



AMALIE Arena Media Clips
Tuesday, October 17, 2023

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Behind the numbers: Lightning allowing a lot of goals through 3 games Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)

BUFFALO — Three games don't make a season, and the Lightning's back-to-back losses in Detroit and Ottawa shouldn't prompt pressing the panic button.

But we have seen the Lightning form some unsettling habits, especially with turnover-riddled play in their own end, early on. It's a little surprising because Tampa Bay had a strong postseason and coach Jon Cooper was pleased with the progress the team made throughout training camp.

Keep in mind, the Lightning also opened last season 1-3-0, but were able to right the ship. The difference is that they allowed more than three goals just once in that stretch. Going into Tuesday's final contest of this three-game road trip, they have allowed an average of 4.67 goals per game.

Yes, the Lightning don't have Andrei Vasilevskiy, and his replacements in goal — Jonas Johansson and Matt Tomkins — have very little NHL experience. But it's clear the scoring the Lightning have allowed has less to do with the netminders and more about how the team is playing in front of them.

To add to the problems, the Lightning were without captain Steven Stamkos, who is tied for the team led in goals (2) and second in points (4), on Sunday due to a lower-body injury.

Here are four numbers that tell a lot about the first three games of the season:

0

5-on-5 shots on goal by Brayden Point in losses to Detroit and Ottawa

Coming off a career-best 51-goal season, Point started this season strong with a three-assist night in the opener last Tuesday against Nashville, but has since struggled to create offense. He was held without a shot on goal in Saturday's loss to the Red Wings, and his only shot on goal in Sunday's game in Ottawa came in 4-on-4 play with 7:33 left in the first period.

When your top goal scorer goes 47 minutes without a shot on goal — and you're not getting the production elsewhere from your stars like Tampa Bay did in Detroit with three-point nights from Stamkos and Victor Hedman — it makes it tough to win a game. Point has struggled to create space for himself, and his teammates are having a hard time helping him find open ice.

5

High-danger scoring chances for Anthony Cirelli in 5-on-5, most on the team

Cirelli arguably has been the Lightning's best all-around player through the first three games. He's been one of the few players who has been responsible in his own end, and he's also creating offensive opportunities. He scored his first goal of the year one minute into the second period Sunday, and he's consistently been getting good looks around the net.

To get that kind of production is a good thing for Cirelli, who has been a defense-first kind of player in his second-line center role. The play of his line Sunday — a newly-formed trio of Tanner Jeannot, Cirelli and Mikey Eyssimont — was one of the few bright spots in Ottawa, as they scored both Tampa Bay goals, recorded 17 of the Lightning's 41 5-on-5 shot attempts and created seven of their 19 5-on-5 scoring chances.

Minus-5

Conor Sheary's plus/minus on the season

Sheary came to the Lightning in the offseason on a three-year deal with the reputation of being a versatile player who can play anywhere along the top three lines. The Lightning are still trying to find where he's best utilized. Sheary has struggled to find his footing after a strong preseason, and his minus-5 is the worst plus/minus among all Lightning forwards. It's an unusual start because Sheary was a plus-9 last season playing with the Capitals.

Sheary opened Saturday's game on the top scoring line, but that didn't last long as Jon Cooper reunited Stamkos with the top line. Sheary was a minus-2 in Sunday's loss, playing on the third line centered by Nick Paul.

111

Shots on goal allowed through three games, most in the NHL

Shot volume can be deceiving because not all shots on goal are created equal. But the Lightning have allowed 37 shots a game, tied for third most in the league. Maybe more telling is that they have allowed 39 high-danger scoring chances. (Only Chicago (41) and Nashville (40) have allowed more.)

Combine that with the fact that the Lightning have allowed 28 more shots on goal than they have produced (83) and it says that not only are they playing way too much time in their own zone — which has a negative impact on your offensive production because you're pinned back for too long — but you're also allowing far too many chances that are open and in front of the net.

The Backcheck: Lightning drop second straight contest, falling 5-2 to the Senators **Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)**

After dropping their first road game of the season Saturday night to the Detroit Red Wings, the Tampa Bay Lightning were right back at it Sunday night at Canadian Tire Centre in Ottawa and lost a second-straight contest, falling 5-2 to the Senators.

