

NHL MORNING SKATE: STANLEY CUP FINAL EDITION – JUNE 2, 2026



STANLEY CUP FINAL

TUESDAY, JUNE 2

MORNING SKATE

Hurricanes, Golden Knights set for Game 1

Parallels between perennial contenders highlighted

Stanley Cup Final returns to Raleigh after 20 years

STANLEY CUP FINAL

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* It has been more than seven months since Carolina and Vegas clashed, but they take a combined 24-5 playoff record into Game 1 of the Stanley Cup Final tonight, which will determine which streaking team pulls one win closer to a second championship.

* The parallels of these perennial contenders extend well beyond the number of Cups (1) and Final appearances (3) each franchise has, with common threads between their coaches and captains, and even within their shared success this postseason.

* For the first time in 20 years, the Stanley Cup Final will be played in Carolina, starting at 8 p.m. ET on ABC, Sportsnet, TVA Sports and CBC. In addition to a full building in Raleigh ([plus more at two official outdoor Watch Parties](#)), fans will head to T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas for a [Game 1 Watch Party](#).



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* For the third year in a row, the NHL in partnership with P-X-P will produce every game of the Stanley Cup Final for NHL in ASL, a three-time Sports Emmy-nominated alternate telecast dedicated completely to the Deaf and hard of hearing community using American Sign Language. The telecasts will be available in the U.S. to stream exclusively on the ESPN App for ESPN Unlimited plan subscribers and Sportsnet+ in Canada.

ONE LAST HELPING OF #NHLSTATS BEFORE GAME 1

The parallels continue [from the captains](#) to the head coaches – despite the lengths of their tenures – for two perennial contenders with nine Conference Finals/Semifinals appearances between them since 2018 (Vegas: 5; Carolina: 4). Both are seeking their second Stanley Cup in their third trip to the Final – Carolina in its 46th season (28th as the Hurricanes) and Vegas in its ninth. They do so with a combined 24-5 record entering their first head-to-head meeting in seven months.

How They Got Here

* The Hurricanes' journey to the Final saw them become the [first team](#) to sweep the first two rounds under the best-of-seven format (since 1987), following a regular-season performance in which they occupied the No. 1 seed in their division from [Dec. 11](#) forward (plus first place in the East from [March 31 onward](#)). Their only playoff loss came off an [11-day break](#), as Carolina followed up becoming the [fifth team in NHL history](#) with an eight-game winning streak to start the playoffs by requiring the fewest contests by any club to reach the Final under the four-round best-of-seven format (13 GP).

* The Golden Knights' road to the Final featured a First Round series win against the Mammoth after a [head coaching change on March 29](#) and another six-game series victory versus the Ducks in the Second Round before sweeping the Presidents' Trophy-winning Avalanche during the Western Conference Final. Vegas became the seventh [team in NHL history to sweep a best-of-seven playoff round against the NHL's No. 1 seed](#), with **John Tortorella** serving as head coach for two of the last three clubs to achieve the feat.



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TORTORELLA CREDITS PLAYERS FOR LONG RUN

“It’s them. It’s not me or the coaching staff. It’s them ... That room self sustains. That’s why they’re in the Final again this year, and that’s why they won it in ‘23, and been so successful.”

- Golden Knights head coach John Tortorella

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The Goalies and Coaches Behind the Wins

* Guarding the crease for Vegas and Carolina throughout the postseason have been **Carter Hart** (12-4) and **Frederik Andersen** (12-1), respectively. Hart enters his first Final on a six-game winning streak and can become the eighth different goaltender in Stanley Cup Playoffs history to record seven straight wins in his first season with a team – the last to do so was **Dwayne Roloson** (8 GP in 2011 w/ TBL). Andersen can become the first goaltender in NHL history to win 13 of his first 14 games of a postseason as he makes his first Final appearance after 650 total NHL games played, which would rank second among active netminders for most games before winning the Stanley Cup (**Sergei Bobrovsky**: 794 in 2024).

* While their tenures vary drastically, there are parallels behind the benches between **Rod Brind'Amour** and Tortorella. Brind'Amour (2006 w/ CAR as a player) and Tortorella (2004 w/ TBL) are both Stanley Cup champions, Jack Adams Trophy winners and each have [13 series wins](#) as a head coach. Brind'Amour can become the fourth individual in NHL history to win a Stanley Cup with the same franchise as a captain and head coach, following **Toe Blake** (w/ MTL), **Hap Day** (w/ TOR) and **Cooney Weiland** (w/ BOS), while Tortorella is looking to become the first head coach in NHL history to go 20+ years between Stanley Cup championships and second to win after taking over [in the club's final 10 games](#).



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BRIND'AMOUR ON BREAKING THROUGH

"I don't think we have broken through, you know what I mean? You've gotta win ... Nobody's gonna remember who comes second ... I appreciate that we have the opportunity to go ahead and win now."

- Hurricanes head coach Rod Brind'Amour

ROD BRIND'AMOUR

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* The parallels to Carolina's run in 2006 are there too: a veteran looking to end a long wait for another Cup: **Jordan Staal** (17 years) now and **Mark Recchi** (15 years) then; a top 10 pick seeking his first championship after exactly 16 seasons: **Taylor Hall** now and **Rod Brind'Amour** then; young forwards providing an offensive spark: **Jackson Blake** (age 22) now and **Eric Staal** (age 21) then.



