



**AMALIE Arena Media Clips**  
**Friday, December 15, 2023**

1. Steven Stamkos scores 4 goals as Lightning snap Oilers' win streak – Associated Press
2. Lightning's Victor Hedman expected to miss second straight game – Eduardo A. Encina (Tampa Bay Times)
3. Andrei Vasilevsky, Steven Stamkos shine as Tampa Bay Lightning rally in Edmonton – Erik Erlendsson (Lightning Insider)

## **Steven Stamkos scores 4 goals as Lightning snap Oilers' win streak**

**Associated Press**

EDMONTON, Alberta — Steven Stamkos scored four goals, Andrei Vasilevskiy made 53 saves and the Lightning beat Edmonton 7-4 on Thursday night to end the Oilers' winning streak at eight.

Nikita Kucherov had a goal and two assists to push his NHL-leading points total to 50. Tyler Motte and Anthony Cirelli also scored to help Tampa Bay improve to 14-12-5 with its fourth victory in six games.

Darnell Nurse, Connor McDavid, Zach Hyman and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins scored for Edmonton. The Oilers fell to 13-13-1, falling a victory short of matching the longest winning streak in franchise history.

Tampa Bay got off to a quick start with a power-play goal 1:07 into the opening period when Nick Paul won a battle in front of the net and sent it over to Stamkos, who fired a snapshot past Stuart Skinner. It was Stamkos' 200th career power-play goal, making him the 20th player in NHL history to hit the benchmark.

The Lightning extended the lead seven minutes into the first when Motte picked up a loose puck in front and swatted home a backhand shot for his first goal of the season.

The Oilers got on the board with a short-handed goal 1:23 into the second period when Nugent-Hopkins sprung Nurse, who used his body as a shield before chipping it past Vasilevskiy.

Edmonton tied it on a power play 7:20 into the second when McDavid won a draw and golfed the loose puck into the net for his 11th, extending his points streak to 11 games.

The Oilers surged ahead with another power-play marker midway through the second, with Hyman ticking Evan Bouchard's shot for his 17th.

Bouchard stretched his points streak to 13 games, the second-longest by a defenseman in franchise history behind only current assistant coach Paul Coffey.

The Lightning pulled back at 6:48 of the third, with Stamkos batting a rebound out of the air and bouncing it past Skinner.

Tampa Bay regained the lead with seven minutes to play when Kucherov battled hard to get a shot off and beat Skinner for his 20th of the season.

Skinner looked bad on another goal just 1:15 later as he waved a glove at Stamkos' shot that went off the post and in for his 12th NHL hat trick.

Edmonton made it interesting with 2:22 left and Skinner pulled when Bouchard found Nugent-Hopkins at the side of the net for his seventh.

Tampa Bay put it away with a pair of empty-netters, first from Cirelli and then with Stamkos' fourth goal of the game and 14th of the campaign.

The Lightning were without defenseman Victor Hedman (upper body), although he could be back in the lineup again as early as Saturday.

## **Lightning's Victor Hedman expected to miss second straight game** **Eduardo A. Encina (Tampa Bay Times)**

Lightning defenseman Victor Hedman is expected to miss a second straight game tonight in Edmonton, but Tampa Bay could be getting a key player back from injury.

Hedman, who leads the team in average ice time, had played in every game this season before missing Tuesday's loss in Vancouver with an upper-body injury. He did not return for the third period of Saturday's overtime win in Seattle.

He is expected to be out again tonight, when the Lightning play the Oilers at Rogers Place, head coach Jon Cooper said during the team's optional morning skate in Edmonton.

Hedman leads all Lightning defensemen with five goals and 27 points in 29 games. He ranks tied for fifth among NHL defensemen in points. He is averaging 23:39 in ice time, which leads Tampa Bay.

### **Making way for Sheary**

The Lightning also made a number of roster moves hours before Thursday's game that set the stage for forward Conor Sheary to be activated onto the active roster from long-term injured reserve.

The team recalled defenseman Sean Day from AHL Syracuse and reassigned defenseman Philippe Myers and forward Mitchell Chaffee to the Crunch after they were called up on Tuesday.

Day will fill the eighth defenseman spot, swapping roster spots with Myers and giving the Lightning a seventh defenseman without Hedman available.

Day has no goals and eight assists in 16 games for the Crunch. He has a plus-1 plus-minus rating.

Chaffee skated Tuesday, making his Lightning debut with 6:56 of ice time.

The moves provide enough cap space to bring Sheary, who has missed the past month with a left hand injury, off long-term injured reserve. Sheary, who carries a \$2 million cap hit, has a goal and two assists in 13 games with the Lightning. His last game was Nov. 7 at Montreal.

### **Lightning sign top pick**

The Lightning signed forward Ethan Gauthier, their top pick in last summer's draft, to a three-year, entry-level contract.

