



Columbus Blue Jackets Media Clips

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Red Wings Insider / Detroit Red Wings eyeing a huge trade with the Columbus Blue Jackets

By Joshua Deeds – October 23, 2025

The Detroit Red Wings have their eyes on a former 1st-round pick of the Columbus Blue Jackets, who has requested a trade from the team.

Former 1st-round pick Yegor Chinakhov has expressed his unhappiness with the Columbus Blue Jackets and requested a trade through his agent.

The move has put General Manager Don Waddell in a troubling situation, as he has lost control of the Russian forward.

According to TSN's Pierre LeBrun, the Detroit Red Wings are one of multiple NHL teams that have been linked to the Blue Jackets player.

The group of teams interested also includes the Toronto Maple Leafs, Buffalo Sabres, Florida Panthers and the Calgary Flames.

It was reported that Chinakhov and the team's Head Coach, Dean Evason, had gone through a misunderstanding that had led him to ask for an exit from the organization for a new start.

The Detroit Red Wings Could Trade For Yegor Chinakhov

The Red Wings have plenty of cap space to shoulder a move that could involve acquiring an RFA like Chinakhov, with \$11.8 million available right now.

While they have 2 1st-round draft picks available in 2026 and 2028 to trade, should it come to that.

But we have to think that a cost-controlled contract like Chinakhov's won't come cheap to the Red Wings at all. It could cost prospects, as the Blue Jackets, according to Union and Blue, would want something other than futures (draft picks).

In 30 games for the Blue Jackets last season, he scored 15 points (7-8).

Sabre Noise / Buffalo Sabres linked to former top prospect in latest NHL trade rumors

By Tim Daniels – October 24, 2025

The Buffalo Sabres' quest to add more scoring depth to their lineup has led to trade talks with the Columbus Blue Jackets about 2020 first-round pick Yegor Chinakhov.

Pierre LeBrun of The Athletic reported Friday the Sabres "recently kicked the tires" on Chinakhov after the Jackets gave the 24-year-old winger's agent, Rick Komarow, permission to speak with other clubs following the player's trade request.

"If the Jackets do decide to move him, they've told inquiring teams they're not just looking for draft picks, as they are hoping to be in the playoff chase again this season," LeBrun wrote. "It would be more of a hockey trade if they find a fit."

Chinakhov has recorded 72 points (34 goals and 38 assists) in 178 appearances across five seasons in Columbus. He's tallied one helper in three games this season after opening the 2025-26 campaign as a healthy scratch in wake of the trade request.

Columbus Blue Jackets' Yegor Chinakhov represents a potential boom-or-bust addition for the Buffalo Sabres

Chinakhov hasn't lived up to expectations since being selected with the No. 21 overall selection in the 2020 draft, and unhappiness with his unsteady role in Columbus has led his agent to explore opportunities for a fresh start in a new organization.

Meanwhile, the Sabres could use a top-nine forward as they deal with an endless stream of injuries that begin in training camp and has carried over to the regular season.

Josh Norris headlines a group of Buffalo forwards currently sidelined that also includes Jason Zucker, Jordan Greenway and Justin Danforth.

Chinakhov has scored 45 points (23 goals and 22 assists) in 86 contests since the start of the 2023-24 season, which is a solid rate of production for a middle-six winger, and there's still reason to believe he possesses more offensive upside in a defined role with a new team.

"I just want to show on the ice what I can do," Chinakhov told reporters at the start of camp. "That's it. I just try to be my best."

The "hockey trade" Columbus is reportedly seeking could make things difficult for Sabres general manager Kevyn Adams, though. Buffalo doesn't have a lot of movable assets who'd fit the Blue Jackets' timeline.

Jack Quinn would have made sense coming into the season as a swap of underperforming young players, but he's got off to a red-hot start with six points in seven games, and it's unlikely the Jackets would have much interest in the oft-injured Greenway.

The one name that could work from Buffalo's perspective is prospect Isak Rosen. The 22-year-old winger, a 2021 first-round selection, has scored 149 points in 199 appearances for the AHL's Rochester Americans but hasn't been able to crack the Blue and Gold's lineup.

Rosen wasn't given much of a chance during the preseason to fill the void left by JJ Peterka in the Sabres' top six, which suggests he's running out of chances to climb the organizational ladder.

Columbus would surely want additional assets, probably a combination of prospects or picks and perhaps a depth player like Beck Malenstyn, but Rosen could perhaps be the foundation of the offer since he's NHL ready and just waiting for his shot.

That said, it's possible the Jackets could get a more proven NHL commodity for Chinakhov, which sounds like their preference, at least at this stage of negotiations.

