



Columbus Blue Jackets News Clips April 2, 2025

Columbus Blue Jackets

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Columbus Dispatch / Columbus Blue Jackets down Nashville Predators 8-4 for big victory

By Brian Hedger- April 2, 2025

Each of the Blue Jackets' games in this final stretch has become a 'must-win' situation to preserve their playoff chances.

That means there was no room for a slip-up Tuesday night at Nationwide Arena, where the Jackets avoided one with an 8-4 victory over a Nashville Predators team that's playing out the string. Kirill Marchenko's third career hat trick and career-high four points paced three multi-goal scorers.

"We scored tonight early, but we didn't particularly play the right way, and it's funny how that goes, right?" Blue Jackets coach Dean Evason said. "We had the results tonight, but the start wasn't good. We were cheating it. We were giving up odd-man rushes. We were very fortunate early to not be behind."

The Blue Jackets (34-30-9) moved to 77 points but didn't gain ground in their pursuit of the second wild-card spot in the NHL's Eastern Conference. They did keep pace with the Montreal Canadiens (35-30-9), who needed goals from Nick Suzuki with nine seconds left in regulation and 29 seconds into overtime to push their point total to 79 with a 3-2 OT win over the Florida Panthers in Montreal.

Columbus also moved three points ahead of the idle Detroit Red Wings (74 points) and New York Islanders (74 points), who lost to the Tampa Bay Lightning on Tuesday night.

"Everyone's bought in to win a game," Blue Jackets center Sean Monahan said. "Everyone's got a job to do. If you're out there on the power play, you've got to try and score a goal or get momentum. If you're killing penalties, keep the puck out of the net. Everyone's been stepping up, and everyone in this locker room wants to be playing in (late) April."

Marchenko led the way for the Jackets' latest goal bonanza, topping the 30-goal mark for the first time in his career with his hat trick and four points. Monahan and Adam Fantilli scored two goals each and Dante Fabbro scored his seventh of the season during a game that pushed the Jackets' single-season franchise record to 14 games with six-plus goals.

Monahan also added two assists for the eighth four-point game of his career and second of the season — the first in a 7-6 overtime win Nov. 21 over the Tampa Bay Lightning — and Kent Johnson finished with three assists for the second three-point game of his career. Zach Werenski and Boone Jenner each finished with two points on two assists, and Fabbro added an assist for a two-point night.

Elvis Merzlikins (24 saves) earned the win in net, while Nashville's Juuse Saros took the loss after allowing seven goals on 26 shots through two periods. Saros was replaced to start the third by Justus Annunen, who allowed Marchenko's third goal.

The Blue Jackets led 3-1 after the first period on goals by Marchenko, Fantilli and Monahan. They pushed it to 4-1 in the second on Marchenko's second of the game, which got him to 30 goals, but the Predators cut it to 4-3 on back-to-back goals from Michael Bunting and Justin Barron.

That's when the floodgates opened.

Fantilli, Monahan and Fabbro scored three unanswered goals to close out the second with the Blue Jackets ahead 7-3, and Marchenko's third goal of the night pushed it to 8-3 early in the third — assisted by Monahan and Fabbro. Hats flew onto the ice from the crowd of 15,605 to celebrate the accomplishment, which couldn't have happened at a better time for the Blue Jackets.

They also went 2 for 5 on power plays, getting both of Monahan's goals with a man-advantage.

"I think right from the hop, the boys were ready to play," Fantilli said. "Marchy scored his first shift. I mean, he didn't stop from there. That whole line didn't stop from there. Our power play was great to day, which is something we've been looking for. It was a great all-around win."

The Athletic / Blue Jackets take early lead and ride Kirill Marchenko's hat trick to blowout win

By Aaron Portzline- April 2, 2025

COLUMBUS, Ohio — It's been a little while since the Columbus Blue Jackets have felt this way. They've continued to win enough games to hang in the playoff race, and they've had a few games where their lofty skill has hung gaudy goal numbers.

But there haven't been many games of late where they scored early, scored often — thanks, in part, to the power play — and watched the final minutes tick away without much drama or nail-biting.

"We needed a win like that," Blue Jackets coach Dean Evason said. "We need all the wins. Yeah, it was a little more relaxed at the end than it has been."

