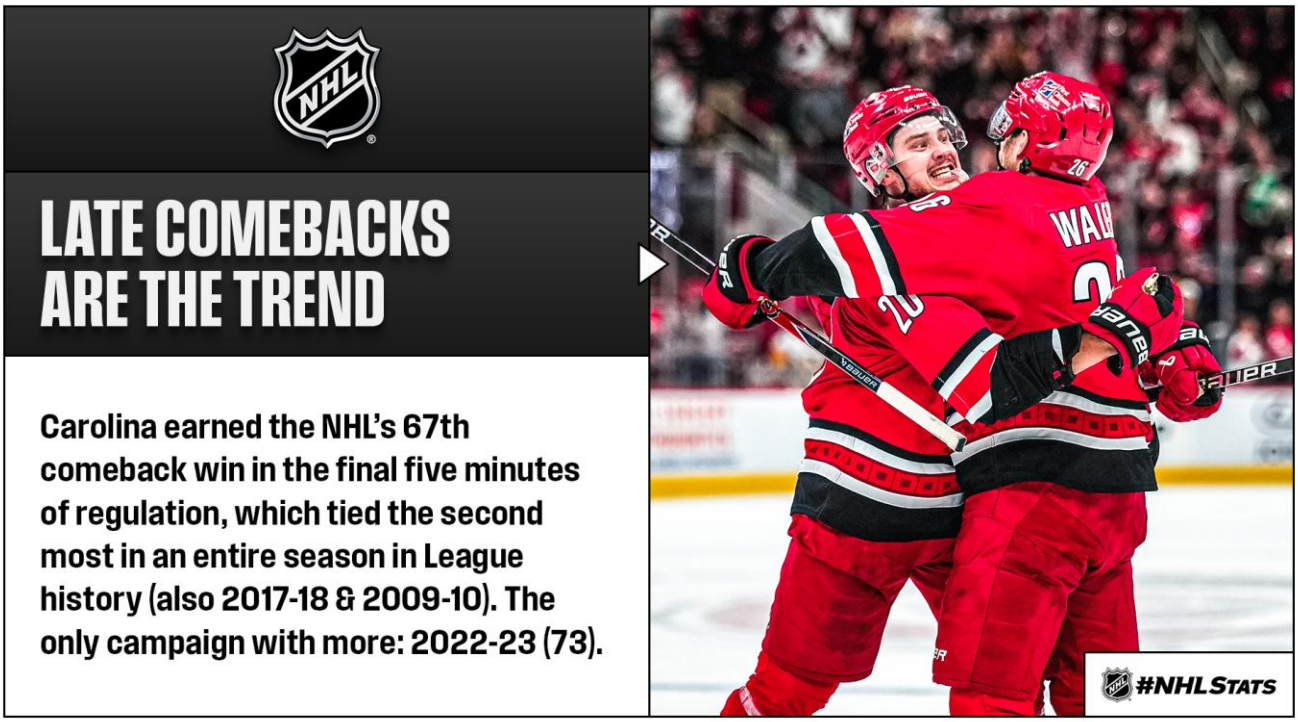
* Thursday's slate is highlighted by a two-pack on ESPN+ that closes with a pivotal game in the Western Conference playoff race between the Pacific Division's third-place Golden Knights and the Mammoth, who hold the first Wild Card position.



HURRICANES OUTLAST PENGUINS IN A THIRD PERIOD FOR THE RECORD BOOKS

In a contest that featured five game-tying goals – and four in the third period – it was the Hurricanes who outlasted the Penguins in a battle between the top two teams in the Metropolitan Division thanks to **Sean Walker**'s first career overtime goal. Carolina and Pittsburgh matched the most game-tying goals in the final frame in NHL history – the only other contests to feature as many: the Flyers-Rangers on March 26, 2024, Blackhawks-Blues on March 15, 1988 and Capitals-Penguins on Nov. 12, 1975.

* Wednesday marked the 19th consecutive game day the Hurricanes (43-19-6, 92 points) have ranked first in the Eastern Conference standings, which is their second-longest run in franchise history trailing only a 37-day stretch in 2005-06 en route to their first Stanley Cup. The only team to lead their conference for more consecutive game days this season is Colorado (117 from Oct. 31 to present).



* **Sebastian Aho** collected an assist on Walker's overtime goal to become the third player in Hurricanes/Whalers history to record 700 points, joining **Ron Francis** (1,175) and **Eric Staal** (775). Aho (307-393—700 in 745 GP) became the fifth-fastest Finnish player to reach the milestone behind **Jari Kurri** (483 GP), **Teemu Selanne** (541 GP), **Mikko Rantanen** (645 GP) and **Aleksander Barkov** (728 GP).

STARS DEFEAT RIVAL AVALANCHE IN SHOOTOUT, MOVE WITHIN TWO POINTS OF FIRST

A showdown between the NHL's top two teams once again needed extra time to decide a victor, with **Wyatt Johnston** finding the back of the net in the shootout to lift Dallas (43-15-10, 96 points) to a comeback win against Colorado (44-13-10, 98 points). The Stars are now just two points back of the League-leading Avalanche after sitting 13 points back from them on Jan. 19. The two Central Division rivals will meet one last time in what could be a pivotal contest on April 4 (3 p.m. ET on ABC).