He'd be an intriguing pickup for a young Sabres squad starting to show some real signs of progress early in the 2025-26 season, though.

The Athletic / Harmony in goal: Blue Jackets' Elvis Merzlikins, Jet Greaves enjoying partnership, success

By Aaron Portaline – October 24, 2025

COLUMBUS, Ohio — As the final horn sounded Saturday in the Columbus Blue Jackets' 3-2 win over the Tampa Bay Lightning in Nationwide Arena, players formed a single line to get to goaltender Jet Greaves for a celebratory headbutt and some "attaboys" after his 15-save third period.

Last in line was fellow netminder Elvis Merzlikins, who stopped a short distance from Greaves for dramatic effect, then opened his arms wide and closed in for a bear hug.

Then, during Tuesday's impressive 5-1 win at the Dallas Stars, FanDuel Sports Network's Dave Maetzold noted on air that Greaves, while watching Merzlikins play, was literally clapping after each of the 22 saves Merzlikins made throughout the game.

It is not always this way in hockey. And there were no guarantees it would be this way in Columbus this season, with Greaves not only spending his first full season in the NHL but also becoming the biggest threat to Merzlikins' playing time in at least three seasons.

So far, the Greaves-Merzlikins duo has been the best story on the Blue Jackets' roster. No matter the metric, the Blue Jackets' goaltending has been among the NHL's best, allowing coach Dean Evason — at least for now — to settle into a back-and-forth rhythm with the two.

If the pattern holds, Greaves will start Friday night against the Washington Capitals in Nationwide, and Merzlikins will get the nod Saturday at the Pittsburgh Penguins, the Blue Jackets' first of 15 back-to-backs on the schedule this season.

Greaves started the season opener against the Nashville Predators. He started the home opener against the New Jersey Devils. These marquee games had been the domain of Merzlikins since he became an NHL regular in 2020, after franchise great Sergei Bobrovsky signed as a free agent with the Florida Panthers.

But during Thursday's practice, Greaves and Merzlikins were out for early work with goaltending coach Niklas Backstrom, and they took a few breaks to goof around the nets, firing home rebounds with their goalie sticks while the other was working drills, etc.

"When I first met Jet, I really, really liked him," Merzlikins said. "He's really, really educated and such a polite kid. It's always nice talking to him. He's always in a positive mood, and he's funny, and he's an amazing teammate.

"I mean, we are here, working together. We want to collect as many wins as possible, and we cheer each other up. I think we have really good chemistry between me and him. We push each other, and we just understand each other."

Merzlikins has never had issues getting along with fellow goaltenders in the NHL. When he arrived in 2019, he was a tandem with Joonas Korpisalo, whom he still counts as a friend. Same for Daniil Tarasov, who signed as a free agent with Florida this summer.

That hasn't changed with Greaves.

During stoppages, Merzlikins said, each of them will skate toward the bench and pull to stop near where the other is sitting. They'll chat on some occasions, perhaps about a goal that was allowed, or a read that went awry, or a 10-bell save, etc. But often it's just a quiet moment, or some words of encouragement.

"Maybe during a commercial break, you ask his opinion," Merzlikins said. "Maybe I should have done something different in a (certain) moment or maybe not. We don't get to see the replays (on the bench during the game) like the players do, right? So we depend on each other."

Greaves has known Merzlikins for several seasons, since he started coming to training camp in 2021. They've worked together on a limited basis the previous three seasons, when Greaves would come up from AHL Cleveland during injury or illness to Merzlikins or Tarasov.

Last season, Greaves stamped himself as the starter in the final two weeks of the season, winning five straight starts to nearly carry the Blue Jackets into the playoffs.

It's been different this year, though. Since the middle of summer, it was clear Merzlikins and Greaves would be the one-two combination — in some order — in Columbus. They were both early into Columbus ahead of training camp, and have spent time together for most of the past two months.

"Elvis has so much support for me, which I really appreciate," Greaves said. "It means a lot having that from your goalie partner. It goes a long way, and it speaks to him and the culture of this team."

"You never know how those situations are going to be, but it's been great. I've been super fortunate since I've been here. I'd sit with Korpi on the plane, and he'd tell me stories and give me advice on different things. (Tarasov) and I knew each other well for a long time."

"It's just like that now with Elvis. Those guys all had super close relationships with each other as well. We've been fortunate."

Strange as it sounds, it's not always this way.

Evason tries to treat the goaltending position as every other spot on the ice, but it's not the same. There are 12 spots in the lineup for forwards and six for defensemen. There's only one spot for a goaltender, so the fight isn't for extra ice time or a job on special teams; it's a battle to simply get to play.