Kirill Marchenko scored his third career hat trick, Adam Fantilli and Sean Monahan scored two goals each, and seven players enjoyed multi-point nights in the Blue Jackets' 8-4 rout of the Nashville Predators before 15,605 in Nationwide Arena.

It marked a season high in goals for the Blue Jackets, who hadn't won in regulation since March 9 against the New York Rangers. There's one other thing, remarkably, that the Blue Jackets hadn't done since that night in Madison Square Garden: score first.

Blue Jackets defenseman Zach Werenski found Marchenko skating wide open through the slot only 1:15 into the game. Never has a 1-0 lead — the Blue Jackets' first in nine games — felt so important, so stress-reducing.

"It was great," Fantilli said. "I don't know how many games it's been since we scored first, but that's a huge part of the game. You don't have to chase it. Marchy coming up with that one was awesome, just huge."

MARCHY STARTS US OFF STRONG! 🤖 @FanaticsBook | #CBJ pic.twitter.com/ZcnSM8EQM7

— Columbus Blue Jackets (@BlueJacketsNHL) April 1, 2025

Marchenko (3-1-4) and Monahan (2-2-4) both had four-point nights. Fantilli (2-1-3) and Kent Johnson (0-3-3) had three-point nights, while Dante Fabbro (1-1-2), Werenski (0-2-2) and Boone Jenner had multi-point nights as the Blue Jackets dialed up 37 shots on goal.

With his two points, Werenski has 20-54-74 on the season, tied with Johnny Gaudreau (2022-23) for the fifth-most points in a single season in franchise history. His assist total (54) is the fourth-highest in a single season. It was a night to flex muscles.

During their last nine games, the Blue Jackets had held a lead for a grand total of 23 seconds. That puts a lot of stress on a team, but that seemed alleviated Tuesday.

By the end of the first period, it was 3-1. By the end of the second, it was 7-3, which was enough to chase Nashville starting goaltender Juuse Saros. By the end of the game, Evason was sending out bottom-six forwards and bottom-pair defensemen to win the Jackets' power play.

For weeks now, Evason has insisted that the Blue Jackets have been playing well at the start of games — and there are analytics that support this — despite not getting rewarded for it. On Tuesday, he argued the opposite, that the Blue Jackets — ironically enough — were rewarded despite now playing well.

(Editor's note: Coaches are no fun.)

"We've talked for a bit now, and I've scolded you guys (in the media) for talking to our players about our starts the whole time," Evason said. "We had the results tonight, but the start wasn't good. We were cheating it. We were giving up odd-man rushes.

"We were very fortunate to not be behind. It kinda flipped."

Marchy's 2nd of the night and 30th of the szn! 🇺🇸 @FanaticsBook | #CBJ pic.twitter.com/bLSjENq90X

— Columbus Blue Jackets (@BlueJacketsNHL) April 2, 2025

Marchenko scored his second and third goals at 4:12 of the second period and 5:23 of the third, respectively, bringing about a shower of hats from the stands. Marchenko, who rarely does anything without a bounce in his step and smile, sat on the bench and beamed beside his teammates.

He's only the fourth Blue Jackets player to register three or more hat tricks, joining Rick Nash (six), Cam Atkinson (four) and Tyler Wright (three).

"I sit there on the bench (with the hats falling overhead) and it feels like a dream, every time," Marchenko said. "I really enjoy this moment because it happens at home. On the road, it doesn't feel like that."

Marchenko's trio of goals pushed him to 31 on the season, becoming the first Blue Jackets player to score 30 or more since Atkinson did it in 2018-19. He's the eighth player in franchise history to hit 30 goals in a season.

"My linemates, they make everything (work) for me," Marchenko said. "I can just shoot at the net and that's it.

"(A night like this) gives us a lot of confidence and energy. Everybody enjoys this moment, but now the game is done and we look to the future and get ready for the next game."

The Predators had pulled to 4-3 midway through the second — no, this was not a display of excellent goaltending on either end — before Fantilli scored an important goal, his second of the game, after a long shift by Columbus in its own end.