Gauthier, who was selected in the second round, 37th overall (the Lightning didn't have a first-round pick), has 13 goals and 17 assists in 28 games with Drummondville of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League.

The 18-year-old is in his third season of major junior hockey. He had 30 goals and 39 assists last season with Sherbrooke of the QMJHL.

Gauthier will finish the season in Drummondville before his entry-level contract begins next season.

## **Andrei Vasilevsky, Steven Stamkos shine as Tampa Bay Lightning rally in Edmonton** **Erik Erlendsson (Lightning Insider)**

EDMONTON – Three individual efforts from the Tampa Bay Lightning led to one important come-from-behind victory on Thursday against the Oilers.

Edmonton entered the game on an eight-game winning streak. During the run, the Oilers had scored four-or-more goals seven times and allowed a total of 13 goals. For good portions of the game at Rogers Place, it appeared as if the streak would continue, the Oilers offense would light the lamp and they would cruise to a ninth-consecutive win.

Edmonton certainly played as if the result was strongly heading in that direction.

But Andrei Vasilevskiy nearly matched a franchise record, Steven Stamkos did match a franchise record only done twice and Nikita Kucherov made another moment of brilliance to set a franchise mark while becoming the first player to reach 50 points in the league this season.

The formula the Lightning used to earn the victory on Thursday won't work on most nights. But, at a time Tampa Bay really needed to pick up two points, the Lightning stunned the home crowd with a third period rally, capped by the performance of the captain.

Here's what they'll be talking about around the water cooler (or coffee pot or on social media or on the group message) today about what happened last night.

### **HEEEEEEEEEEE'S BACK**

Andrei Vasilevskiy missed the first two months of the season following back surgery. He went 209 days between playing in a game after missing all of training camp and the preseason. Thursday was his ninth start of the season.

Vasilevskiy is now, officially, back. The five-time Vezina Trophy finalist and 2021 Conn Smythe winner was in top form in a near record setting performance.

By any measure, the Lightning shouldn't have won Thursday's game. Whether it was the eye test, the surface numbers or the advanced numbers. They all heavily favored the Oilers, starting with the 57 shots on goal.

But, as they say, that's hockey.

"It was another Hall-of-Fame performance by a Hall-of-Fame goalie," defenseman Mikhail Sergachev said. "I always tell him, he's a Hall of Famer."

Vasilevskiy played like one against the Oilers.

The 53-save performance by Vasilevskiy is the second most in franchise history, bested only by his 54 saves against Washington in a 5-4 overtime victory on March 20, 2019. It marked his third career regular season game with 50-plus saves.

Vasilevskiy stopped 15 shots in the first period, 20 in the second and 18 in the third. He saved 3.41 goals above expected, while still allowing four goals.

"It was pretty remarkable how he played," Lightning head coach Jon Cooper said. "I think he's been trying to get back into feeling the way he was. I'm sure he didn't want that many shots on goal . . .

now he's hopefully getting into a little bit of a groove here for us. But you need everybody to win and we needed him more than ever."

## **STOP, STAMMER TIME, STAMMER TIME, STAMMER TIME, STAMMER TIME**

Between 1992 and 2014, two players in franchise history scored four goals in a game. On Thursday, more than nine years later, Steven Stamkos became the third.

Stamkos opened the scoring with a power play goal 67 seconds into the game and capped the scoring with 6.1 seconds left into an open net. Stamkos score the first, third, fifth and seventh goals to record his 12th career hat trick and his first career four-goal game, just the third in franchise history.

"The last probably week or two I've had some really quality chances that haven't gone in the net," Stamkos said. "It's probably been bunching up for a moment like this and that's what happens. They come in spurts, usually, so you just try not to get too down and continue to shoot the puck. And obviously they went in tonight, which was really nice to see."

Chris Kontos was the first in franchise history to score four goals in a game, which came in the inaugural game on October 7, 1992. The mark was finally matched by Marty St. Louis on January 18, 2014, at home against San Jose. Thursday, Stamkos became the third player to register a four-goal game.

"He looked at me after the fourth one and says, 'First time ever'," Cooper said. "I was like, you got 500 and that was the first time you've had four in a game and he said, 'Yeah'. So we had a good little chuckle on the bench. But you need your big guys to come out when the game is on the line. And Vassy and Stammer did that tonight."

## **BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE**

Stamkos matched franchise history with his four-goal performance. But his first goal put him into the NHL record books.

When Stamkos snapped off a quick shot from a pass by Nick Paul to open the scoring, he registered his 200th career power play. Stamkos is just the 20th player in league history to reach 200 power play goals and is only the second active player to hit the milestone.