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HOW THEY WERE BUILT

The 2026 Stanley Cup Final will be a showcase of two teams built in different ways: the [Golden Knights roster](#) features 16 players acquired via trade, while the [Hurricanes' playoff lineup](#) has a total of six players that were drafted by the franchise. Led by 2026 playoff scoring leader **Mitch Marner**, Vegas' 16 players acquired via trade are tied for the second most among all Stanley Cup finalists in NHL history, behind only the 1997 Flyers (17).

* Four of Carolina's top eight scorers entering the Final were drafted by the team, including **Jackson Blake** (No. 109 in 2021), **Seth Jarvis** (No. 13 in 2020), **Andrei Svechnikov** (No. 2 in 2018) and **Sebastian Aho** (No. 35 in 2015). Blake's 15 points are the second most in a single postseason by a Hurricanes/Whalers skater before age 22 (**Eric Staal**: 28 in 2006), while Aho [leads the franchise](#) in every major playoff scoring category.

* One of the trade acquisitions on Carolina is **Taylor Hall**. Nearly 16 years after being called first overall at the 2010 NHL Draft and 10 years after a famously one-for-one trade put him on a path that has included stops with seven NHL teams and a Hart Trophy-winning season, Hall will skate in his Stanley Cup Final debut. Not only that, but the 34-year-old will do so as the Hurricanes' leader for both [assists](#) and [points](#) in these playoffs as he approaches franchise records in each category ([adding to one he set in their Conference Finals clincher](#)). While the second-overall pick from 2010 (**Tyler Seguin**) lifted the Cup less than a year after the draft, the playoff grind has been just that for Hall – his 1,056 total NHL games played are the [most by a No. 1 pick before their first Final](#) since **Alex Ovechkin** in 2018, who capitalized by defeating Vegas. If Hall does the same, he will surpass current ESPN analyst **Erik Johnson** (14 seasons) for the most seasons by a No. 1 pick before hoisting the Cup.

STANLEY CUP FINAL 2026

A TOP PICK PURSUING THE TOP PRIZE

TAYLOR HALL

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FIRST STANLEY CUP FINAL AFTER 1,056 GAMES **2017-18 NHL MVP NOW WITH HIS 7TH TEAM** **HURRICANES SCORING LEADER THIS POSTSEASON**



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* Four “Golden Misfits” remain with Vegas in **William Karlsson, Brayden McNabb, Reilly Smith** and **Shea Theodore**. Theodore (4-7—11 in 16 GP) paces all defensemen in the 2026 Stanley Cup Final in points and is tied for the League lead in goals at his position this postseason. He also boasts a career total of 2-7—9 in 10 games during the Stanley Cup Final (0.90 P/GP), the seventh-highest point-per-game rate among all defensemen in NHL history during the championship series (min. 10 GP) – **Bobby Orr** paces that list (8-12—20 in 16 GP; 1.25 P/GP).

* Another trade pickup is **Tomas Hertl**, who got a taste of the Stanley Cup Final as a 22-year-old in 2016 with the Sharks, scoring the club’s first goal of the series in Game 1 but then was sidelined with an injury suffered in Game 2. Hertl also missed both the 2014 Olympics and 2016 World Cup of Hockey due to injury but, after his first 82-game season since 2021-22 (plus a trip to the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026), Hertl is back for another shot at the Cup. Among the more than 300 NHL goals in Hertl’s career are [four unforgettable tallies as a teenager](#) in October 2013, a series-extending winner against the Golden Knights in the [2019 First Round](#) (the first shorthanded double-overtime goal in NHL history) and a contribution to San Jose’s historic Game 7 rally two days later. The playoff grind in 2026 alone has seen Hertl snap a 29-game goalless drought in Game 4 against Anaheim, igniting a hot stick that has since collected at least one point in five of seven games entering the Final – including go-ahead goals in both victories that pushed Vegas to the brink of series wins ([Game 5 vs. ANA](#) & [Game 3 vs. COL](#)).



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#NHLSTATS: LIVE UPDATES READY FOR THE FINAL

The #NHLStats have kept rolling in Live Updates, with [playoff trends Saturday](#), [matchup notes Sunday](#), [player notables Monday](#) and [Stanley Cup Final Game 1 trends today](#). Check back daily – even on off days – for daily updates throughout the Final.



UPDATES FROM THE NHL DRAFT COMBINE IN BUFFALO

The 2026 NHL Scouting Combine presented by Fanatics is taking place this week at KeyBank Center and LECOM HarborCenter in Buffalo, with top-ranked North American skater **Gavin McKenna** [set to meet with at least eight teams](#). Check out the [NHL Draft hub on NHL.com](#) for more stories on the players who will have their names called June 26-27 in Buffalo.

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



MEDIA DAY COVERAGE ON NHL.COM

- * [Frederik Andersen preparing for Stanley Cup Final with heavy heart](#)
- * [Golden Knights, Hurricanes seek focus amid Stanley Cup Final spotlight](#)
- * [Rod Brind'Amour, John Tortorella have taken different paths to Stanley Cup Final](#)
- * [Stanley Cup Final blog: Noah Hanifin](#)
- * [Stanley Cup Final blog: Jordan Martinook](#)

QUICK CLICKS



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- * [The 2026 Western Conference Final on ESPN was the most-viewed since 2015 \(avg. 2.2M viewers\)](#)
- * [NHL Network announces wall-to-wall 2026 Stanley Cup Final programming](#)
- * [GRAMMY Award-winning duo **Brothers Osborne** to perform free concert outside Lenovo Center](#)



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