



**AMALIE Arena Media Clips**  
**Thursday, October 26, 2023**

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## **Alex Barre-Boulet is finding a fit on Lightning's top scoring line** **Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)**

TAMPA — As important as is the question about whether this is the season Alex Barre-Boulet finally sticks on the Lightning roster is the matter of where he best fits on the forward lines.

The 26-year-old wing has proven all he can in the AHL, coming off a career-high 84-point season in Syracuse. In training camp, the Lightning had him on the third line and second power play. But they put him on waivers just before their opening-night game; he wasn't claimed and was assigned to the Crunch.

An injury to forward Tyler Motte in the opener quickly presented Barre-Boulet with another opportunity with the Lightning. Back on the roster, he was put on a third line that didn't seem to take full advantage of his offensive skill.

With coach Jon Cooper looking for a spark in the second period of an Oct. 17 game in Buffalo, he shuffled his lines, putting Barre-Boulet on the top line alongside Brayden Point and Nikita Kucherov.

It's an experiment Cooper had tried before but didn't stick. This time it did.

Since being elevated to the top line, Barre-Boulet has scored in back-to-back games, including a heady redirection in Tuesday's 3-0 win over the Hurricanes.

"He's a great player, and he sees the ice really well," Point said. "And I think the more reps he gets, just the more confident he becomes, and he's just playing his game right now. And his game is dynamic, and he makes great plays. I think (Tuesday) was another really good one for him."

Barre-Boulet might not have been ready for a top-line role in the past, but he focused on improving his skating and getting stronger knowing that his sixth training camp with the team this year could be make or break. He also knew that with the losses of top-six forward Alex Killorn (free agency) and power-play threat Ross Colton (trade), this might be his best opportunity.

Since Barre-Boulet joined Point and Kucherov for the past three-plus games, the top line — which sputtered to open the season — has 11 more shot attempts (46) than allowed (35) in 5-on-5 play. That includes 19 scoring chances over the past two games, 12 from high-danger areas, most of any Lightning line over that stretch.

Over the past two games, against Toronto and Carolina, Barre-Boulet has two goals, seven shots on goal and six high-danger scoring chances.

Not only did Motte's injury open the door to Barre-Boulet's return to the roster, Steven Stamkos' two-game absence with a lower-body injury opened a top-six spot. Since Stamkos' return, Barre-Boulet not only has remained on the top line, he has continued to get better.

"He's got a pretty elite hockey IQ," Cooper said. "He has ability. He's done that at levels he's played at prior to the NHL, (shown) that he's got offensive instincts, and so you learn to play with these guys and where they want the puck and where they know you should put it, and he's slowly learning that.

"As you can see, he can finish. So you get him into these offensive situations and he can excel."

His goal against Carolina was a good example.

With less than three minutes left in the second period and the Lightning clinging to a one-goal lead, the Hurricanes' defense clamped down on Point and Kucherov as they entered the offensive zone on a rush. Point passed from the right circle to Barre-Boulet as he approached the left hash. Barre-Boulet ran out of runway as Carolina goaltender Pyotr Kochetkov closed off the near post with his right pad.

But Barre-Boulet stuck with the play, snapping a pass from behind the net to defenseman Darren Raddysh at the point. Carolina reset, and as Barre-Boulet sped to a soft spot just in front of the crease, Point drifted to the left circle and lifted his stick for a one-timer.

That spun three Hurricanes skaters around, and another went to Kucherov positioned at the right circle. Raddysh had an open lane to rifle a shot toward the net that Barre-Boulet calmly tipped past Kochetkov to give the Lightning a 2-0 lead.

"I think every game he's getting better," Cooper said. "I think for him to excel, he's got to play with some pretty good players because he's got some gifted offensive talents, and so you've just got to put him in a situation to succeed.

"You're not asking him to go in and be on a checking line and kill penalties for you and block shots. You ask him to do what he's doing here now, and he's making the best of his opportunity."

## **Nuts & Bolts: Going for a second-straight win on home ice** **Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)**

Everything you need to know ahead of Tampa Bay's matchup against the San Jose Sharks on Thursday.

