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Columbus Blue Jackets

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The Athletic / Blue Jackets' schedule challenges them to play better on the road and in back-to-backs

By Aaron Portzline – July 16, 2025

By finishing two points out of the Stanley Cup playoffs last season, the Columbus Blue Jackets left themselves open to all manner of “would have” and “should have” laments. But there were two glaring areas in which they knew they must improve.

The Blue Jackets won just 14 road games (14-23-4), and only 10 of those wins came in regulation. It essentially wiped out the gains they made in Nationwide Arena, where they had one of the better home records in the league (26-10-5).

The other bugaboo was a little less obvious, but even more dramatic. The Blue Jackets had 12 back-to-backs on their schedule last season — a manageable number — but they went just 2-10 in the second games, the worst record in franchise history.

The NHL released its regular-season schedule Wednesday. Now the Blue Jackets know what their marching orders are — better performances in uncomfortable settings (the road) and when the legs are weary (back-to-backs) — and those will likely be a theme from the start of training camp and well into the season.

The Blue Jackets, who are celebrating their 25th season in the league, open the campaign on Oct. 9 at Nashville. They'll play another road game, Oct. 11 in Minnesota, before they return to Columbus for the home opener against the New Jersey Devils in Nationwide Arena. This marks the second straight season they've opened with two on the road.

The longest homestand is a five-game set in late January, when the Blue Jackets host Ottawa (Jan. 20), Dallas (Jan. 22), Tampa Bay (Jan. 24), Los Angeles (Jan. 26), and Philadelphia (Jan. 28). They also have a four-game homestand in December.

The longest road trip is a five-game set in early November. The Blue Jackets will play at the New York Islanders on Nov. 2, then head west to play Calgary (Nov. 5), Vancouver (Nov. 8), Edmonton (Nov. 10), and Seattle (Nov. 11). They also have a four-game trip later in November, and another in early January.

The Jackets will play four games against five of their Metropolitan Division rivals: Carolina, New Jersey, New York Islanders, Pittsburgh, and Washington. They'll play only three games against the remaining two Metro clubs, the New York Rangers and Philadelphia.

Scheduling oddity here: the Blue Jackets play only three games all season on Fridays: Oct. 24 vs. Washington and Nov. 28 vs. Pittsburgh in Nationwide Arena, and Jan. 30 at Chicago. They play 22 games on Saturdays and 17 each on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The Blue Jackets will go dark from Feb. 5 to Feb. 25 while the NHL pauses for the Winter Olympics. The Jackets' last game before the break will be Feb. 4 vs. Chicago at home. They'll return from the break on Feb. 26 with a game in Boston.

That midseason break will be well-timed, too. The Blue Jackets will play 18 games in 32 days before the break, then come out of the break with 25 games in 47 days to finish the season.

The Blue Jackets end the season with two home games: April 12 vs. Boston and April 14 vs. Washington.

The Blue Jackets were one of the youngest teams in the league last season, and it's hoped that the tough lessons learned on the road in 2024-25 — they had an 0-5-2 stretch (Oct. 26 to Nov. 16) and a 1-6-1 skid (Dec. 3-28) — will benefit them in the long run.

The Blue Jackets have more back-to-backs on their schedule this season (15) than they did a year ago, but there's a key difference, and it's one that was actually requested of the league by the Blue Jackets.

GM Don Waddell said the Blue Jackets put in a request with the league's schedule-makers that they have some second games in Nationwide. They got their wish on four of the "second" games:

Oct. 29 vs. Toronto, after playing Buffalo a night earlier

Jan. 4 vs. Pittsburgh, after hosting Buffalo the previous day

Feb. 4 vs. Chicago, after playing in New Jersey

March 3 vs. Nashville, after playing at the New York Rangers

Other than adding depth forward Charlie Coyle, Miles Wood and Isac Lundestrom, the Blue Jackets are mostly running back the club that was one of the biggest surprises last season. They won the final six games of the season and finished 40-33-9 (89 points), the most wins and points since the 2018-19 season.

