



AMALIE Arena Media Clips
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Blues shut out Lightning, who fail to score for second straight game

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — The Lightning were shut out for the second game in a row Tuesday night in a 5-0 loss to the St. Louis Blues, Tampa Bay's third straight setback.

"People are going to look and say we've been shutout the last couple of games," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said. "The problem is, it's not our offense. We're giving up gifts, and we're having good stretches in the game. That's been the story this year. It's just giving up those easy ones.

"Guys are getting discouraged and then they're fighting it a bit, so that kind of hurts the mojo of your team."

Jordan Kyrou and Jakub Vrana scored 19 seconds apart in the second period, and Jordan Binnington made 30 saves for St. Louis.

Jonas Johansson stopped 24 shots for Tampa Bay, which dropped to 6-6-4.

"We had a good start and then we started giving up chances," Lightning defenseman Victor Hedman said. "The second period was an even period, and then we gave up two in less than a minute, so, just breakdowns. It wasn't like we were dominated. I think it was an even match. We just gave up way too much."

Colton Parayko and Kasper Kapanen also scored for the Blues (8-5-1), who have won three straight.

"There wasn't a lot going on, to be honest with you, in the game, I thought, in the first period," Blues coach Craig Berube said. "I think from a defensive standpoint, checking standpoint we were pretty solid, disciplined, staying out of the box. We did a good job of finishing on some plays and scoring and then staying with it."

Binnington earned his first shutout of the season and the 13th of his career.

"It's a team that you're proud to be a part of," Binnington said. "It's a month or two of working hard and buying in. It's nice to see some results come our way. We're just staying patient and playing together and trusting the system and we're getting rewarded."

Kapanen scored his third goal of the season into an empty net with 3:58 remaining and Kyrou scored his second goal of the game and fourth of the season with 42 seconds remaining to seal the win for St. Louis.

Kyrou took an outlet pass from Torey Krug and skated in to score on a backhand shot, and Vrana scored his second of the season on a feed from Krug 19 seconds later to give St. Louis a 3-0 lead with 3:24 remaining in the second period.

"It's just a chemistry play with (Kyrou)," Krug said. "We've talked over the years. If he sees that I get the puck in transition, he can take off and I'll try to get it to him. Obviously he saw open ice and he made a great move on the breakaway. The other goal, you've got to give Vrana a lot of credit because I don't think there's many guys in the league that score off that pass with his release."

Thomas, the Blues' leading scorer, has registered at least one point in seven straight games with five goals and six assists.

3 reasons frustration is setting in for Lightning after loss to Blues **Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)**

ST. LOUIS — The Lightning are in a rut. They've lost three straight games in regulation, have gone their last two without a goal, and any momentum they build offensively is negated by egregious defensive breakdowns.

Their third straight defeat, a 5-0 loss to the Blues Tuesday night at Enterprise Center, encompassed the good, the bad and the ugly that's become characteristic of the Lightning's season just more than a month in.

"People are going to look and say, 'Hey, we've been shut out the last couple games,'" Lightning coach Jon Cooper said. "But the problem is — it's not our offense. It's that we're giving up gifts. We have some good stretches in the game and just, that's been the story this year is just giving up those easy ones.

"Guys are getting discouraged, and then they're fighting it a bit, and so that kind of hurts the mojo of your team. We've just got to stop making those gaffes. I know the guys aren't meaning to do it, but they're happening."

Here's a look at three reasons why frustration is kicking in for the Lightning.

Early deficits are putting them at a disadvantage

The Lightning have had their challenges holding late leads, but in the past two games they were immediately at a disadvantage by falling behind early. Both St. Louis — and Carolina in the previous game — excel at protecting leads. After Tuesday's game, the Blues are 7-0-0 when scoring first and 4-0-0 when having the lead after one period.

Teams like this go into lockdown mode once they have a lead. They don't allow many looks, push everything to the outside, manage to get their stick on everything and block a ton of shots.

After not touching the puck much in the offensive zone against the Hurricanes, the Lightning's focus was to put the puck on net. But St. Louis had 22 blocked shots after two periods.