NHL legends Patrick Roy and Dominik Hasek, among others, were notoriously icy and dismissive of their backups. Where others saw up-and-coming goaltenders, they saw threats to their playing time and job security.

Merzlikins said that while growing up in Latvia, he once had another goaltender sabotage his gear so he wouldn't be available to play in a game he was scheduled to start.

"I got my pads cut," Merzlikins said. "I got my (skate) blades messed up against the concrete. I knew who it was, too. You could tell that (the strap at the bottom of his pads) was cut; it wasn't ripped off.

"I took it because I was the youngest on the team. But, I wasn't even playing the games, and then the chance I did have to play in a game, I had something get messed up with my gear."

Merzlikins said he thinks this sort of adversarial relationship between goaltenders is a thing of the past, say the 1990s. Today, the schedules are so compact and the pace of play is so demanding that few goaltenders carry a 65-game or more load, as was usual a generation ago.

"We live these things together now," Merzlikins said. "The good games we share, and the bad games we share. There is no need for this type of thinking, like, 'This is my net!' Here, we are all professionals. For a team, it's good to have two goaltenders like this."

The Blue Jackets became a much tighter group last season, brought together in part by the preseason tragedy that took the life of star winger Johnny Gaudreau. Player after player, even veterans like Sean Monahan and Dante Fabbro, who have played elsewhere, have said that it feels as much like a family as a hockey club.

The fact that Greaves and Merzlikins have gotten along so well is an extension of that. But it's also a credit to Merzlikins, 31, who has more to lose — namely, playing time — if Greaves continues to excel.

"The leadership within the room demands that from each other. There's an accountability factor," Evason said. "There's a team-first mentality in our group ... and that's no different with the two goaltenders.

"The maturity level of both of them is very high. And, you know, maybe you (wouldn't have) said that about Elvis in the past. That's my guess; I wasn't here. But he's become, as we've talked about before, a great teammate."

Greaves (1-2-0) has stopped 77 of 83 shots (.928 save percentage) and has a 2.04 goals-against average. His 7.0 goals saved above expected is fourth best in the NHL, trailing only the New York Rangers' Igor Shesterkin, the Chicago Blackhawks' Spencer Knight and the Montreal Canadiens' Jakub Dobeš.

Merzlikins isn't far behind. He's stopped 102 of 110 shots (.927) and has a 2.69 goals-against average. His 3.3 goals saved above expected is 14th in the NHL.

Together, they have the Blue Jackets tied for fourth in the NHL with a .927 save percentage.

After practice Thursday, Backstrom and Evason were to discuss the upcoming pair of games this weekend. After that, Backstrom would make his way to the back reaches of the dressing room to tell one of the goaltenders that he's starting Friday versus the Capitals.

So far, they've alternated starts, which has made life easy on Evason. But it might not always be that way, he said again after Thursday's practice.

"They've both been fantastic, just getting prepared," Evason said. "If they get asked to stop pucks that night and help the team win, they've both done it."

The Columbus Dispatch / Columbus Blue Jackets defenseman Dante Fabbro battling to regain 2024-25 form

By Brian Hedger – October 24, 2025

The Blue Jackets didn't think of Dante Fabbro as a third-pairing defenseman when they re-signed him June 29, giving him a four-year contract worth \$16.5 million, but that's where he's skating.

Six games into the season, rather than keeping Fabbro with Zach Werenski on the Jackets' top pairing, he's played the past two games with Jake Christiansen. And Fabbro will remain part of the third pairing Oct. 24 against the Washington Capitals, although he will take his right-handed shot to the left side with the pending return of fellow righty Erik Gudbranson from an upper-body injury.

Denton Mateychuk, meanwhile, is skating with Werenski in his first full NHL season, and he's got the added challenge of patrolling the right side as a lefty. That isn't how things were supposed to look for the Blue Jackets on the back end, but a 3-3-0 start and wins in their past two games will likely keep it that way until coach Dean Evason and his staff sense a need to change it.

How did all this happen so quickly?

Look no further than the Blue Jackets' 4-1 loss to the Colorado Avalanche on Oct. 16 at Nationwide Arena, where a recent Stanley Cup winner and perennial Cup contender made the upstart Blue Jackets look timid.

The Avalanche used relentless pressure to force turnovers, controlled the puck, and won a lion's share of battles along the boards. Fabbro wasn't the only guy who lost too many battles, but he was moved off the top pairing after that game.

"I think it's just being a little harder in battles, so a big emphasis for myself the last week and a half has been in practice and being harder in battles," Fabbro said. "I've been trying to get myself better prepared for the last two games, and it's been better as of late."

