

STANLEY CUP
PLAYOFFS

FRIDAY, MAY 29

MORNING SKATE

Canadiens familiar with overcoming 3-1 series deficits

Hurricanes eye first Stanley Cup Final berth in 20 years

How they were built: 2026 Golden Knights

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* The Canadiens will need to overcome a 3-1 series deficit to advance to the Stanley Cup Final – a feat only one team in NHL history has done to date – but franchise history may provide inspiration. Montreal’s three series victories when trailing 3-1 are tied for the most in NHL history.

* The Hurricanes are within one win of returning to the Stanley Cup Final for the first time in 20 years and can do so with a familiar face at the helm. **Rod Brind’Amour** can achieve rare status should Carolina advance in its pursuit of a second championship.

* #NHLStats takes a closer look at how the Western Conference champion Golden Knights were built ahead of the franchise’s third-ever berth in the Stanley Cup Final.



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CANADIENS LOOK TO KEEP CUP ASPIRATIONS ALIVE IN GAME 5

The Canadiens are in the midst of the franchise's best stretch as the visitor in their 109-year history and will need to continue that success to become the second team in NHL history to overcome a 3-1 series deficit to advance to the Stanley Cup Final. Montreal (7-3 on the road), no strangers to overcoming a 3-1 deficit in a best-of-seven series, sits one road win shy of establishing a [single-postseason franchise record](#).

EASTERN CONFERENCE FINAL 2026

CANADIENS HAVE RALLIED FROM 3-1 BEFORE...

The Canadiens have overcome a 3-1 series deficit three times in franchise history (2021 R1, 2010 CQF & 2004 CQF) - tied with the Canucks (2003 CQF, 1994 CQF & 1992 DSF) and Rangers (2022 R1, 2015 R2 & 2014 R2) for the most by one franchise in NHL history.

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2021 First Round vs. Maple Leafs

The Canadiens and Maple Leafs met in the playoffs for the first time in 42 years, with Toronto entering as the No. 1 seed in the Scotia North Division. **Carey Price** rallied Montreal to three straight wins (1.83 GAA, .945 SV% in Games 5-7) and helped Montreal become the first team in NHL history to win consecutive games while facing elimination, despite surrendering a multi-goal, third-period lead in each contest (Games 5-6).

2010 Conference Quarterfinals vs. Capitals

Nicklas Backstrom (5-4—9) and **Alex Ovechkin** (4-4—8) combined for 17 points through the first four games in helping Washington take a 3-1 series lead before the tides shifted in Game 5 as **Jaroslav Halak** rebounded with a 37-save effort. Halak followed that up with 53- and 41-save efforts in Game 6 and Game 7, respectively, to help the Canadiens become the second team in as many seasons to eliminate the Presidents' Trophy winner in the opening round. Halak stopped 131 of 134 shots against in Games 5-7, with his 53-save performance in Game 6 slotting in as the second-highest save total by any goaltender in a *regulation playoff game* on record (since 1955-56). Halak's 41-save showing in the finale was the second-highest Game 7 save total on record for a Canadiens goaltender (behind **Ken Dryden**'s 46 saves in the 1971 Quarterfinals).

2004 Conference Quarterfinals vs. Bruins

The Canadiens and Bruins met in the Stanley Cup Playoffs for the second time in three postseasons but required seven games to decide a series winner for the fifth time in the NHL's expansion era. Boston built a 3-1 advantage after capturing multiple overtime wins in a single series for the first time since the 1992 Division Semifinals, but captain **Saku Koivu** – with 2-5—7 through Games 5-7 – became the first Canadiens player with three consecutive multi-point games in the playoffs since **Larry Robinson** (3 GP in 1987) to help his club complete the comeback. Montreal first scored five or more goals in back-to-back elimination games for the second time in franchise history (Games 2-3 of 1942 QF) before **Jose Theodore** (32 saves) became the second Canadiens goaltender with a Game 7 shutout (also **Gump Worsley**: Game 7 of 1965 SCF).

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CANADIENS RALLY TO BEGIN IN RALEIGH?

The Canadiens can join the 2000 Devils (vs. PHI) as the second team in NHL history to overcome a 3-1 series deficit to advance to the Stanley Cup Final. New Jersey eventually went on to capture the Cup (4-2 vs. DAL).



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HURRICANES ON THE VERGE OF FINAL FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 20 YEARS

The Hurricanes have rebounded from a series-opening loss with three consecutive victories and now sit one win shy of advancing to the Stanley Cup Final for the third time in franchise history and first in two decades (also 2006 & 2002). Carolina can become the 12th team in NHL history to go 20 or more years from one Final appearance to the next – which includes nearly every series since 2018, excluding 2024 and 2025.