* Dallas improved to 31-8-5 against Western Conference teams this season, which is the most wins by any club against intraconference opponents. The next closest teams are Colorado (26-4-7) and Minnesota (26-9-7).



OVECHKIN, HUTSON SCORE IN #NHLSTATS: LIVE UPDATES

Alex Ovechkin scored to move within one of becoming the second player in League history with 1,000 goals (regular season & playoffs) on the same day that **Cole Hutson** scored his first career goal in his NHL debut. Hutson became Ovechkin's first teammate that was born after the Capitals captain's NHL debut on Oct. 5, 2005 and, alongside his brother **Lane**, became the third set of brothers in the past 30 years to each record a point in their first career contest. Click here for more notes on both Ovechkin and Hutson in #NHLStats: Live Updates.



QUICK CLICKS

* **Trevor Zegras** receives tribute from Ducks during 1st game back in Anaheim
* **Cole Hutson**'s parents have priceless reaction to Capitals defenseman's 1st goal
* **Cole Eiserman** signs 3-year, entry-level contract with Islanders
* Post-Olympic buzz fueling tight races for Stanley Cup Playoffs, Commissioner **Gary Bettman** says
* Bruins-Devils deliver ESPN's most-viewed regular-season game in the new rights deal



TIGHT WEST PLAYOFF RACE AT FOREFRONT OF ESPN+ BROADCAST

Thursday's 11-game slate includes an intriguing two-pack exclusively on ESPN+ that opens with the Blackhawks visiting the Wild in the back half of a home-and-home set that started with Minnesota's 4-3 overtime win on Tuesday and closes with a pivotal game in the Western Conference playoff race when the Pacific Division's third-place Golden Knights (31-23-14, 76 points) host the Mammoth (35-27-6, 76 points), who hold the first Wild Card position.



* Brothers **Nick** and **Marcus Foligno**, who became teammates for the first time at the NHL Trade Deadline, continue their efforts with the NHL, NHLPA, the V Foundation for Cancer Research and the Wild through Hockey Fights Cancer powered by the V Foundation for cancer research to raise funds for breast cancer research in honor of their late mother, **Janis Foligno**. Fans are encouraged to join the Foligno Face-Off by donating $17, $71, a nod to the brothers' jersey numbers, or any amount you can give. Click here for more information.

* The Pacific Division's third-place Golden Knights enter Thursday two points back of the division-leading Ducks (37-27-4, 78 points) as Vegas looks to climb back towards the top of a division it led as recently as March 14. The Golden Knights, who are looking to qualify for the postseason for the eighth time in the franchise's nine-season history, are also only five points ahead of the Kings (28-24-15, 71 points), who have a game in hand and sit as the first team ***outside*** the playoff line (fourth in the Pacific Division).

* The Mammoth and the Kraken (31-27-9, 71 points), the NHL's two newest franchises, hold the first and second Wild Card position, respectively, with the closest four teams chasing them – all within four points of the final playoff position – also in action on Thursday.

* ***Did You Know?*** The playoff line in the Western Conference has been one point or a tiebreaker every day since March 7. The "playoff line" is the difference between the lowest ranked playoff team and the first team outside the bracket.

WESTERN CONFERENCE WILD CARD RACE

ENTERING PLAY MARCH 19

TEAM	RECORD	REMAINING GP	VS. ON THURS
(WC1) MAMMOTH	35-27-6 (76 PTS)	14	VGK
(WC2) KRAKEN	31-27-9 (71 PTS)	15	NSH
KINGS	28-24-15 (71 PTS)	15	PHI
SHARKS	32-28-6 (70 PTS)	16	BUF
PREDATORS	30-28-9 (69 PTS)	15	SEA
JETS	28-28-11 (67 PTS)	15	BOS



ALSO ON TAP THURSDAY...

The rest of Thursday's slate also features a Stanley Cup Final rematch, several clubs jockeying for postseason positioning in the Eastern Conference Wild Card race and the streaking Sabres looking to push their lead atop the Atlantic Division

* **Connor McDavid** (398-799—1,197 in 781 GP) can reach the 400-goal and 800-assist milestones when the Oilers face the Panthers in a rematch of the past two Stanley Cup Finals – Florida owns a 2-1-0 edge over Edmonton in the previous regular-season meetings between the clubs since their first

Final in 2024. McDavid can become the fifth Oilers player with at least 400 goals and just the second with 800-plus assists.

* A pivotal Atlantic Division matchup between Original Six clubs pits Montreal (A3; 37-20-10, 84 points) against Detroit (WC2; 37-23-8, 82 points). A regulation win by the Red Wings could put them above the Canadiens in the standings and into the Atlantic Division's top three, depending on the result of the Bruins (WC1; 37-23-8, 82 points) game against the Jets. Also in action tonight is Columbus (35-21-11, 81 points), which is riding a 10-game point streak (6-0-4) – the League's longest active run – and is sitting one point below the playoff line.

* ***Did You Know?*** The "playoff line" in the Eastern Conference has been two points or fewer for all but four days since the Olympic break, including every day since March 9.

* The Sabres set a franchise record their last time out by extending their road point streak to 11 games (10-0-1). They'll look to push that stretch to 12 when they visit **Macklin Celebrini** (60-98—158), who's nearing 100 career assists, and the Sharks. Buffalo can become the third team this season with a road point streak of at least a dozen contests (TBL & DAL: 13 GP).

