



AMALIE Arena Media Clips
Thursday, October 19, 2023

1. Here are 3 takeaways from Lightning's first road trip of the season – Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)
2. Nuts & Bolts: Season's first homestand begins Thursday – Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)

Here are 3 takeaways from Lightning's first road trip of the season Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)

BUFFALO, N.Y. — The Lightning ended their first road trip of the season with losses to all three Atlantic Division teams they faced. Universally, however, they believed they found their footing during Tuesday's 3-2 overtime loss to the Sabres.

Salvaging a point meant a lot because the Lightning believed they played well enough to win. They needed Brandon Hagel's goal with seven seconds left in regulation to force overtime. Had that not happened, there would have been a less upbeat tone in the locker room afterward.

"One's better than none, so I thought we played fine (Tuesday)," Hagel said. "I think we had the puck lots and did everything but get it past (Sabres goaltender Devon Levi) one more time in extra time. ... A lot better, I thought. I thought even the last two periods the last game (Sunday in Ottawa) we did well and carried it into this game."

Here are three takeaways from the trip.

The Lightning's veteran core has seen everything, but it's easy to forget that half of this team's roster wasn't around at the beginning of last season. So, it hasn't experienced Tampa Bay's fast starts in recent seasons. Add that the team's biggest source of confidence, goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy, is recovering from back surgery and is out two months and this team is starting over in terms of building swagger.

After looking frustrated while falling behind during back-to-back losses Saturday in Detroit and Sunday in Ottawa, Tampa Bay again trailed early in Buffalo. It's interesting that Hagel, who wore an "A" on his jersey for the first time with captain Steven Stamkos out injured, was the player who led the Lightning back. Second-period line shakeups put Hagel and Anthony Cirelli together, and their dump-and-chase game set the tone for the team.

Also, placing Alex Barre-Boulet — who has admitted his confidence has wavered over the years as he has been on and off the Lightning's roster — on the top line with Brayden Point and Nikita Kucherov gave Barre-Boulet an opportunity and the belief that he belonged. Those things are important, and coach Jon Cooper probably doesn't get enough credit for pushing the right buttons at the right time when blending his lines.

Timing is everything for a goaltender, and as new Lightning No. 1 Jonas Johansson returned to Buffalo — where the Sabres made him a third-round draft pick in 2014 before he fizzled out quickly on bad teams — it was a good reminder. Johansson never expected to shoulder the starting load when he signed with the Lightning in July, but he's much more prepared for it now, 2½ years after the Sabres traded him to the Avalanche.

Even on a better Lightning team, Johansson's numbers (3.71 goals-against average, .893 save percentage) probably wouldn't indicate how well he has played. And he's not going to bail out his teammates from turnovers and defensive lapses like Vasilevskiy has. But he has kept Tampa Bay in games.

After falling behind 2-0 in the first 15½ minutes against the Sabres, things could have unraveled for Johansson. But he was calm and didn't allow another goal for the remainder of regulation. Overall, he has been a little unlucky, and he has faced an onslaught of shot volume. "You can't look at any of

these games and say (the goaltenders) were the cause of what happened,” Cooper said, also referencing backup Matt Tomkins, who played in the 5-2 loss to the Senators, his NHL debut.

Power play isn't same without Stamkos

We don't know how much time Stamkos will miss with the lower-body injury he sustained against Detroit, but the Lightning need him back on the power play soon. True, not many man-advantage units have as much star power as Tampa Bay's, but Stamkos' one-timer from the left circle is the No. 1 thing defenses have to focus on stopping. And because of that, more space is created for others.

Victor Hedman is great at drawing attention to himself and getting Stamkos open. The Lightning's two-defenseemen look on Tuesday didn't do much — the power play was 0-for-4 — because Hedman and Mikhail Sergachev couldn't draw out the penalty killers to give Point and Kucherov space.

One bright spot is that Point had his best game of the trip against the Sabres, and that should translate to the power play. When the Lightning were without Stamkos for most of the 2020 playoffs, the power play ran at a 22.7% success rate. If Stamkos misses more time, Tampa Bay will have to continue to dust off that film to see what worked then.

Nuts & Bolts: Season's first homestand begins Thursday **Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)**

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

When: Thursday, October 19 - 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

Brandon Hagel - Brayden Point - Nikita Kucherov
Tanner Jeannot - Anthony Cirelli - Mikey Eyssimont
Conor Sheary - Nick Paul - Alex Barre-Boulet
Austin Watson - Luke Glendening - Waltteri Merela

Defensemen

Victor Hedman - Erik Cernak
Mikhail Sergachev - Darren Raddysh
Zach Bogosian - Nick Perbix

Goaltenders

Jonas Johansson
Matt Tomkins

Thursday's Matchup

The Lightning and the Canucks are playing the first of two matchups this season, the only meeting at AMALIE Arena...The Bolts posted a 2-0-0 record vs. VAN last season, winning the two matchups by a combined score of 10-6...Steven Stamkos (4-1—5) led Tampa Bay in goals and points vs. VAN last season, while Brayden Point (1-3—4) and Alex Killorn (1-3—4) were tied for the team lead in assists...Stamkos has picked up points in 14 of his 18 career games vs. VAN (16-11—27) and has scored goals in five of his last six contests vs. VAN (7-3—10)...Nikita Kucherov has posted a multi-point effort in eight of his last 11 games vs. VAN (6-10—16), including five of the his last six matchups vs. VAN (4-6—10)...Point has recorded two straight multi-point games vs. VAN (1-3—4) and has found the scoresheet in six of his last seven contests vs. VAN (4-7—11)... Brandon Hagel has notched three points in his two career games vs. VAN (1-2—3) since joining the Lightning...Nick Perbix posted a multi-point effort (0-2—2) in his one career game vs. VAN...Victor Hedman has points in seven of his last 10 contests vs. VAN (4-5—9)...Erik Cernak has four points in six career games vs. VAN (1-3—4)...Tampa Bay is 6-3-1 in their last 10 home games vs. VAN and 8-2-0 in the last 10 meetings overall...The Lightning are 19-17-3 with two ties all-time vs. VAN, including a home record of 11-8-2...The Bolts have won six consecutive contests vs. VAN...Tamp Bay has scored four or more goals in seven of their last nine games vs. VAN (total: 40 goals)...Stamkos (16-11—27) holds the Lightning franchise records for career goals and points vs. VAN.

Injuries

Tyler Motte - Upper-body, out
Steven Stamkos - Lower-body, out
Andrei Vasilevskiy - Back, out

Tampa Bay Sports Item of the Game

Halloween 2023 Inflatable Pumpkin

Show your Lightning spirit this Halloween with this inflatable pumpkin. Now available at AMALIE Arena and online at [TampaBaySports.com](https://www.TampaBaySports.com), while supplies last.

The Road Ahead

Saturday, October 21 vs. Toronto Maple Leafs

Tuesday, October 24 vs. Carolina Hurricanes

Thursday, October 26 vs. San Jose Sharks