Columbus Dispatch / Columbus Blue Jackets mimic 'Jackass' hijinks in 2025-26 schedule release video

By Brian Hedger – July 16, 2025

The Columbus Blue Jackets released their 2025-26 schedule with a prank video inspired by the "Jackass" series.

The Blue Jackets' video is part of a trend of NHL teams creating creative schedule release videos.

The team's season opens with away games against Nashville and Minnesota before their home opener against New Jersey.

The new Blue Jackets schedule is full of pranks.

OK, well, not exactly. The Jackets' 2025-26 schedule itself is straightforward, but its July 16 release was accompanied by a team-produced prank video mimicking the "Jackass" television series. Call this one the "Blue Jackass" edition.

The Blue Jackets are not rookies when it comes to sending up widely watched programs. Their 2022-23 video is set to a Stranger Things theme.

The 2025-26 video begins with a warning for viewers not to replicate any of the ensuing pranks. Below that is a logo rendering of the team's Stinger mascot and two crossed hockey sticks replacing the "Jackass" logo of a skull and crutches.

The video cuts to the first scene featuring head coach Dean Evason, an avid golfer, looking into the camera before teeing off on a golf course. Wearing dark sunglasses and holding a driver, Evason says his name and, "Welcome to Jackets," before pulling the club into his backswing.

Unaware that Blue Jackets president/GM Don Waddell has tossed a prank ball straight into his swing path from the back side of the tee box, Evason follows through and literally smokes both balls — the real one flying downrange and the fake one exploding in a puff of smoke.

There is much rejoicing. (The scene, it's later revealed, was done in one take.)

Then, the sound of a familiar guitar riff from the "Jackass" show plays to usher in a host of other pranks played at the expense of mostly Metropolitan Division rivals, plus a few other popular draws to Nationwide Arena.

A Toronto Maple Leaf gets squirted with maple syrup and covered in leaves. A Florida Panther puts on a helmet filled with sand. A Philadelphia Flyer gets bodychecked into a shrub. An unsuspecting Washington Capital gets tackled by a Blue Jacket. There are even two guys dressed like fishermen — a nod to a foregone New York Islanders' logo — and they whail away on each other with fish.

And then, the coup de grace: Somebody in a penguin costume tries to evade pucks being shot at them while running on an ice rink.

As for Stinger, the Blue Jackets' mascot, he's used as a moving depiction of the Chicago Blackhawks sliding headfirst into a hockey net. Stinger also gets smashed by a giant wooden hand while promoting the Carolina Hurricanes' visit March 31. The final prank — accompanied by a note that the New Jersey Devils will visit on New Year's Eve — involves a staffer getting knocked down by a silver ball dropped from the rafters onto a target she's holding.

The video, which ends with a blooper reel, was quite an effort to drum up excitement while adding a fourth link to a chain of schedule-release videos the Blue Jackets began in 2022.

Teams across the NHL also made 2025-26 schedule release videos with varying degrees of quality.

The Calgary Flames used a “Rambo” theme featuring shirtless, grungy forward Ryan Lomberg in a “Lombo” video.

Drew Doughty, a star defenseman, makes a cameo in the Los Angeles Kings’ video and gets labeled as “some toothless hillbilly” after dropping off food for the creative team making the video.

In New Jersey, devilish mascot NJ Devil, who turns out to be star defenseman Dougie Hamilton, terrorizes a dodgeball playing group of children wearing gear from Metropolitan Division teams, including one wearing a Blue Jackets t-shirt.

The Blackhawks and Seattle Kraken each produced videos bemoaning the necessity for schedule release videos, including Chicago defenseman Alex Vlasic arguing for simplicity in a team marketing meeting.

“Hear me out,” Vlasic says. “What if we just post the schedule? ... Maybe even with a caption that says, like, ‘Here’s the schedule.’”

After receiving rave reviews for his idea's raw truth, Vlasic delivers the punchline, “Who knew marketing was so easy?” before the video cuts to a screen that says, simply, “We Play Every Team.”