**When:** Thursday, October 26 - 7 p.m. ET

**Where:** AMALIE Arena - Tampa, FL

**TV coverage:** Bally Sports (check local listings)

**Radio coverage:** 102.5 MHz-FM, Lightning Radio 24/7

**Where to stream it:** BallySports.com

### **Projected Lineup (subject to change)**

#### *Forwards*

Alex Barre-Boulet - Braydent Point - Nikita Kucherov

Steven Stamkos - Nick Paul - Brandon Hagel

Tanner Jeannot - Anthony Cirelli - Waltteri Merela

Conor Sheary - Luke Glendening - Mikey Eyssimont

#### *Defensemen*

Victor Hedman - Erik Cernak

Mikhail Sergachev - Nick Perbix

Calvin de Haan - Darren Raddysh

#### *Goaltenders*

Jonas Johansson

Matt Tomkins

### **Thursday's Matchup**

The Lightning and Sharks are playing the first of two matchups this season and the only meeting at AMALIE Arena...The Bolts posted a 1-0-1 record vs. SJS last season, collecting a 4-3 win Oct. 29 at SJS and dropping the Feb. 7 contest at AMALIE Arena in overtime by a score of 4-3...Brayden Point (2-2—4) led all Tampa Bay skaters in points vs. SJS last season and was tied with Ross Colton (2-0—2) for the team lead in goals...Point is riding a five- game point streak vs. SJS (3-4—7) and has found the scoresheet in eight of his 11 career contests vs. SJS (3-8—11)... Nikita Kucherov has points in four straight games vs. SJS (2-4—6) and has picked up points in eight of his last 10 contests vs. SJS (5-9—14)...Kucherov has posted a multi-point effort in three of his last four home games vs. SJS (2-4—6)...Steven Stamkos has points in seven of his last 10 contests vs. SJS (6-9—15)...Stamkos has recorded seven points over his last four home games vs. SJS (4-3—7)...Victor Hedman is riding a four-game point streak vs. SJS (2-3—5) and has picked up points in seven of his last eight contests vs. SJS (5-6—11)...Hedman has points in four consecutive home games vs. SJS (3-5—8)...Anthony Cirelli has found the scoresheet in five of his last six contests vs. SJS (1-5—6)...Nick Paul has five points in his seven career games vs. SJS (3-2—5)...Mikhail Sergachev has picked up points in five of his last eight contests vs. SJS (1-5—6)...The Lightning are 5-4-1 in their last 10 home games vs. SJS and 8-1-1 in the last 10 meetings overall...The Bolts have scored three or more goals in nine of their last 10 meetings with SJS (total: 45 goals)...Tampa Bay is 25-20-1 with two ties all-time vs. SJS, including a home record of 13-10-1 with one tie...Stamkos (14-14—28) holds the Lightning franchise records for career goals, assists and points vs. SJS.

## **Injuries**

Tyler Motte - Upper-body, out

Andrei Vasilevskiy - Back, out

## **Tampa Bay Sports Item of the Game**

2023 Tampa Bay Lightning Player Name & Number Tees

Player Name & Number tees and back and bigger than ever. Choose your favorite from 10 Tampa Bay Lightning Players. Available in store at Amalie Arena and online at TampaBaySports.com, while supplies last.

## **The Road Ahead**

Monday, October 30 vs. Seattle Kraken

Thursday, November 2 at Columbus Blue Jackets

Saturday, November 4 at Ottawa Senators

## **The Backcheck: Lightning defeat the Hurricanes in shutout win**

**Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)**

The Tampa Bay Lightning got back in the win column Tuesday night and collected points for the fourth-straight game in a 3-0 win over the Carolina Hurricanes. The Bolts got goals from Brayden Point, Alex Barre-Boulet and Nick Paul with Jonas Johansson recording his second career shutout and first as a member of the Lightning, stopping all 32 shots he faced.

With Martin Necas in the penalty box for high-sticking Darren Raddysh, the Bolts opened the scoring with a power-play goal from Point with 54 seconds left in the first period. Taking a pass from Nikita Kucherov at the point, Victor Hedman quickly fired a one-timer toward the net, where a wide-open Point was waiting to redirect the shot past Pyotr Kochetkov for his first goal of the season.