Statistically, nothing about Fabbro's first six games is a flashing red warning light.

According to Natural Stat Trick, Fabbro has skated 95:07 at even strength and the Blue Jackets have generated more attempts (110-105), four fewer shots (45-49), one more goal (3-2), three fewer scoring chances (46-49), four fewer high-danger chances (19-23) and two more high-danger goals (2-0).

Mateychuk has skated 94:37 and the Blue Jackets have garnered six fewer attempts (88-94), an equal number of shots (43-43), one more goal (3-2), two fewer scoring chances (36-38), seven fewer high-danger chances (14-21), and an equal number of high-danger goals (1-1).

Mateychuk also scored one of those goals in the third period of a 5-1 victory Oct. 21 in Dallas to give the Blue Jackets a two-goal cushion and some needed breathing room. Fabbro finished with one shot and

three attempts while skating 18:18 in that game, including 2:39 helping the Jackets go 2 for 2 killing penalties.

"I'd like to be hitting the ground running, but sometimes you've just got to work on some things to get the feel back out there," he said. "I've been talking to the coaches, and they've been really transparent. It's been great. ... At the same time, Dents has played unbelievable and deserves more ice time with the way he's playing. What I can do is push him to be better, and he can push me."

Moving to the left as a righty might not help, forcing Fabbro to make critical plays on his backhand, but he's not complaining about that or his role. A long season has just started, and there's plenty of time for him and others to earn bigger roles.

"I'd like to snap my fingers for it to be that way, right away, but there's a lot of work and preparation that comes with that," Fabbro said. "Not that I wasn't doing that this summer. It's just for some reason I wasn't feeling it a little bit, but I'm working on it with the coaches, and it's getting there."

The Columbus Dispatch / Columbus Blue Jackets' Miles Wood returns to practice 'happy that I have two eyes still'

By Brian Hedger – October 24, 2025

Miles Wood's first question for Mike Vogt was a doozy once the Blue Jackets' head athletic trainer reached him Oct. 13 at Nationwide Arena.

After catching a stick blade that belonged to former New Jersey Devils teammate Dougie Hamilton in his left eye, Wood could only see out of his right.

"I think my first words were, 'Is my eye still there?'" Wood said Oct. 23 after returning to practice. "They put the stitches in, and then for probably 10 minutes after that, it started to clear up slightly ... but for probably a half hour there, it was blacked out."

Wood, 30, said it's the scariest injury he's ever suffered playing hockey, and he's got a hockey smile that includes gaps from eight missing teeth. This injury required "seven or eight" stitches to the skin around his eye, but Wood's vision was a bigger concern.

"That's the most scared I've ever been," he said. "I said to the trainers, 'Break whatever bone you want, just don't take my eye.' ... when I was down on the ice, I thought my eyeball was in my hand when I pulled it away."

Luckily, it just seemed that way because his vision was blocked by blood that had pooled in his eye, which is known as hyphema. Wood said his vision is expected to fully return, but there are still a couple of "hazy" areas.

Wood may return to the Blue Jackets' lineup soon, but that depends on his vision and stamina after having to rest for nine days to avoid setbacks. Yegor Chinakhov has played three games in Wood's place at right wing on the fourth line.

"I had to sleep in a chair, essentially, for the last week so the blood wouldn't rush to my head and cause a re-bleed, which they didn't want," Wood said. "They said I couldn't get the heart rate up, no sauna or anything, so I haven't been doing much. The skate today was certainly a hard one. For the guys, it was a cake walk. For me, I was sucking wind out there."

After the injury, several of Wood's former Devils teammates and training staff reached out to see how he was doing.

"There was a loose puck there, and my head was down," he said. "(Hamilton) just kind of made a normal defensive play, and it was just a freak thing."

Wood practiced with a longer visor than he'd previously worn but isn't required to wear a full shield.

"I'm just happy that I have two eyes still," he said. "It's just hockey, I guess."

The Hockey Writers / Denton Mateychuk: The Final Piece to the Blue Jackets' Defensive Scheme

By Wesley Minke – October 24, 2025

Going into the season, the biggest question mark for the Columbus Blue Jackets was going to be could the defensive core that was built to win here finally put together the pieces and make a run. So far, one of the biggest answers has been the emphatic improvement of Denton Mateychuk.

Mateychuk's play has been far above what was expected from him this season, and so much so that he has jumped from the third defensive pairing to the top pairing with Zach Werenski. His skating ability and offensive upside leave Columbus dreaming of what could be for the future with him and Werenski.