Along those lines, several high-profile teams decided against making a video to accompany their schedule release. That list includes both Florida teams, the Tampa Bay Lightning and the two-time defending Stanley Cup champion Florida Panthers.

The Blue Jackets open the 2025-26 season with road games Oct. 9 in Nashville and Oct. 11 at the Minnesota Wild before returning for their home opener against the Devils on Oct. 13 at Nationwide Arena.

And that’s no joke.

Columbus Dispatch / Columbus Blue Jackets 2025-26 schedule opens at Nashville Predators, Minnesota Wild

By Brian Hedger – July 16, 2025

The Columbus Blue Jackets will begin their 25th anniversary season on the road against the Nashville Predators on October 9th.

Following their game in Nashville, the Blue Jackets will travel to Minnesota to play the Wild on October 11th.

The Blue Jackets' home opener is scheduled for October 13th against the New Jersey Devils.

The full schedule was released on July 16th.

The Blue Jackets' 2025-26 schedule for their 25th anniversary season has been released and they'll start on the road again.

The Jackets open Oct. 9 at the Nashville Predators before traveling North to play the Minnesota Wild on Oct. 11 prior to their home opener Oct. 13 against the New Jersey Devils. Here is a link to the full schedule, which the team announced at 1 p.m. July 16 with a humorous video.

Last season, the Blue Jackets split their first two games on the road against the Minnesota Wild and Colorado Avalanche before returning to open the home schedule against the Florida Panthers in a game preceded by an emotional ceremony to honor Johnny and Matthew Gaudreau.

Columbus Blue Jackets players salute the fans following the 6-1 win over the New York Islanders in the team's final NHL hockey game of the season at Nationwide Arena in Columbus on April 17, 2025.

The Blue Jackets' full schedule was released about three weeks later than in recent years, when the league timed its release with the NHL draft in late June. As part of changes made to the NHL's collective bargaining agreement with the NHL Players' association, this is the final 82-game regular season before the league shifts to 84 games starting in 2026-27.

NBC4i.com / Blue Jackets open 2025-26 campaign at Nashville as full schedule is released

By Orri Benatar & David DeGuzman – July 16, 2025

The 25th anniversary season of the Columbus Blue Jackets is just around the corner and the 82-game regular season schedule has been released.

The NHL revealed the league's full regular season schedule on Wednesday, which includes the Blue Jackets' roadmap to clinch their first Stanley Cup Playoffs berth since the 2019-20 season. To open the season, Columbus will play at the Nashville Predators on Oct. 9 at 8 p.m. before a second road trip on Oct. 11 against the Minnesota Wild.

After those two games, the Blue Jackets' home opener at Nationwide Arena arrives with an Oct. 13 clash against the New Jersey Devils. Other notable games include a Black Friday showdown against the Pittsburgh Penguins at home, a New Year's Eve home game against the Devils, and welcoming the Washington Capitals for the final game of the season on April 14.

2025-26 Columbus Blue Jackets schedule

OCTOBER

- Oct. 9: AT Nashville Predators (8 p.m.)
- Oct. 11: AT Minnesota Wild (8 p.m.)
- Oct. 13: Vs. New Jersey Devils (7 p.m.)
- Oct. 16: Vs. Colorado Avalanche (7 p.m.)
- Oct. 18: Vs. Tampa Bay Lightning (7 p.m.)
- Oct. 21: AT Dallas Stars (8 p.m.)
- Oct. 24: Vs. Washington Capitals (7 p.m.)
- Oct. 25: AT Pittsburgh Penguins (7 p.m.)
- Oct. 28: AT Buffalo Sabres (6:45 p.m.)
- Oct. 29: Vs. Toronto Maple Leafs (7:30 p.m.)

NOVEMBER

- Nov. 1: Vs. St. Louis Blues (7 p.m.)
- Nov. 2: AT New York Islanders (5 p.m.)
- Nov. 5: AT Calgary Flames (9:30 p.m.)
- Nov. 8: AT Vancouver Canucks (10 p.m.)
- Nov. 10: AT Edmonton Oilers (8:30 p.m.)
- Nov. 11: AT Seattle Kraken (10 p.m.)
- Nov. 13: Vs. Edmonton Oilers (7 p.m.)
- Nov. 15: Vs. New York Rangers (7 p.m.)