The Bolts were a little flat coming out of the gate and registered just three shots on goal in the opening 20 minutes, going to the first intermission trailing 1-0 after Vladimir Tarasenko opened the scoring at the 7:02 mark. Ottawa outshot Tampa Bay 17-3 in the first period, but Matt Tomkins performed well between the pipes in his first career NHL start, making 16 saves to keep the Bolts within one.

After struggling in the second period in each of the first two games to start the season, the Lightning showed some pushback in the middle frame Sunday night with Anthony Cirelli tying the game 1-1 exactly one minute into the second.

Mikey Eyssimont started the play when he threw a big hit on Mathieu Joseph at the Tampa Bay blue line, enabling Cirelli to gain possession and skate freely into the Ottawa zone. After crossing the blue line, Cirelli sent a backhand feed to Tanner Jeannot, who slid the puck across the zone to Darren Raddysh before he completed the tic-tac-toe passing play, returning the puck back to Cirelli and allowing him to roof a backhand over the glove of Joonas Korpisalo to even the score with his first goal of the season.

Ottawa answered back 7:48 later when the Lightning failed to clear the zone and let Brady Tkachuk get a good look from the slot. Raddysh was able to block the first shot attempt, but the puck bounced right back out to Tkachuk, who quickly threw it back at the net and past Tomkins to make it 2-1.

The Bolts punched back 4:12 later when Jeannot won a race to a loose puck in the offensive zone and cycled it around the boards and up to the point for Victor Hedman. Controlling the puck along the wall, Hedman fired a shot towards the Senators goal, where Eyssimont redirected the puck right to Jeannot, who used his strength to open up some space and quickly roofed a shot for his first of the season with 7:01 left in the second.

Unfortunately for the Lightning, that would be their last goal of the evening. Joseph made it 3-2 with just under a minute left in the second before Tkachuk scored his second goal of the game with 7:07 left in the third. Tim Stutzle added an empty-net goal with 2:43 remaining to seal the 5-2 win for Ottawa and hand the Bolts their second-straight loss.

Tomkins finished the night with 33 saves on 37 shots against in his NHL debut. Steven Stamkos did not play and is listed as day-to-day with a lower-body injury.

Bolts Quotes

Jon Cooper on the game: "It was taxing on us in that first period, but we came out in the second and I liked our game. It was just a tough goal to give up with a minute left and we had tired D out there. Again, they catch a break. They try to force a puck in, we get a stick on it, it goes right to Joseph and it's in the net. You look at another one with Tkachuk's goal, Raddy blocks it and it goes right on his stick. But we put ourselves in those situations and they capitalized, so good on them for that. We get to the third, I don't know if they even had a shot on goal before Brady's goal. We had our looks. We

tie it at three, who knows what happens there? Their goalie made some saves when he had to and the big boy got the fourth goal and that was it.”

Jon Cooper on the line of Jeannot-Cirelli-Eyssimont: “I thought they were great. I thought Jeano was a beast out there. Tony was Tony, doing his thing. Eyssy had a really good game. There are no complaints on them. They spent most of the night in the offensive zone. We need a little bit more production and we just can’t be giving up four a night. It’s not a recipe to win, but our goaltenders have been great. That kind of sucks for Tommer, his NHL debut, and I thought he did great. He gave us a chance, but on a night when you needed a couple more goals, we couldn’t get them.”

Jon Cooper on Tomkin's debut and the loss to Ottawa

Anthony Cirelli on necessary adjustments: “Just in the D-zone, getting the puck out, limiting those turnovers where they’re coming at us on breaks and stuff like that. It’s only three games in here, so we just have to watch some video and continue getting better.”

Tanner Jeannot on the game: “I thought we were working hard out there, but just a little bit careless with the puck a couple times and they made us pay for it. They’re a fast team out there, so we’ve just got to limit those. Something to build on, we’ll look at the tape and get ready for Buffalo.”

Tanner Jeannot | Postgame 10.15.23

Bolts by the Numbers

Matt Tomkins became the 10th goaltender this century to make his NHL debut at age 29 or older.

Victor Hedman recorded an assist and has picked up points in each of Tampa Bay’s first three games. Only four defensemen in Lightning franchise history have opened the season with a longer point streak (Dan Boyle, 7 GP in 2002-03; Kevin Shattenkirk, 4 GP in 2019-20; Paul Ranger, 4 GP in 2007-08; Pavel Kubina, 4 GP in 2002-03).