Werenski signed a massive six-year contract extension that keeps him tied to Columbus until the end of the 2027-28 season. The extension, worth almost \$9.5 million per year, gives the Blue Jackets a stout top-end defenseman that is one you can pair with a young, budding, offensive-minded defender. His recent games have graded out to make him one of the top skaters nightly for the Blue Jackets.

The Blue Jackets are counting on the second defensive pairing to show up in a big way each night to provide their top line the ability to stay up in plays and be aggressive. Damon Severson and Ivan Provorov have been that second pairing for the Blue Jackets this season, and have given them the chance to be a more dynamic team on offense.

The offensive component he adds to the team gives him a chance to make an impact in more than one way, and also allows him to play in more special teams roles, like the power play. He can be the Cale Makar prototype for the Blue Jackets, which gives them the facilitator at the top of the zone on those increasingly impactful offensive possessions.

Mateychuk's offensive game only adds to the above-average offensive output the Blue Jackets have had this season, and expounds upon their above-average effort from last season as well. The biggest piece of improvement in Mateychuk's game has been his understanding of the defensive zone and his growth in the ability to anchor deep in the defensive zone.

The wicked wrist shot and powerful slapper of Mateychuk only add to his excellence from the point attack. He gives the Blue Jackets another blueliner with the ability to get shots through traffic from distance, and the ability to sneak on the backside of a play through traffic. He really is the wildcard of the offensive attack and is learning how to excel on his own defensively.

Looking Ahead and the Progression That Needs to Continue

If Mateychuk is going to be trusted on that top pair with Werenski, he has to continue to progress both ways, and more specifically, because of the player that Werenski is, he needs to progress defensively. That is not to call Werenski a selfish player by any means, but it is to say that he will stay up in the play and give himself room to create.

I believe that is why a player like Dante Fabbro, Werenski's former defense partner, played such a critical role in his offensive success last season. Mateychuk, a more skilled offensive player than Fabbro, hopes to boost the output of his defense partner this season. So long as Mateychuk plays the quick and physical game that he has become accustomed to this season, he will be more than enough to form one of the top defensive pairings in the NHL this season.

The Leafs Nation / Maple Leafs among teams inquiring about Blue Jackets' Yegor Chinakhov

By Michael Mazzei – October 24, 2025

The Toronto Maple Leafs are reportedly among the teams that have expressed interest in acquiring Columbus Blue Jackets forward Yegor Chinakhov.

TSN's Pierre LeBrun reported during Thursday's edition of Insider Trading that Chinakhov's name has been floating around in the trade market because he has gotten limited playing time to begin the season. He has only played in three games at the time of filing, recording one assist and averaging 8:41 minutes per game as he has been deployed on the fourth line.

LeBrun noted that 26 scouts were in attendance for the Blue Jackets' game against the Colorado Avalanche, a likely indication that interested parties are gathering notes to share with their respective teams on the current state of Chinakhov's game. The reason why the Leafs are in the mix is due to the fact that they are seeking an upgrade up front. Other teams that LeBrun says are interested include the Calgary Flames, the Buffalo Sabres, the Detroit Red Wings, and the Florida Panthers. While it is unclear exactly what it would take to acquire his services, LeBrun reported that Blue Jackets GM Don Waddell would prefer to do a hockey trade given the fact that the team is an injury away from needing the player back in the top-nine.

Sportsnet's Elliotte Friedman later reported in his latest 32 Thoughts article on Thursday that the Leafs made a trade pitch for Chinakhov during the offseason that included Nick Robertson. The Blue Jackets ultimately rejected the offer, but Friedman noted that the file remains open on that front.

Chinakhov made shockwaves during the 2025 offseason when his agent, Shumi Babaev, posted on X that the player had requested a trade due to a lack of communication with Columbus head coach Dean Evason in regards to his spot in the lineup. At the time, Babaev stated that Chinakhov would honour his contract if nothing materialized over the summer, but would prefer to continue his career elsewhere so he had a better opportunity to play.

It appears that nothing has changed regarding his spot on the team, hence why he is now in trade rumours at this point in the season. Yet it makes sense why teams like the Leafs would be interested in taking a chance on him beyond the fact that he was a former first-round pick in 2020.

Chinakhov is gifted with a wicked shot, strong offensive instincts, and speed to burn. His defensive game, while far from perfect, has also seen improvements since making the move over to North America. The one concern teams will have is his durability as Chinakhov has never gone through a season fully healthy to this point in his career, with the most games played being 62 in 2021-22. He missed significant time last season due to a back injury, and got frequently scratched down the stretch even once he had recovered.