Nov. 17: Vs. Montreal Canadiens (7:30 p.m.)

Nov. 18: AT Winnipeg Jets (8 p.m.)

Nov. 20: AT Toronto Maple Leafs (7 p.m.)

Nov. 22: AT Detroit Red Wings (1 p.m.)

Nov. 24: AT Washington Capitals (7 p.m.)

Nov. 26: Vs. Toronto Maple Leafs (7 p.m.)

Nov. 28: Vs. Pittsburgh Penguins (7 p.m.)

DECEMBER

Dec. 1: AT New Jersey Devils (7 p.m.)

Dec. 4: Vs. Detroit Red Wings (7 p.m.)

Dec. 6: AT Florida Panthers (3:30 p.m.)

Dec. 7: AT Washington Capitals (7 p.m.)

Dec. 9: AT Carolina Hurricanes (7 p.m.)

Dec. 11: Vs. Ottawa Senators (7 p.m.)

Dec. 13: Vs. Vegas Golden Knights (7 p.m.)

Dec. 16: Vs. Anaheim Ducks (7 p.m.)

Dec. 18: Vs. Minnesota Wild (7 p.m.)

Dec. 20: AT Anaheim Ducks (10 p.m.)

Dec. 22: AT Los Angeles Kings (10 p.m.)

Dec. 28: Vs. New York Islanders (5 p.m.)

Dec. 29: AT Ottawa Senators (7 p.m.)

Dec. 31: Vs. New Jersey Devils (7 p.m.)

JANUARY

Jan. 3: Vs. Buffalo Sabres (3 p.m.)

Jan. 4: Vs. Pittsburgh Penguins (3 p.m.)

Jan. 6: AT San Jose Sharks (10 p.m.)

Jan. 8: AT Vegas Golden Knights (10 p.m.)

Jan. 10: AT Colorado Avalanche (4 p.m.)

Jan. 11: AT Utah Mammoth (7 p.m.)

Jan. 13: Vs. Calgary Flames (7 p.m.)

Jan. 15: Vs. Vancouver Canucks (7 p.m.)

Jan. 17: AT Pittsburgh Penguins (7 p.m.)

Jan. 20: Vs. Ottawa Senators (7 p.m.)

Jan. 22: Vs. Dallas Stars (7 p.m.)
Jan. 24: Vs. Tampa Bay Lightning (7 p.m.)
Jan. 26: Vs. Los Angeles Kings (7 p.m.)
Jan. 28: Vs. Philadelphia Flyers (7 p.m.)
Jan. 30: AT Chicago Blackhawks (8:30 p.m.)
Jan. 31: AT St. Louis Blues (7 p.m.)

FEBRUARY

Feb. 3: AT New Jersey Devils (7 p.m.)
Feb. 4: Vs. Chicago Blackhawks (7 p.m.)

FEBRUARY 6-24 – WINTER OLYMPICS BREAK

Feb. 26: AT Boston Bruins (7 p.m.)
Feb. 28: Vs. New York Islanders (6 p.m.)

MARCH

Mar. 2: AT New York Rangers (7 p.m.)
Mar. 3: Vs. Nashville Predators (7 p.m.)
Mar. 5: Vs. Florida Panthers (7 p.m.)
Mar. 7: Vs. Utah Mammoth (7 p.m.)
Mar. 10: AT Tampa Bay Lightning (7 p.m.)
Mar. 12: AT Florida Panthers (7 p.m.)
Mar. 14: AT Philadelphia Flyers (7 p.m.)
Mar. 17: Vs. Carolina Hurricanes (7 p.m.)
Mar. 19: Vs. New York Rangers (7 p.m.)
Mar. 21: Vs. Seattle Kraken (5 p.m.)
Mar. 22: AT New York Islanders (7 p.m.)
Mar. 24: AT Philadelphia Flyers (7 p.m.)
Mar. 26: AT Montreal Canadiens (7 p.m.)
Mar. 28: Vs. San Jose Sharks (5 p.m.)
Mar. 29: Vs. Boston Bruins (5 p.m.)
Mar. 31: Vs. Carolina Hurricanes (7 p.m.)