Fantilli was sprung by a pass from Jenner and skated past the Nashville defense for a breakaway goal to make it 5-3. Before the end of the period, Monahan scored his second of the game and Fabbro added one against his former club to make it 7-3.

IT'S RAINING HATS IN NATIONWIDE! @FanaticsBook | #CBJ pic.twitter.com/YaxIPuzTwe

— Columbus Blue Jackets (@BlueJacketsNHL) April 2, 2025

Both of Monahan's goals were power-play goals. If any aspect of the Blue Jackets' game could use a boost right now, it might be special teams.

The Jackets, who hadn't scored two man-up goals in a game since Jan. 7, had scored one goal — and allowed four short-handed goals — since the middle of March. It was a stunning drop after the unit lingered in the league's top half for most of the season.

"Hopefully that can jump-start us in both of the special teams," Evason said. "We've talked about how those have to be better. Tonight, they were. They need to be even better moving forward."

The win allowed the Blue Jackets to jump the Rangers in the standings and move up to ninth place in the Eastern Conference, two points behind the Montreal Canadiens for the final wild-card spot. The Canadians came back to beat the Florida Panthers in overtime.

One could tell by listening to Blue Jackets players, especially Monahan, that the challenge will be to forget this game quickly. They needed this, to be sure, but they also must understand that they likely won't see this much open ice again in the final nine games of the season.

A huge test is waiting Thursday, when the Colorado Avalanche play in Nationwide.

"We know it's not going to be like this the rest of the way, so get that out of the way," Monahan said.

"We'll take the two points, but, yeah, we move forward."

The Athletic / Veteran James van Riemsdyk feels the squeeze of Blue Jackets' roster glut

By Aaron Portzline- April 2, 2025

COLUMBUS, Ohio — James van Riemsdyk has been around long enough to understand the situation. But that doesn't mean the Columbus Blue Jackets' 35-year-old winger has to like it.

Not only did the Blue Jackets add two veteran forwards at the NHL trade deadline, they're healthier than they've been all season. It's so crowded in the dressing room that defenseman Jordan Harris and forward Jack Williams are dressing in temporary stalls.

And if you think the room is crowded, you should see coach Dean Evason's lineup card.

That's how van Riemsdyk has become the odd man out, drawing a healthy scratch in the last two games and possibly a third when the Blue Jackets host the Nashville Predators on Tuesday in Nationwide Arena. After Monday's practice, Evason said he was still deciding on a lineup.

"(A decision regarding van Riemsdyk) is one of the biggest parts of our (coaches' meetings) right now," Evason said. "It consumes a lot of our time. They're all hard because everybody wants to play and honestly, we don't think we've had anyone who has played poorly or poor enough to not be in our lineup. I'll be honest with you: Do we know we're making the right decision? No. But you've got to make a decision, and so we did."

Evason's candor is refreshing. But he's right. The decision to make van Riemsdyk a healthy scratch does raise some eyebrows, especially with the upstart Blue Jackets lurking just 2 points behind the Montreal Canadiens for the eighth and final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference with a game in hand.

"You want to play," van Riemsdyk told The Athletic on Monday. "These are the most fun games to play, so of course you want to be playing. Over the course of this season, I think I've performed fairly well and done the things I want to be doing. I think I bring value when I'm in there."

"Ultimately, we don't make those decisions as players. That doesn't make it easier, but you do realize that you're not in control of it. It still sucks."

James van Riemsdyk – Columbus Blue Jackets (6) pic.twitter.com/kx8dixcSlo

— NHL Goal Videos (@NHLGoalVideos) January 3, 2025

Van Riemsdyk has 14-16-30 in 63 games, his highest goal total in three seasons. But those numbers look more impressive when presented with context.

Among players with 14 or more goals, only Ottawa's Adam Gaudette (10:16) and Edmonton's Corey Perry (11:42) have drawn less ice time than van Riemsdyk (12:20). Among players with 30 or more points this season, only one — Carolina's Eric Robinson, a former Jacket — has drawn less ice time (12:00). If you rank the Blue Jackets by goals scored per 60 minutes of playing time at five-on-five, van Riemsdyk (.94) trails only Kent Johnson (1.39), Kirill Marchenko (1.21) and Mathieu Olivier (.97).