Stamkos is now tied with Mark Recchi for 19th all-time, two away from matching Steve Yzerman for 18th and four away from Wayne Gretzky for 17th on the all-time list. It is a significant milestone, to say the least.

"That's pretty special," Stamkos said. "Anytime you can join a club with some of the names that are on that list of 200 power play goals, it's pretty unique and pretty cool. Obviously I've been fortunate to play on some really good power plays in my career here in Tampa. So just think of all the great plays that had been made and the opportunities I've had and scored. So that's cool."

## **THE MAGICIAN KEEPS WAIVING HIS WAND**

Nikita Kucherov put on a show, once again. On Tampa Bay's go-ahead goal in the third period, Kucherov all but mesmerized Cody Ceci with some kinda, sorta, accidentally, on purpose, feints with his stick.

The puck slipped through the legs of Ceci as Kucherov worked his way around the Edmonton defenseman, regain the puck and slipped a shot under the pads of Stuart Skinner at 12:47 to put Tampa Bay in front 4-3.

On what was a relatively quiet night for Kucherov considering everything else that took place in the game, Kucherov finished with the goal and a pair of assists. He reached the 20 goal mark in his 30th game of the season as well as 30 assists.

Kucherov is the fastest in franchise history to reach 50 points and is one of four active players to reach 50 points in 30-or-fewer games – Connor McDavid, Leon Draisaitl and Sidney Crosby are the other three. Kucherov is also the first player to record 50 points this season and has opened a seven-point lead in the scoring race.

To take it one step further, Kucherov is among the fastest wingers to reach the 50-point mark in the past 39 years.

- 21- Mike Bossy (1984-85)
- 24- Rob Brown ('88-89)
- 24- Jaromir Jagr ('95-96)
- 25- Jari Kurri ('84-85)
- 26- Kevin Stevens ('92-93)
- 28- Dino Ciccarelli ('86-87)
- 28- Jagr ('99-00)
- 30- Nikita Kucherov (2023-24)

## **GOT AWAY WITH ONE**

Remember all those analytic numbers mentioned above that favored the Oilers. I undersold it a tad.

According to [MoneyPuck.com](https://www.moneypuck.com), Tampa Bay registered just a 19.1-percent mark on the Deserve-To-Win-Meter, which is a simulation of the game 1,000 times based on the data. Edmonton registered an expected goals rate of 6.73.

Natural Statrick showed Edmonton with an expected goals of 7.41 in all situations, tracked a whopping 54 scoring chances for the Oilers and 28 high danger chances.

Needless to say, Thursday's formula won't lead to a victory very often. Hello, Andrei Vasilevskiy.

"Without him, that's not even a game," Stamkos said. "We give all the credit to the Vassy tonight. Certainly not a recipe we want to have to rely on every night. But in a game like that where we don't have our best and we're playing a really good team that's on a good streak, to have him back there was obviously huge."

Cooper knows it wasn't a perfect formula.

"We can't play this game on our heels like we have for . . . especially that second period," Cooper said. "Stammer gets that big one to tie it and then Kuch does a Kuch thing and then Vassy kind of took us home from there. But you wipe out that second period I wasn't completely deflating about the game. But when the game's on the line, you have to kind of turn the page from the first and the second period and just go out and win the third. They went won the third, and so it was big for us obviously."

The win had some extra importance as the Red Wings, Senators and Panthers all lost on Thursday while the Maple Leafs had to rally from down five goals in the third period to gain a point before falling to Columbus in overtime.

## **NOTES**

Tampa Bay recalled D Sean Day from Syracuse and reassigned D Phil Myers and RW Mitchell Chaffee to the Syracuse Crunch. ... D Victor Hedman missed his second consecutive game with an upper-body injury. ... The Lightning also scratched RW Austin Watson and Day. ... With 12 career hat tricks, Stamkos is the sixth active player with as many, joining Alex Ovechkin (30), David Pastrnak (15), Sidney Crosby (13), Evgeni Malkin (13) and Connor McDavid (12). ... Tampa Bay scored five goals in the third period for the second time this season (also 5 on Nov. 24 at CAR) and the fifth time in franchise history. ... Stamkos scored three goals in a period for the second time in his career (also Nov. 4, 2011 vs CHI; P2 which was his first career hat trick). The only player with as many instances in franchise history is Marty St. Louis (3x). ... Tampa Bay opened the scoring for the sixth consecutive game. ... Tyler Motte scored his first goal as a member of the Lightning. ... Tampa Bay has two victories on the season when trailing after two periods, both against Edmonton.

### **MY THREE STARS**

1. Lightning G Andrei Vasilevskiy – Allowed the game to stay close in stopping 51 shots
2. Lightning C Steven Stamkos – Franchise-record trying four goals, plus-3, seven shots
3. Lightning RW Nikita Kucherov – Goal, two assists, plus-1