APRIL

Apr. 2: AT Carolina Hurricanes (7 p.m.)
Apr. 4: Vs. Winnipeg Jets (7 p.m.)
Apr. 7: AT Detroit Red Wings (7 p.m.)

Apr. 9: AT Buffalo Sabres (7 p.m.)

Apr. 11: AT Montreal Canadiens (7 p.m.)

Apr. 12: Vs. Boston Bruins (6 p.m.)

Apr. 14: Vs. Washington Capitals (7 p.m.)

The CBJ missed out on a postseason spot on the final day of the 2024-25 season to mark its best season in five years. Columbus had multiple notable points streaks during the year as the team and community came together after the death of Johnny Gaudreau. No win was more memorable than the 5-3 victory over the Detroit Red Wings at Ohio Stadium in the Stadium Series game in front of over 90,000 fans.

The 2025-26 NHL season begins on Oct. 7 with a tripleheader that starts with the two-time defending Stanley Cup Florida Panthers hosting the Chicago Blackhawks at 5 p.m. The Pittsburgh Penguins will then visit the New York Rangers at 8 p.m. before the Los Angeles Kings welcome the Colorado Avalanche at 10:30 p.m.

The league will pause in February for the Milan Olympics as the top talent of the NHL will play at the games for the first time since 2014. The puck drops at the Olympic tournament on Feb. 11 when Slovakia faces Finland. Team USA's opening game will be on Feb. 12 against Latvia, where Blue Jackets teammates Zach Werenski (USA) and Elvis Merzlikins (Latvia) could play against each other.

Columbus Dispatch / 5 things to know about the Columbus Blue Jackets' 2025-26 schedule

By Brian Hedger – July 16, 2025

The Blue Jackets' 2025-26 schedule is out, and it's a doozy.

Thanks to the NHL's return to Olympic competition in February, every team's schedule is packed with games before and after the 2026 Milano-Cortina Winter Games on Feb. 6-22.

For the Blue Jackets, that means 15 sets of back-to-backs, three more than last season, plus months featuring 14-16 games. It's going to be daunting for all 32 teams, but especially a Blue Jackets bunch targeting a return to the Stanley Cup Playoffs for the first time since 2020.

Here's a closer look with five things to know about the Blue Jackets' 2024-25 schedule:

Columbus Blue Jackets start with challenging first two months

There's nothing like diving right into the deep end of the pool, right?

That's what the Blue Jackets will do after opening the season Oct. 9 in Nashville against the Predators, a fellow 2024-25 playoff non-qualifier. The schedule gets significantly more challenging in a hurry with seven of the Jackets' first 10 games against teams that did reach the postseason, plus 14 of their first 25 games through October and November are on the road.

Nine of 15 games in November are road matchups, including a season-long five-game road trip that starts Nov. 2 at the New York Islanders and includes the annual Western Canada swing through Calgary (Nov. 5), Vancouver (Nov. 8) and Edmonton (Nov. 10) before concluding Nov. 11 in Seattle.

Winnipeg Jets center Vladislav Namestnikov (7) ends up in the net against Columbus Blue Jackets goaltender Elvis Merzlikins (90) during the second period at Nationwide Arena on November 1, 2024 in Columbus, Ohio. At left is Columbus Blue Jackets right wing Mathieu Olivier (24).

Columbus Blue Jackets have 15 back-to-backs to play

Playing back-to-back games has been one of the Blue Jackets' biggest stumbling blocks the past five years, including last season's 8-14-2 record in 24 games played as part of 12 back-to-backs and a 9-14-3 overall mark in 13 back-to-backs in 2023-24.