The Leafs fit the bill of a team that would make sense as the winner of the Chinakhov sweepstakes for a number of reasons. Head coach Craig Berube is straightforward with his directions and players know where they stand with him, which goes a long way in building trust. The medical staff would be able to help keep Chinakhov feeling healthy for longer while addressing other underlying ailments that may be bothering him. And given the Leafs' needs to add up front, there will be opportunities for him to make an impact offensively.

If the Blue Jackets prefer to do a hockey trade, then the logical option for the Leafs to include as the return piece is Robertson. Multiple insiders, including TSN's Darren Dreger, have reported that the forward is in trade rumours and seeking a different opportunity because of a lack of a solidified role on the team. A hypothetical deal would see both teams get to move disgruntled players off their roster and give each of them a fresh start while adding a different element to their respective lineups.

While it is unclear if a trade will actually materialize, it nonetheless makes sense why Brad Treliving would reportedly be checking in on Chinakhov.

Cleveland 19 News / Owen Sillinger's Return to the Ice: Monsters' Forward Back After ACL Injury

By Leah Doherty – October 23, 2025

CLEVELAND, Ohio (WOIO) - Cleveland Monsters forward Owen Sillinger returned to the ice last Friday in the team's home opener, eight months after tearing his ACL in February.

Surprisingly, this was Sillinger's first injury in his hockey career. Shortly after his injury, he had surgery, which required a full reconstruction of his knee using a hamstring graft.

Sillinger, who is in his fifth year playing in Cleveland, was also named an alternate captain for the season.

Hockey runs in the family for the Regina, Sask., native. His younger brother, Cole Sillinger, plays center for the Columbus Blue Jackets, the Monsters' parent club. His Dad, Mike, played in the NHL for 17 seasons, and younger brother Lukas plays hockey for Arizona State University.

Sillinger said he relied on his family, friends and staff with the Monsters during his lengthy rehab.

Monsters Head Coach Trent Vogelhuber faced his share of injuries when he played and said players can feel isolated from teammates during rehabilitation.

"When players are hurt, they feel separated from the team," Vogelhuber said. "They're not involved in obviously the battle out there with the guys, but they're not even involved in practice. They're not involved in road trips and the dinners and the camaraderie. So you can really feel isolated."

After eight long months, Sillinger made his return to the ice when the Monsters faced the Lehigh Valley Phantoms.

"It's pure excitement. You wait eight months to come back and be with your friends and your teammates and everyone that supported you," Sillinger said.

Sillinger reflected on his recovery and said he believes he grew stronger mentally, which he hopes will translate to the ice.

"I think it's important to take the positives when there's maybe not a lot of positives there," Sillinger said. "I learned a lot about myself."

Next up the Monsters host the Rochester Americans this Saturday at Rocket Arena. Puck drop is set for 7 p.m.

The Athletic / Analyzing 2025-26 NHL teams by age, height, weight and nationality

By Jame Mirtle – October 22, 2025

Wednesday is the two-week mark of the 2025-26 NHL season, which means we have a pretty good sample size of players to look at already.

As of this past weekend, 726 players had suited up in a game, including 62 goaltenders, 228 defensemen and 436 forwards. On average, those players are 28.4 years old, 6-foot-1.5 tall and 201 pounds.

If you haven't seen this post before, it's an annual collection of various demographical odds and ends that I put together every year, early in the season, using data from NHL.com. You can check out last year's version [here](#).

The NHL has been trending slightly older and bigger over the past few seasons, but it's a very subtle shift and there's not much change from last season in this regard, so there's probably not a lot to read into there. What you do see is a lot of team-by-team variation as rosters change with retirements, the arrival of rookies, etc.

Let's dig into this year's results.

The Canadiens are the NHL's youngest team

Average age of players who have appeared for each NHL team as of Oct. 19

Average age of forwards: 28.1

Average age of defensemen: 28.4

Average age of goalies: 29.8

NHL average age this season: 28.4

Analysis: Winnipeg as the oldest team is interesting, as they have just one player under 25 (Nikita Chibrikov) and a whopping 14 players who are over 30 years old, including most of their core. Their window is now.

The Canadiens, meanwhile, are incredibly young, with the addition of 19-year-old Ivan Demidov giving them 13 players under 25 years old and all but Josh Anderson, Mike Matheson and Brendan Gallagher under 30. Exciting times for the Habs.

Generally speaking, older teams tend to perform better in the standings (and playoffs), as the youngest listed here are largely rebuilding clubs. Of the bottom 11, only Montreal made the playoffs. Of the nine oldest teams here, only Pittsburgh missed, and the Penguins are greatly influenced by their trio of ancient stars.