The Blues also stayed out of the box, which kept the Lightning's vaunted power play off the ice. Tampa Bay had just 2:21 of power-play time on the night. That also played into the Lightning's 5-on-5 struggles. Tampa Bay has allowed 44 goals in 5-on-5 play, which is tied with San Jose for most in the league.

The snowball effect is becoming overwhelming

The Lightning went into the first intermission down a goal but were outplaying the Blues in most facets of the game. They could deal with the deficit knowing they were a shot away from tying it, and in the second period it was much of the same. They outshot St. Louis 15-8 in the period and had 22 scoring chances, including 12 high-danger opportunities. But the Lightning went into the locker room deflated after falling behind 3-0 after allowing goals on back-to-back shifts 19 seconds apart in the final four minutes of the period.

What made it worse was that the first of the two goals came on a bad line change following an icing call, allowing Jordan Kyrou to spring free along the right side on a breakaway. Then, on the net shift, goaltender Jonas Johansson failed to clear the puck along the wall, past Calvin de Haan and

Brandon Hagel, turning it over. It hemmed the Lightning in their own zone and allowed Jakub Vrana an open shot from the right dot.

“The guys are pressing and they’re not letting the game come to them, trying to force things, and when that happens the mental side takes over and sometimes you can struggle,” Cooper said. “So we just have to fight through it. You go through situations like this in a season, and it’s got to get through and the teams that have the mental makeup, they’ll get through stuff like this.”

They are reaching uncharted territory

Ultimately, this team hasn’t faced much adversity in recent years. It has overcome injuries, had strong starts to the season and never really had to claw to make the playoffs.

But this year it’s different. And you can’t pin it on not having goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy. He might have prevented some of the goals the Lightning have allowed, but their defensive struggles have more to do with turnovers and coverage mistakes in their own zone than the goaltender in net.

The Lightning haven’t scored in 122:10 of game time and have just one goal over their past eight periods. Though they played out differently, the Lightning have been outscored 9-0 over their past two games. They’re not used to being on the short side of such lopsided games. The last time Tampa Bay was shut out in back-to-back games was in the 2015-16 season in a 2-0 loss Oct. 24 at Chicago and a 2-0 loss Oct. 27 at St. Louis. There were only four current Lightning players on that team: Steven Stamkos, Victor Hedman, Nikita Kucherov and Andrei Vasilevskiy.

“You can see it wears on guys, too,” Hedman said. “Three tough games in a row. This is where it really tests your mental strength. We haven’t gone through this a lot lately, and some guys probably haven’t gone through it. It’s just how you respond to this. We’ve just got to make sure that the guys who have been here a long time lead the way.”

Tampa Bay Lightning hit pot hole of futility not crossed in eight years **Erik Erlendsson (Lightning Insider)**

St. Louis – It's that time of year for faith to be tested. Only, the Tampa Bay Lightning reached that period much earlier this season than usual.

Normally, the type of trepidation the Lightning elicit from their current state of play comes in February or March when the playoffs are just far enough away to feel like the season will collapse. But it's only November. The season is only 16 games deep.

Yet, the panic button is sitting within reach and plenty wonder if it's time to press it down with force.

For the third consecutive game on Tuesday, the Lightning lost in regulation. For the second consecutive game, Tampa Bay failed to score a goal, something that has not happened to the Lightning since October 24 and 27, 2015, in losses to Chicago and St. Louis.

And for the third consecutive game, the Lightning didn't have enough push or discipline in their game – not the penalty variety – to give them a chance at victory. And for the umpteenth time on the season when things go wrong, it had nothing to do with the goaltending.

"This is frustrating, but at the same time, you have to embrace the challenges," defenseman Victor Hedman said. "They come in different ways. Losses increase. You have to embrace it and be grateful that you have an opportunity to turn it around. We play in the best league in the world, and you play against really good players and good teams. So the bottom line is that we know that we have a target on our back every single game we play. Guys want to play good against us. Right now, it's tough for us. But one thing I know is that we can bounce back. Never in my mind do I have any doubt on that. So, we just have to continue to work on this. We're 16 games in, still in the mix, so just have to keep working."