YEARS FROM ONE STANLEY CUP FINAL APPEARANCE TO THE NEXT			
NHL HISTORY			
TEAM	LAST	END OF DROUGHT	YEARS
ST. LOUIS BLUES	1970	2019	49
DETROIT RED WINGS	1966	1995	29
MONTREAL CANADIENS	1993	2021	28
FLORIDA PANTHERS	1996	2023	27
BUFFALO SABRES	1975	1999	24
NEW YORK RANGERS	1950	1972	22
COLORADO AVALANCHE	2001	2022	21
BOSTON BRUINS	1990	2011	21
DALLAS STARS	2000	2020	20
WASHINGTON CAPITALS	1998	2018	20

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*NY RANGERS ALSO WENT 20 YEARS: 1994 TO 2014

* 2026 HURRICANES CAN JOIN THIS LIST

* A series-clinching victory in Game 5 would also mark the 100th Stanley Cup Playoffs win in Hurricanes *team history* – a total that regularly features current head coach **Rod Brind'Amour**. Brind'Amour, who captained the franchise during its 2006 championship, has competed in 97 of the 99 Hurricanes postseason victories to date: 39 as a player and 58 as a head coach.

* Brind'Amour can become the first individual in the NHL's expansion era (since 1968) to reach the Stanley Cup Final with the same franchise as a captain and head coach. Overall, only three individuals in NHL history have captured a championship in both scenarios: **Toe Blake** (MTL), **Hap Day** (TOR) and **Cooney Weiland** (BOS).

GOLDEN KNIGHTS: HOW THEY WERE BUILT

For the third time in nine NHL seasons the Golden Knights are back in the Stanley Cup Final on the hunt for the franchise's second championship after winning in 2023. A closer look at [how the team was built](#) reveals a roster heavy on key additions by trade, which has been a trademark of the Vegas franchise since joining the NHL in 2017-18, and just two regulars who were drafted and developed by the franchise. The roster also returns 11 players who were part of the championship team in 2023.

Acquired Via Trade

Sixteen key pieces to the Vegas roster were acquired via trade including captain and all-time playoff leading scorer **Mark Stone** (2019 trade), current playoff leading scorer **Mitch Marner** (2025 trade), current playoff assists leader **Jack Eichel** (2021 trade) and current playoff goals leader (tied) **Brett**



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Howden (2021 trade). The all-time leading playoff point producer among Vegas defensemen, **Shea Theodore**, was also acquired via trade in 2017.

Acquired Via Free Agency

Four parts to the Golden Knights' Final-bound team were signed in free agency, comprised of three in 2025 – **Carter Hart**, **Brandon Saad** and **Dylan Coghlan** – as well as **Ben Hutton** in 2021. Hart has backstopped Vegas to all 12 wins this postseason and [set a franchise record](#) with a six-game winning streak, one he started in Game 5 of the Second Round and will carry into the 2026 Stanley Cup Final.

Acquired Via Expansion Draft

William Karlsson and **Brayden McNabb** are the two longest-standing Golden Knights after joining the franchise through the expansion draft nine years ago and helping the club win its first-ever championship in 2023. Karlsson ranks among the top three on many of Vegas' all-time playoff lists: third for [goals](#) (32), fourth for [assists](#) (44) and tied for second in [points](#) (76). Meanwhile, McNabb ranks second in postseason [assists](#) and [points](#) among defensemen in franchise history.

Drafted by the Franchise

Two members of the roster were drafted by the franchise: **Kaedan Korczak** (No. 41 in 2019) and **Pavel Dorofeyev** (No. 79 in 2019). Defenseman Korczak has made an impact through Vegas' run to the Final with three assists, including one in their series-clinching game in the First Round as well as a multi-point outing in Game 3 during the Western Conference Final. Dorofeyev has been leading the charge in goals this postseason alongside his teammate Howden – the two are co-leading the NHL in goals (10) through the 2026 Stanley Cup Playoffs. Dorofeyev set a franchise mark for fewest games to 10 goals in a playoff year (13), besting Karlsson (17 GP in 2023).

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DOROFYEV TIED ATOP NHL GOALS LEAD

Pavel Dorofeyev helped Vegas become the 17th team in NHL history, and fifth since 1998, to enter the championship series with multiple 10-goal scorers alongside the 2024 Oilers, 2018 Capitals, 2009 Penguins and 2008 Red Wings.

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LOOKING AHEAD TO THE DRAFT: SMITS CAN JOIN RARE COMPANY

Alberts Smits is the top-ranked international defenseman for the 2026 Upper Deck NHL Draft. Smits, who turned 18 in December, played big minutes in European men's leagues in Finland with Jukurit (6-7—13 in 38 GP) and then on loan in Germany with Munchen where he was a strong playoff performer



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(2-4—6 in 11 playoff games). Smits also hit the international trifecta this season, representing his home country of Latvia at the World Junior Championship, Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026 and the World Championship was eliminated from the quarterfinals on Thursday. Smits could surpass **Zemgus Girgensens** (No. 14 in 2012) as the highest selected Latvian player in NHL Draft history.



* Round 1 of the 2026 Upper Deck NHL Draft will take place on Friday, June 26 (7 p.m. ET, ESPN, ESPN+, SN, TVAS). Rounds 2-7 will be held on Saturday, June 27 (11 a.m. ET, NHLN, ESPN+, SN).