Further, it's the type of goals he's scored this year — greasy, net-front, high-traffic goals — that usually rule the day when the temperature rises in the final few weeks of the season. Van Riemsdyk is one of the best heavy-traffic scorers in the NHL.

Seven of van Riemsdyk's 14 goals have been scored on deflections or tip-ins, and 11 of the 14 have been scored from within 10 feet of the cage. For perspective, the hashmarks between the two faceoff circles are 10 feet from the goal line.

"As I've gotten older, you learn to handle it better," van Riemsdyk said. "If you're pissed off — and you probably should be if you've got that competitiveness in you — you have to channel it the right way and be ready when your number is called. I've shown when I'm in there that I've been productive and I've helped the team. Now I have to be patient and when I get an opportunity, be ready for it. Things always kind of shake themselves out."

James van Riemsdyk – Columbus Blue Jackets (11) pic.twitter.com/QJFOpfj8rd

— NHL Goal Videos (@NHLGoalVideos) February 9, 2025

Van Riemsdyk said he's trying to make the most of the situation.

When GM Don Waddell signed him as a free agent late in the summer, the Blue Jackets knew they were adding a veteran player — he's dressed in 1,074 games, more than any other forward, and in 82 Stanley Cup playoff games, more than any player on the roster — but also an extension of the coaching staff.

In his 16th season, van Riemsdyk is one of the more respected players in the game, and he's put that to use while out of the lineup the last two games. Before this, he'd played every game since Dec. 5, but he was a healthy scratch six times in a 10-game stretch in November.

The Blue Jackets are 3-6-0 with one regulation win when he sits.

"There are guys you develop relationships with through the year, and so I try to watch (their games) and try to help the team in that way," van Riemsdyk said. "Guys will ask different things about certain plays or situational stuff, and I want to be a resource for that. That's part of my value to the team, is being able to use my experience in a positive way to help guys."

"I've been in this scenario a lot of times in my career, a playoff push down the stretch when every game is important. There's stuff you can learn from that, and hopefully guys feel like they can ask me things and we can talk through certain situations. That's part of having a good team environment."

[BlueJackets.com / Blue Jackets ease past Predators for 8-4 victory](#)

By Craig Merz- April 2, 2025

COLUMBUS -- Kirill Marchenko scored his third NHL hat trick and had an assist for the Columbus Blue Jackets, who defeated the Nashville Predators 8-4 at Nationwide Arena on Tuesday.

"On the bench, it feels like a dream every time when you score a hat trick and like all [the] hats are going on the ice," he said. "I really enjoy this moment because I scored a hat trick at home, because on the road, it's not really feeling like that."

Sean Monahan had two goals and two assists, Adam Fantilli scored twice and had an assist, and Kent Johnson had three assists for the Blue Jackets (34-30-9), who have won three of their past four. Elvis Merzlikins made 24 saves.

"It's a 60-minute game. Tonight, we were ready to go off the hop and got some early ones," Monahan said. "It's a league where you have to compete all night and find ways to win. Regardless of whatever happened in the first (period), you've got to be at your best."

Columbus remained two points behind the Montreal Canadiens for the second wild card into the Stanley Cup Playoffs from the Eastern Conference with a game in hand.

Luke Evangelista had two assists, and Juuse Saros allowed seven goals on 26 shots playing the first two periods for the Predators (27-40-8). Justus Annunen made 10 saves.

Nashville has lost four straight and is 2-8-1 in its past 11 games. The Predators lost 2-1 at the Philadelphia Flyers on Monday.

"It was a tough game, but the effort was there, the compete was there," Nashville coach Andrew Brunette said. "We just self-inflicted a little bit. Game management, shift management got us in trouble on three goals. Things that as a young team right now that we have to learn and get better at."

Marchenko made it 1-0 for Columbus at 1:15 of the first period with a shot from the low slot after Zach Werenski dug the puck out of the right corner. Marchenko set an NHL career high by scoring in a fourth straight game (six goals).

It was the first time in 10 games that the Blue Jackets scored first.

"I don't know how many games it's been since we scored first, but that's a huge part of the game. (Otherwise) you have to chase it," Fantilli said. "So [Marchenko] coming up with that one was awesome, was huge."