The Lightning did put in the work on Tuesday against the Blues. Tampa Bay came out and executed a good game plan, particularly for a road game. They kept things simple, breaking out of the zone, navigating the neutral zone and creating a forecheck.

Tampa Bay spent a good portion of the period in the offensive zone. The first period numbers reflected a good representation of how the first period looked as the Lightning had more than 60-percent of the expected goal rate and 58-percent of the scoring chances. But suddenly, some of Tampa Bay's bad habits started to come into play.

Players were getting loose behind the defense, some high-quality chances were being handed to the Blues. Jonas Johansson kept St. Louis off the board until the 11:09 mark when the Blues had the Lightning out of position defensively in their zone as Colton Parayko lifted a shot to the far post over the glove of Johansson.

The rest of the period Tampa Bay was on its heels and were fortunate to get out of the opening period down only a goal.

The second period, the Lightning had push. They generated more in the second period than they did in the first. They had the puck a lot, generated plenty of offensive zone time, even if they were not exactly getting to the high danger area around the slot. The Lightning had 33 shot attempts, 22 scoring chances and 12 high danger chances in the second period.

In the span of 19 seconds, however, the game essentially ended.

Jordan Kuyrou caught Tampa Bay in a line change, racing past the Tampa Bay bench to create a lay for Torey Krug to find him with a pass in stride and he skated in alone on Johansson to give St. Louis a two-goal lead. On the next shift, Johansson tried to rim a puck up the boards for an exit but missed the mark and two quick passes and a fake shot later, Jakub Vrana had an open net at the right circle off a pass from Krug.

In the blink of an eye, a bad line change and a defensive zone turnover during a one-goal deficit into three goals with less than four minutes left in the second period.

“You’re sitting watching this game, there’s three-and-a-half minutes left in the (second) period it’s 1–0 any you’re probably feeling half decent about the game,” Lightning head coach Jon Cooper said. “A bad change and then a turnover in our end and they both end up in the back of the net. All of a sudden a minute later in the dressing room you’re down 3-0 and the guys were probably a little bit discouraged at that. It’s tough to give those up at the end of the period. But I think what’s frustrating for the guys is they didn’t feel like they gave up anything in the second period and all of a sudden we’re down 3-0.”

The game was, for all intents and purposes, over at that point. The Blues are one of the top defensive teams in the league and were committed defensively to close the game out. The Lightning were unable to generate the same type of puck possession in the third as they did in the first two periods. St. Louis blocked 26 shots in the game, nine in the third period.

It added up to another loss as the Lightning try to figure out how to stop repeating some of the same mistakes that have been a big reason Tampa Bay has allowed the third most goals in the league to this point.

“It’s just going out there and just focus on the things that we talk about daily, in video meetings on the ice and practice,” center Anthony Cirelli said. “We know what we need to do. We just have to go out there and do it. At this point everyone’s got to kind of step up, each and every guy, and just go out there and do it. We’ve been told so obviously it’s very, very frustrating. But a little adversity you just have to build through it and keep looking at the positives and working on that.”

Tampa Bay’s 6-6-4 record is the fewest number of wins through 16 games under Cooper. With 16 points, it matches the fewest number of points Tampa Bay has had through 16 games since Cooper took over behind the bench. Both of those other occurrences were at the start of the 2015-16 season, when Tampa Bay was 7-7-2 through 16 games.

The Lightning next head for Chicago, the team that sent the Lightning into this mini-slide a week ago. Now they have to find a way to stop the slide.

“The guys are pressing and not letting the game come to them and trying to force things,” Cooper said. “When that happens, the mental side takes over and sometimes you can struggle. So we just have to fight through it. You go through situations like this in a season and you just have to get through it. The teams that have the mental makeup they’ll get through stuff like this.”

We’re about to find out if the Lightning have the mental makeup this season.