The first of this season's 15 back-to-backs is Oct. 24-25. Columbus hosts the Washington Capitals at Nationwide Arena, then makes a trip to Pittsburgh's PPG Paints Arena the next night.

The Jackets also end October and start November with split back-to-backs. They play on the road Oct. 28 in Buffalo and host Toronto on Oct. 29, then play the St. Louis Blues on Nov. 1 in Columbus before facing the New York Islanders Nov. 2 at UBS Arena in Elmont, New York.

November features another odd back-to-back set Nov. 17 against the Montreal Canadiens at Nationwide Arena and Nov. 18 in Winnipeg. On the positive side, the Jackets get two home/home back-to-backs Jan. 3-4 against Buffalo and Pittsburgh, plus March 28-29 against San Jose and Boston.

Jan 7, 2025; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA; Columbus Blue Jackets goaltender Elvis Merzlikins (90) defends the net against Pittsburgh Penguins right wing Bryan Rust (17) during the first period at PPG Paints Arena. Mandatory Credit: Charles LeClaire-Imagn Images

Columbus Blue Jackets will be home for the holidays

The Blue Jackets typically hold a practice on Thanksgiving. It will be interesting to see if that tradition continues this year with games on either side of the U.S. holiday, which is Nov. 27, 2025.

The Jackets are set to host the Maple Leafs on Nov. 26 before coming out of the holiday Nov. 28 against the Penguins. A month later, they'll return from the NHL's break for Christmas with a home game Dec. 28 against the Islanders.

Fans watch the New Year's Eve fireworks show after the game between the Columbus Blue Jackets and the Carolina Hurricanes at Nationwide Arena on Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 in Columbus, Ohio.

Columbus Blue Jackets to host the New Jersey Devils on New Year's Eve

It doesn't happen every season, but it's usually memorable when the Blue Jackets play on New Year's Eve at Nationwide Arena. One of the most memorable games in the franchise's recent history was Dec. 31, 2019, when then-rookie Elvis Merzlikins bested former Blue Jackets star goalie Sergei Bobrovsky in the Blue Jackets' 4-1 victory over the Florida Panthers.

Zach Werenski took care of the offense, netting his first NHL hat trick against Bobrovsky almost six months after the net-minder signed with the Panthers on July 1, 2019. This time, the Blue Jackets host the Devils in what could be a key in-season matchup within the Metropolitan Division. Columbus finished just two points behind New Jersey for third place in the Metro last season.

Oct 22, 2024; Columbus, Ohio, USA; Columbus Blue Jackets players salute the fans following the 6-2 win over the Toronto Maple Leafs in the NHL hockey game at Nationwide Arena.

Columbus Blue Jackets to get some home cooking in January and March

The NHL's schedulers made up for the Blue Jackets' tough road slate in the first two months by allotting a preponderance of home games in January and March.

They'll play nine out of 16 games each month at Nationwide Arena, including a season-long, five-game homestand Jan. 20-28 plus three separate three-game homestands in March. The four games scheduled around the Olympics in February are split evenly between road and home games.

Columbus Blue Jackets goaltender Elvis Merzlikins (90) sprays water on his helmet in the second period at Nationwide Arena on Thursday, April 3, 2025 in Columbus, Ohio.

Columbus Blue Jackets to play 68% of games on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays

The Blue Jackets will play 17 games each on Tuesdays and Thursdays plus 22 games on Sundays.

According to the Blue Jackets, they have a combined 464-499-134 record on those three days, notching 1,062 points out of 2,194 possible for a .484 all-time points percentage. Out of those days, they're most successful on Thursdays at 147-127-40 all-time for a .532 points percentage.

The Blue Jackets 135-153-44 all-time on Tuesdays and 182-219-50 on Saturdays. Notable home Thursday dates include Oct. 16 against the Colorado Avalanche, Nov. 13 against the Edmonton Oilers, Dec. 4 against the Detroit Red Wings, Jan. 22 against the Dallas Stars, March 5 against the Florida Panthers and March 19 against the New York Rangers.