Anecdotally, it feels like it's getting harder to hang on as an NHLer into your late 30s. There are only two 40-year-olds in our sample (with Corey Perry becoming the third on Tuesday night for the Kings) and just 10 players leaguewide who are older than 37.

More and more, that's becoming the age cutoff for most mortal players. Which makes what Ovechkin and Crosby are doing — continuing to produce as stars into old age — that much more impressive.

On the flip side, there have been 15 teenagers to play a game in the league this season and 56 players who are 21 or younger, so the youth movement is real. It's hard not to watch Islanders wunderkind Matthew Schaefer, who was born in 2007, and feel a bit old.

The 10 oldest players in the NHL this season

1. Brent Burns, Colorado, 40.6 years old
2. Alex Ovechkin, Washington, 40.1
3. Jonathan Quick, New York Rangers, 39.8
4. Evgeni Malkin, Pittsburgh, 39.2
5. Ryan Reaves, San Jose, 38.8
6. Kris Letang, Pittsburgh, 38.5
7. Cam Talbot, Detroit, 38.3
8. Sidney Crosby, Pittsburgh, 38.2
9. Anze Kopitar, Los Angeles, 38.2
10. Nick Foligno, Chicago, 38.0

The 10 youngest players in the NHL this season

1. Matthew Schaefer, New York Islanders, 18.1 years old
2. Ben Kindel, Pittsburgh, 18.5
3. Brady Martin, Nashville, 18.6
4. Michael Misa, San Jose, 18.7
5. Braeden Cootes, Vancouver, 18.7
6. Jett Luchanko, Philadelphia, 19.2
7. Macklin Celebrini, San Jose, 19.4
8. Sam Dickinson, San Jose, 19.4
9. Harrison Brunicke, Pittsburgh, 19.5
10. Matvei Gridin, Calgary, 19.6

The Kings have the tallest team in the NHL

Average height (in inches) of players who have appeared for each NHL team as of Oct. 19

Average height of forwards: 73.0

Average height of defensemen: 74.1

Average height of goalies: 75.0

NHL average height this season: 73.5 inches (6-1.5)

Analysis: The Kings jumped up this list from last season, when they were ranked 10th, in part thanks to having five players who are 6-5 or taller (Samuel Helenius, Joel Edmundson, Quinton Byfield, Jeff Malott and Darcy Kuemper).

Nashville, meanwhile, has taken the short-king crown from Colorado and Seattle thanks to the fact that the Predators have more than half a roster of players who are 6-0 or shorter. Even their No. 1 goalie, Juuse Saros, is short by NHL standards at an impish 5-11, bucking a trend where the average goalie is now 6-3.

Thankfully, they have 6-6 Michael McCarron to get things off the top shelf in the dressing room.

There's been a proliferation of big men in the league here early on, too, as last season there were only nine players who were 6-7 or taller and two of them were inexperienced goaltenders.

This year, our list of the uber tall has 13 names and none of them are in the crease. It hasn't been enough of a trend to shift the league's average height up, but keep an eye out for these behemoths nonetheless.

The tallest players in the NHL this season

1. Matt Rempe, New York Rangers, 81 inches (6-9)

1. Curtis Douglas, Tampa Bay, 81

3. Elmer Soderblom, Detroit, 80

3. Louis Crevier, Chicago, 80

3. Adam Klapka, Calgary, 80

3. Tyler Myers, Vancouver, 80

7. Lian Bichsel, Dallas, 79

7. Adam Edstrom, New York Rangers, 79

7. Logan Stanley, Winnipeg, 79

7. Vincent Desharnais, San Jose, 79

7. Nikita Zadorov, Boston, 79

7. Jamie Oleksiak, Seattle, 79

7. Victor Hedman, Tampa Bay, 79

The shortest players in the NHL this season

Eight listed at 5-8:

Gavin Brindley, Colorado

Logan Stankoven, Carolina

Bobby Brink, Philadelphia

Cole Caufield, Montreal

Alex DeBrincat, Detroit

Colin Blackwell, Dallas

Justin Danforth, Buffalo

Conor Sheary, New York Rangers

Plus: 18 players listed at 5-9, including Lane Hutson and Brad Marchand.

The Leafs are 15 pounds heavier than the Preds

Average weight of players who have appeared for each NHL team as of Oct. 19

Average weight of forwards: 198.9

Average weight of defensemen: 205.0

Average weight of goalies: 201.0

NHL average weight this season: 201 pounds

Analysis: Wait, Patrick Kane is listed at just 154 pounds this season? Has he been on a diet we didn't know about?

