



**AMALIE Arena Media Clips
Monday, November 6, 2023**

1. Lightning assign rookie to Syracuse, setting up Tyler Motte's return – Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)
2. Nuts & Bolts: Lightning at Leafs to open the back-to-back – Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)

Lightning assign rookie to Syracuse, setting up Tyler Motte's return **Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)**

With Tyler Motte expected to return from injured reserve at some point during the Lightning's current road trip, the team faced a difficult decision in making room for the veteran forward.

There was no clear candidate to remove from a roster with little flexibility. On Sunday, the Lightning assigned the one player they easily could, rookie forward Walteri Merela, to AHL Syracuse.

Motte, who hasn't played since injuring his right hand in the team's season opener Oct. 10, likely will be activated before Monday night's game in Toronto.

Merela, an international free-agent signee from Finland, was slated to open the season in Syracuse so he could get adjusted to the smaller rink size and quicker pace of the North American game. But he forced his way onto the opening night roster with a strong preseason performance.

He continued to impress the organization in the season's first three weeks, with coach Jon Cooper saying that Merela kept getting better every game. But his status as the roster's only waiver-exempt player allowed the Lightning to send him down and prevent the possibility of the organization losing anyone through waivers.

The Lightning could have assigned either forward Alex Barre-Boulet or defenseman Zach Bogosian to the minors without going through waivers because neither has reached 30 days or 10 games played since they cleared waivers at the beginning of the season, but that would only be a temporary solution.

Barre-Boulet, called up following Motte's injury, has played well in a top-six role and on the second power-play unit. He has points in five of his last six games (three goals, three assists) and is a plus-5 over that stretch. Bogosian carries an important role as a veteran bottom-pair defenseman who can play both the left and right side.

Merela didn't record a point in his first 10 NHL games, but provided a strong forechecking presence and did a good job winning puck battles. When he was on the ice, the Lightning recorded 10 more shot attempts than they allowed in 5-on-5, an indication of steady play, and he created offense with 11 scoring chances, seven of them considered high danger.

Motte brings a little different game to the Lightning lineup. He's also a valued forechecker, but carries more speed than Merela, and he can play more penalty-kill minutes. Motte started the season opener in a top-six role alongside Brandon Hagel and Anthony Cirelli on the second line. He would likely slot somewhere in the middle-six forwards upon his return.

Nuts & Bolts: Lightning at Leafs to open the back-to-back **Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)**

Everything you need to know ahead of Tampa Bay's matchup against the Toronto Maple Leafs on Monday.

When: Monday, November 6 - 7 p.m. ET

Where: Scotiabank Arena - Toronto, ON

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 - Anthony Cirelli - Nikita Kucherov

Mikey Eyssimont - Brayden Point - Brandon Hagel

Steven Stamkos - Nick Paul - Conor Sheary

Tanner Jeannot - Luke Glendening - Austin Watson

Defensemen

Victor Hedman - Erik Cernak

Mikhail Sergachev - Darren Raddysh

Calvin de Haan - Zach Bogosian

Goaltenders

Jonas Johansson

Matt Tomkins

Monday's Matchup

The Lightning and Maple Leafs are playing the second of four matchups this season and the first of two meetings at Scotiabank Arena...TOR defeated the Bolts in overtime 4-3 Oct. 21 at AMALIE Arena in the first meeting of the season...Steven Stamkos is riding a seven-game point streak vs. TOR (2-9—11) and has points in 16 of his last 20 games vs. TOR (6-24—30)...Stamkos has found the scoresheet in four of his last five road games at TOR (3-8—11)...Nikita Kucherov has recorded points in 13 of his last 14 contests vs. TOR (11-9—20) and has points in 12 of his 15 career road games at TOR (7-13—20)...Mikhail Sergachev has found the scoresheet in four of his last five games vs. TOR (1-4—5)...The Bolts are 6-3-1 in their last 10 road games at TOR and 3-5-2 in the last 10 meetings overall...Tampa Bay is 45-52-9 with two ties all-time vs. TOR, including a road record of 22-26-5 with one tie...Stamkos (22-40—62) holds the Lightning franchise records for career assists and points vs. TOR and is tied with Vincent Lecavalier (22-30—52) for the all-time lead in goals.

Injuries

Tyler Motte - Upper-body, Day-to-Day

Andrei Vasilevskiy - Back, out

Tampa Bay Sports Item of the Game

MSX Launch

Take your activewear collection to the next level, with the Tampa Bay Lightning MSX by Michael Strahan collection, now available. Shop the collection now, at Amalie Arena and online at TampaBaySports.com, while supplies last.

The Road Ahead

Tuesday, November 7 at Montreal Canadiens

Thursday, November 9 vs. Chicago Blackhawks - [Buy Tickets](#)

Saturday, November 11 vs. Carolina Hurricanes - [Buy Tickets](#)