NOTES

Tampa Bay recalled D Haydn Fleury from his conditioning assignment with the Syracuse Crunch. ... D Erik Cernak skated on Tuesday but did not play and is considered day-to-day. ... The Lightning

recorded zero penalty minutes in a game for only the fifth time in franchise history and the first time in a road game (Last: Mar. 30, 2021 vs. CBJ). ... Steven Stamkos and Nick Paul both finished minus-5. ... Tampa Bay scratched Austin Watson, Cernak and Fleury. ... D Phil Myers made his season debut, and his first game in the NHL in nearly a calendar year, finishing with 15:32 of ice time with 5 shot attempts, 2 hits and 2 blocked shots.

MY THREE STARS

1. Blues G Jordan Binnington – Didn't have to be spectacular but did stop all 30 shots he faced
2. Blues RW Jordan Kyrou – Two goals, six shots
3. Blues D Colton Parayko – Goal, plus-2, four shots, three hits, three blocked shots

Max Groshev records hat trick in 5-4 win over Islanders Syracuse Crunch

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – *Max Groshev* recorded a hat trick in a 5-4 Syracuse Crunch win over the Bridgeport Islanders today at Total Mortgage Arena.

The win advances Syracuse to 7-3-0-2 on the season. The Crunch have swept the two-game season series against the Islanders for the first time since the 2017-18 season.

Crunch goaltender *Brandon Halverson* stopped 29-of-33 shots in victory. *Jakub Skarek* turned aside 20-of-24 in net for the Islanders. The Syracuse power play converted on 1-of-3 opportunities, while Bridgeport went 1-for-6.

The Crunch jumped out to a 3-0 lead with a strong first period. It started with a shorthanded goal 11:20 into the game. *Gabriel Fortier* came in down the right side on a two-on-one rush with Groshev. At the last second, he threw a cross-slot feed for Groshev to chip in over Skarek. Five minutes later, Groshev scored his second of the game on a similar play. This time, he came in on a rush with *Mitchell Chaffee*. *Gabriel Dumont* rounded out first period scoring with five seconds remaining in the frame when he sent in a rebound opportunity while on the man-advantage.

Syracuse continued to build on their lead with another goal halfway through the second period. *Declan Carlile* circled the puck around the zone and fired a shot from the left circle. Skarek made the stop, but the rebound came out into the high slot for *Joe Carroll* to send home. Bridgeport finally responded to steal one back at the 15:19 mark when *Cole Bardreau* centered a feed for *Jeff Kubiak*.

The Islanders added two more goals in the final frame to rally back within one. *Matthew Maggio's* one-timer from the right circle was blocked, but *Samuel Asselin* found the rebound and threw it in while on the power play early in the period. *Brian Pinho* then made it a one-goal game with just 4:33 remaining when he scored during a scramble in front of the net. Groshev halted the comeback effort with his hat trick goal into the empty net in the final two minutes of play. With 1:10 remaining in the game, *Bardreau* scored with a long shot from the right point, but Syracuse held on for the victory.

The Crunch return home to host the Hartford Wolf Pack on Friday.

Crunchables: The Crunch lead the league with five shorthanded goals...*Max Groshev* has five goals in his last two games.

Monica Quimby fights to get women's sled hockey recognized globally **Joey Knight (Tampa Bay Times)**

Headstrong as ever, the seasoned defender has asserted herself at a chronological blue line, braced for Father Time's daunting rush. The numbers, and natural law, are against her.

Monica Quimby, 37, doesn't care. A de facto enforcer on the highly successful U.S. women's development sled hockey team, Quimby remains in dogged pursuit of Paralympic gold. Problem is, women's sled hockey isn't on the Paralympic Winter Games slate and won't be until 2030 at the earliest, when Quimby will be in her mid-40s.

But when adversity has remained a bedfellow your entire adult life, you don't sweat the reality of middle age. You check it, hard.

"Oh, I'm fighting," said Quimby, who resides in Lakewood Ranch. "I'll be going down swinging. I play defense."

Paralyzed from the waist down in a 2006 skiing accident, Quimby has evolved into one of her sport's most physical players and fiercest advocates. Starting Thursday, she and the Lightning sled team join 29 other NHL-affiliated sled clubs for the 13th USA Hockey Sled Classic at AdventHealth Center Ice in Wesley Chapel. The Lightning will compete in Tier 4.