Victor Hedman’s five points are the most among all NHL defensemen and his four assists are tied with Quinn Hughes for the most helpers.

Tanner Jeannot sets up in the crease and taps the puck in the net

Luke Glendening went 9-for-13 in the faceoff circle. He’s won 63.9% of his faceoffs this season, the fifth-highest win percentage among all NHL centers with 35 or more faceoffs.

Jon Cooper coached his 800th career NHL game. His 481 wins through his first 800 games are tied with Scotty Bowman for the most in NHL history.

The Lightning have now lost four straight games at Ottawa, allowing 23 goals during that four-game span.

Lightning Look Ahead

The Bolts will wrap up their three-game road trip Tuesday night at KeyBank Center with a matchup against the Buffalo Sabres. Puck drop is set for 7:30 p.m. ET.

Krenner’s Three Stars: Brady Tkachuk, Vladimir Tarasenko, Tanner Jeannot

Nuts & Bolts: Road trip wraps up in Buffalo **Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)**

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

When: Tuesday, October 17 - 7:30 p.m. ET

Where: KeyBank Center - Buffalo, NY

TV coverage: ESPN (check local listings)

Radio coverage: [102.5 MHz-FM](#), [Lightning Radio 24/7](#)

Where to stream it: [ESPN+](#)

Projected Lineup (subject to change)

Forwards

Brandon Hagel - Brayden Point - Nikita Kucherov

Tanner Jeannot - Anthony Cirelli - Mikey Eyssimont

Conor Shear - Nick Paul - Alex Barre-Boulet

Austin Watson - Luke Glendening - Waltteri Merela

Defensemen

Victor Hedman - Nick Perbix

Mikhail Sergachev - Darren Raddysh

Calvin de Haan - Erik Cernak

Goaltenders

Jonas Johansson

Matt Tomkins

Tuesday's Matchup

The Lightning and the Sabres are playing the first of four matchups this season and the first of two meetings at KeyBank Center...The Bolts posted a 2-1-1 record vs. BUF last season, including a 1-1-0 mark in the two games at KeyBank Center...Brayden Point (5-4—9) led Tampa Bay in goals vs. BUF last season and was tied with Nikita Kucherov (1-8—9) for the team lead in points...Kucherov is riding a 13-game point streak vs. BUF (10-13—23) and has points in six straight contests at BUF (5-7—12)...Kucherov has points in 15 of his 16 career games at BUF (10- 14—24) and has found the scoresheet in 22 of his last 23 contests vs. BUF overall (14-20—34)...Point is riding a six-game point streak vs. BUF (5-6—11) and has scored a goal in four consecutive matchups...Point has found the scoresheet in six of his last seven contests at BUF (4-3—7)...Steven Stamkos has picked up points in six straight games vs. BUF (4-7—11), along with 11 of the last 13 meetings (6-11—17)...Brandon Hagel has found the scoresheet in four of his five career games vs. BUF (3-4—7)...Anthony Cirelli has points in six of his last eight contests vs. BUF (3-5—8)...Nick Paul is riding a five-game point streak vs. BUF (1-4—5) and has recorded a point in each of his five games vs. BUF since being acquired by Tampa Bay in 2022...Victor Hedman has points in five of his last six contests vs. BUF (1-6—7) ...The Lightning are 6-4-0 in their last 10 games at BUF and 7-2-1 in the last 10 meetings overall...The Bolts are 50-49-9 with five ties all time vs. BUF, including a road record of 26-25-3 with two ties... Tampa Bay has scored five or more goals in eight of their last 10 games vs. BUF (total: 47 goals)...The Lightning have scored a power-play goal in nine of their last 11 meetings with BUF...Stamkos (22-25—47) holds the Bolts franchise records for career goals and points vs. BUF

Injuries

Tyler Motte - Upper-body injury, out

Steven Stamkos - Lower-body injury, day-to-day
Andrei Vasilevskiy - Back, out

Tampa Bay Sports Item of the Game

Halloween 2023 Plush Vampire Bear

Check out this year's Tampa Bay Lightning Halloween collection, including this plush spooky dragon. Now available at AMALIE Arena and online at TampaBaySports.com, while supplies last.

The Road Ahead

Thursday, October 19 vs. Vancouver Canucks

Saturday, October 21 vs. Toronto Maple Leafs

Tuesday, October 24 vs. Carolina Hurricanes