With the score still at 1-0, Tampa Bay got another goal late in a period with Barre-Boulet lighting the lamp for a second-consecutive game to double the lead with 2:09 left in the middle frame. After Point found Barre-Boulet with a pass across the offensive zone, the shifty winger tried to make a move to the forehand before sending the puck up to the point for Raddysh. With his head up the whole way, Raddysh hammered a shot pass to the back door, where Barre-Boulet had slipped out and found himself all alone to redirect the puck past Kochetkov and make it 2-0.

Similar to Saturday's contest against the Toronto Maple Leafs, the Lightning went into the third period with a two-goal lead at home and a chance to earn an important two points. Looking to play a full 60-minute game Tuesday night, Tampa Bay shut the door on Carolina in the third period and added a back-breaking goal with 2:56 remaining with Brandon Hagel finding Paul at the left faceoff dot before the power forward ripped a quick one-timer past Kochetkov to make it 3-0.

With the win, the Bolts moved to 3-2-2 on the season with a home record of 3-0-1.

### **Bolts Quotes**

Jon Cooper: "We played a pretty complete game and I don't think we gave them anything all night. It's funny about this game, somebody will look down and say, 'Oh wow, Carolina had 33 shots.' But I thought we kept everything to the outside, goalie got to see everything and if there was a hair-raising moment for a second, he was calm in the net for us. I thought it was a pretty workmanlike game for the guys. We got the lead, extended it and held it. That's what you want to do in this league. And they did it for 60 minutes."

Jon Cooper: "When you don't give up a goal in a game, it's more than just the goalie. He'd probably be the first to tell you, it was a team shutout. I don't want to say he played better, but he was really, really good against Toronto. Tonight, he just had to sit there and let the pucks hit him. We caught Carolina at the end of quite a long road trip. You have to try to take advantage of teams that have traveled and been tired, so it was fortunate for us and we took advantage."

Brayden Point: "Less sitting back. Still trying to press and play our game and stay on top of them. I think, in the Toronto game, we just kind of sat back and gave them too much time to make plays. I thought tonight we did a good job of just continuing to play and press them. It's just a little confidence that we can do it. We can close out a game. We can defend. Obviously, JJ getting a shutout, but I think we did a better job tonight of limiting chances than we have in the past games."

Jonas Johansson on if some wins feel nicer than others: "Yeah, they do. I want to say those tight wins when you really need to get one, those feel the best. But two points is two points, always."

## **Bolts by the Numbers**

- Victor Hedman recorded his sixth assist of the season, tied for the second-most among all NHL defensemen, while his seven points are tied for the fourth-most.
- Brayden Point scored his 42<sup>nd</sup> career game-opening goal, the sixth-most among all NHL skaters since he entered the NHL in 2016-17.
- Nikita Kucherov picked up one assist and now has 10 points this season, tied for the sixth-most among all NHL skaters.
- Jonas Johansson has now made 198 saves this season, the most among all NHL goaltenders and 37 more than the next-closest goalie.
- Johansson's .917 save percentage ranks ninth among all NHL goalies with four or more games played this season.
- Anthony Cirelli won 10-of-19 faceoffs and has won 60.4% of his faceoffs this season, the fourth-highest win percentage among all NHL skaters with 100 draws or more this season.
- The Lightning went 1-for-4 on the power play and have converted on 33.3% of their power plays this season, the fifth-best percentage among all NHL teams.
- The Bolts went 4-for-4 on the penalty kill and moved to 94.1% on the PK this season, the third-highest percentage among all NHL teams. They have not allowed a power-play goal against since the first game of the season vs. Nashville.

## **Krenner's Three Stars**

1. Jonas Johansson
2. Brayden Point
3. Alex Barre-Boulet

## **Lightning Look Ahead**

Thursday, October 26 vs. San Jose Sharks, 7 p.m. ET, AMALIE Arena

Monday, October 30 vs. Seattle Kraken, 7 p.m. ET, AMALIE Arena

Thursday, November 2 at Columbus Blue Jackets, 7 p.m. ET, Nationwide Arena