At the other end of the (ahem) scale this season, the NHL has an impressive handful of players who weigh in at more than 250 pounds and 10 who are more than 240. That's up from last year, so again, being really big seems to be in.

This is one stat where there's a sizeable gap between the biggest and smallest clubs in the league, with the Maple Leafs (and others) significantly outweighing the 193-pound Predators and Canucks.

I'm not sure how much this stat actually matters, however, as the two-time defending champion Panthers are one of the lighter clubs here. The fact they are missing big men Aleksander Barkov and Matthew Tkachuk does likely affect this, but Florida didn't exactly ice a heavyweight lineup last year, either. They just play big.

The Avalanche coming in as one of the smallest clubs is interesting, given they'll have to tangle with beefy rosters in Dallas and Vegas (among others) in the West this season. Something to keep in mind when the playoffs roll around.

The heaviest players in the NHL this season

1. Matt Rempe, New York Rangers, 261 pounds
2. Nikita Zadorov, Boston, 255
3. Jamie Oleksiak, Seattle, 252
3. Elmer Soderblom, Detroit, 252
5. Aliaksei Protas, Washington, 250
6. Anthony Stolarz, Toronto, 248
7. Victor Hedman, Tampa Bay, 244
8. Curtis Douglas, Tampa Bay, 242
9. Arber Xhekaj, Montreal, 240
9. Anthony Mantha, Pittsburgh, 240

The lightest players in the NHL this season

1. Patrick Kane, Detroit, 154 pounds
2. Lane Hutson, Montreal, 162

- 3. Logan Stankoven, Carolina, 165
- 3. Conor Garland, Vancouver, 165
- 5. Jared Spurgeon, Minnesota, 166
- 5. Dustin Wolf, Calgary, 166
- 7. Max Shabanov, New York Islanders, 167
- 8. Nikolaj Ehlers, Carolina, 168
- 9. Bobby Brink, Philadelphia, 169
- 10. Nikita Chibrikov, Winnipeg, 170
- 10. Samuel Girard, Colorado, 170
- 10. Kent Johnson, Columbus, 170
- 10. Lukas Reichel, Chicago, 170

Montreal is the NHL's most Canadian team

Nationalities of players who have appeared for each NHL team as of Oct. 1

Forwards: Canadian 42.7 percent, American 27.4 percent, European 29.5 percent

Defensemen: Canadian 42.5 percent, American 30.7 percent, European 26.8 percent

Goalies: Canadian 22.6 percent, American 27.4 percent, European 50 percent

NHL averages this season: Canadian 41.0 percent, American 28.5 percent, European 30.4 percent

Analysis: These numbers overall are all very close to what we saw last year, with the biggest shift continuing to happen in goal.

As we covered in detail here before the 4 Nations Face-Off, there are fewer Canadian goalies than ever, and it's a trend that doesn't show much sign of slowing. Only 14 Canadians have made an appearance in an NHL crease this season, many of whom are backups: Jet Greaves, Scott Wedgewood, Cam Talbot, Calvin Pickard, Stuart Skinner, Darcy Kuemper, Sam Montembeault, Jake Allen, Tristan Jarry, Jordan Binnington, Joel Hofer, Adin Hill, Eric Comrie and Logan Thompson.

Meanwhile, the percentage of NHL games played by American players has nearly doubled in the cap era, as more and more players are coming from non-traditional markets and states that haven't typically produced high-level talent.

More than half of the NHL was Canadian as recently as 2014-15; I don't suspect we'll ever see anything close to that again. In fact, there could be more U.S.-born players in the league than Canadians within the next 15 years, if current trends hold.

Before we wrap up, I have one more bonus bit of info I pulled out in this analysis that looks at players' draft position.

What round were players currently in the NHL drafted in?

First: 42.3 percent

Second: 17.1 percent

Third: 9.9 percent

Fourth: 6.5 percent
Fifth: 5.0 percent
Sixth: 3.6 percent
Seventh: 3.2 percent
Undrafted: 12.5 percent

First-round picks are obviously a huge part of building the talent base in the NHL, but as you can see above, not everything. In fact, one in eight NHLers wasn't drafted at all, a figure that rises to one in five for goaltenders.

The chances of hitting on a late-round pick and getting an NHLer out of it are slim, however, with only about one pick in Rounds 6 and 7 sticking in the league. The NHL shortened the draft to seven rounds in 2005, so there aren't any players left that were picked in the later rounds. But given that success rate, you wonder if they could shorten the selection process even further.

That's all for this post this year. If you have any additional questions or suggestions for similar analysis you'd like to see in the future, feel free to drop them in the comments.