* [CLICK HERE](#) for #NHLStats Pack: Looking Ahead to the 2026 Upper Deck NHL Draft

PLAYERS DRAFTED 1ST ROUND AFTER PLAYING IN OLYMPICS SAME YEAR

ALBERTS SMITS (PICTURED) COULD JOIN THIS LIST IN 2026			
PLAYER	OLYMPIC YEAR	COUNTRY	PICK
JURAJ SLAVKOVSKY	2022	SLOVAKIA	1ST BY MTL
SIMON NEMEC	2022	SLOVAKIA	2ND BY NJD
RASMUS DAHLIN	2018	SWEDEN	1ST BY BUF
DARIUS KASPARAITIS	1992	UNIFIED TEAM	5TH BY NYI
SERGEI BAUTIN	1992	UNIFIED TEAM	17TH BY WIN
KIRK MULLER	1984	CANADA	2ND BY NJD
EDDIE OLCZYK	1984	USA	3RD BY CHI
AL IAFRATE	1984	USA	4TH BY TOR
CRAIG REDMOND	1984	CANADA	6TH BY LAK
J.J. DAIGNEAULT	1984	CANADA	10TH BY VAN

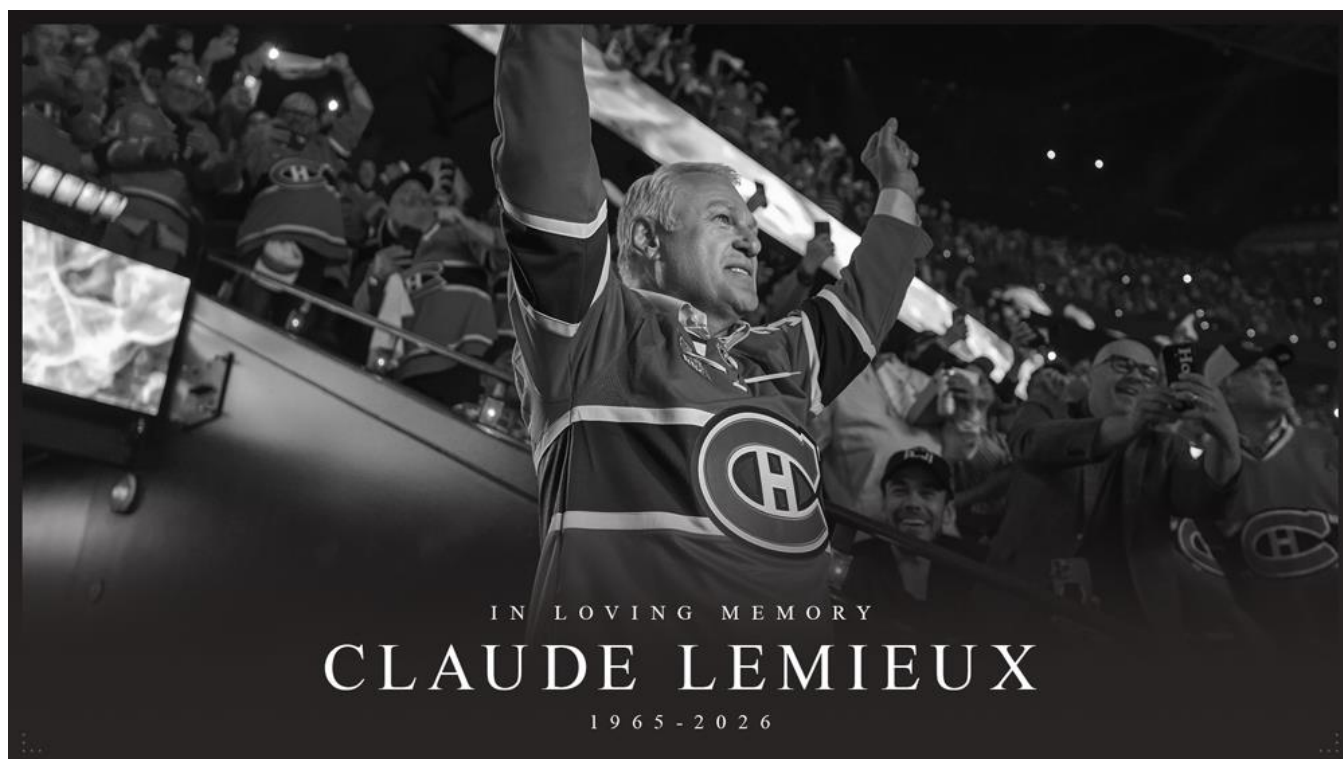
QUICK CLICKS

- * [Stanley Cup Final to begin June 2 or June 4](#)
- * [NHL EDGE stats: Frederik Andersen's case for Conn Smythe Trophy](#)
- * [COL-VGK delivers most-viewed WCF Game 3 since 2002](#)
- * [Claude Lemieux dies at 60, was 4-time Stanley Cup champion](#)
- * [Commissioner Gary Bettman Statement on the Passing of Claude Lemieux](#)



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IN LOVING MEMORY
CLAUDE LEMIEUX
1965 - 2026



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