Thing is, Quimby could be the lone female on the Tampa Bay roster. "We might have one more that will be coming as well," she added.

The disparity typifies the struggle Quimby and her peers have endured to find their spot on the Paralympic stage.

While sled ice hockey at the Paralympics technically has been a mixed-gender event for more than a decade, only three female players have participated in the Games as of 2022. The U.S. team never has featured a woman.

"Even though there's been more than one that has been good enough to play," Quimby said.

Undeterred, the U.S. women's development team forges on with the subtlety of a steamroller. At the 2023 Women's World Challenge — a fledgling event staged in early September in Green Bay, Wisconsin — the U.S. posted four shutouts in as many games to capture its second consecutive gold medal.

"Our girls have one mission right now," U.S. coach Rose Misiewicz said at the event, "and that's to take this sport globally."

The event featured only three other teams: Canada, Great Britain and Team World (players from Europe, North America and Asia). The prerequisite for the Paralympics is at least eight teams spanning at least three continents, according to Quimby.

"We've had two world challenges and we've won gold back-to-back these last two years," she said. "We're on our way to have a world championship, then the next stop would be Paralympics."

Raised in Maine, Quimby was a sophomore skier on the University of New Hampshire's club team in 2006 when a freak accident altered her life. Swerving to avoid a snowboarder on a trail, she struck

the top of a ski jump sideways and flew through the air. The landing broke the L1 vertebrae in her back, leaving her paralyzed.

Disillusioned with sports in the accident's immediate wake, she earned a degree in molecular biology and a master's in higher education, ultimately becoming an adjunct professor at a Maine community college. Ultimately, she again gravitated toward athletics, taking up para-canoeing after moving to Florida, and earning a silver medal at the 2014 Lake Placid International Regatta in New York.

"I got a silver medal, which was great, but I was actually recruiting people from the sled hockey team that was down in Fort Myers to come try para-canoe and I fell in love with sled hockey," Quimby said. "So the opposite happened. So instead of going for Rio in (the 2016 Paralympic Games) for para-canoe, I switched (to sled hockey)."

One of her early mentors in her new sport: Berkeley Prep alumnus Declan Farmer, a bilateral amputee and three-time Winter Paralympics gold medalist. Within about eight months, Farmer had imparted to her most of the sport's basics and nuances.

She learned of the core strength required to navigate the sleds, which feature two blades anywhere from 2 inches to a half-inch apart (depending on one's skill level). She learned how to propel herself with the pair of sticks afforded each player, smaller versions of hockey sticks which feature ice picks on one end that provide traction on the ice.

She quickly realized there's no backward skating, but virtually all other rules of conventional hockey apply.

"It's full check," Quimby said.

"Those boards are really hard, there's no flex where we get hit. I think that shocks people at first, when you see that it's a full-check adaptive sport. I love that part of the game, it's just so fun. It's so full contact ... but everybody is friends. When you're on the ice, you're playing the game, but everybody is super supportive. It's just such a great environment."

Veteran defender Monica Quimby (white jersey) scores for Team USA against Great Britain during the 2023 Para Ice Hockey Women's World Challenge. The U.S. captured the gold medal in the event, held in September in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Veteran defender Monica Quimby (white jersey) scores for Team USA against Great Britain during the 2023 Para Ice Hockey Women's World Challenge. The U.S. captured the gold medal in the event, held in September in Green Bay, Wisconsin. [Courtesy of Monica Quimby]

By 2014, Quimby had earned an alternate spot on the women's national team. Four years later, she scored her first international goal in a 7-0 romp of Team Europe during the Women's International Para Ice Hockey Cup in the Czech Republic. Upon winning that event, the team was informed it would be included under USA Hockey's umbrella, meaning it would get sponsorship money and training perks.

A half-decade later, the quest for equality on the international stage moves forward, if ever so deliberately. Stands to reason.

No going backward in this sport.

"We're definitely going in the right direction," Quimby said.