Fantilli increased the lead to 2-0 at 16:34 with a one-timer from the right face-off circle, and Monahan made it 3-0 on the power play at 18:10 off a shot from the right dot.

Filip Forsberg cut it to 3-1 at 18:34, squeezing a shot between Merzlikins' left shoulder and the crossbar.

Marchenko pushed it to 4-1 at 4:12 of the second period before the Predators scored twice within 43 seconds to pull to within 4-3, on goals by Michael Bunting at 5:43 and Justin Barron at 6:26.

Fantilli extended the lead to 5-3 at 12:00 when he scored off a pass up the middle by Boone Jenner, who started the rush by intercepting a pass in the defensive zone.

"We had a great offensive-zone shift and turn over the puck and they scored," Brunette said. "That was really deflating for our group after coming in on the back-to-back, getting in late and clawing our way back into position."

Monahan made it 6-3 with a power-play goal at 16:47, stuffing the puck inside the right post. Dante Fabbro, claimed off waivers from Nashville on Nov. 10, then made it 7-3 at 19:41.

Marchenko completed the hat trick and made it 8-3 at 5:23 of the third period with his 31st goal of the season.

"The reason he's had success is because he has been hard, because he's been heavy, because he's been tenacious on pucks," Blue Jackets coach Dean Evason said. "He's getting more opportunities because he's getting it back. He's not just one and done. He's not just fanning out and looking for a one-timer, which was fantastic tonight."

Jordan Oesterle scored at 9:02 for the 8-4 final.

NOTES: The Blue Jackets scored at least six goals for the 14th time this season, passing the Washington Capitals for the most in the NHL. ... Jenner had two assists to give him eight points (five goals, three assists) in a five-game point streak but had his four-game goal streak end. ... Werenski also had two assists. ... Predators forward Jakub Vrana had an assist in his 400th NHL game. ... Nashville used 11 forwards and seven defensemen for the second straight game.

[BlueJackets.com / Winning Thoughts: Marchenko's hat trick highlights a crucial victory](#)

By Jeff Svoboda- April 2, 2025

After CBJ wins, we'll give three takeaways about what stood out or what we'll remember from the Blue Jackets victory.

BLUE JACKETS 8, PREDATORS 4

1. Kirill Marchenko's third career hat trick highlighted a night in which the Jackets' top dawgs brought their best.

The saying goes that big-time players make big-time plays in big-time games, and that's how it went for the Blue Jackets on Tuesday night. With 10 games to go and the Blue Jackets needing to stay close to Montreal for the final Eastern Conference playoff spot, Columbus had four players notch at least three points for just the third time in team history on the way to the eighth eight-goal game in franchise annals.

No one shone brighter than Marchenko, who had the opening goal of the first, second and third periods to notch his third career hat trick, as well as the Blue Jackets' first one at home this year. It was the third overall this season for Columbus and 53rd in franchise history, and it left Marchenko as just one of four players in team history with at least three hat tricks (Cam Atkinson, 6, Rick Nash, 4, Tyler Wright, 3).

"I say on the bench it feels like a dream every time when you score a hat trick and all the hats are going on the ice," Marchenko said. "I really enjoy this moment because I score a hat trick at home because on the road, it doesn't feel like that. Here, I just try to enjoy this moment."

Marchenko added an assist for his first career four-point night, while linemate Sean Monahan also had four points with two goals and two assists. Adam Fantilli added a two-goal, three-point night, while Kent Johnson had three helpers to complete the quartet of players with at least three points.

But it was Marchenko's night, especially as he became the first CBJ player and eighth all-time to reach the 30-goal plateau in a single season.

"I really wanted to score 30," he said. "It feels great, but (Alex) Ovechkin scored how much? 37 right now (38 after scoring Tuesday night). (I'll try) to score more. It's not done."

2. The Blue Jackets finally got to play with a lead on the way to the win over the Predators.

Saturday at Ottawa, Columbus gave up the first goal of the game to the Senators, and it marked the ninth straight contest in which the Blue Jackets found themselves in a 1-0 hole.

The irony is that the Blue Jackets have been one of the better teams in the NHL this season at scoring first, so the sudden reversal of fortunes was a bit foreign. Columbus has said all the right things – they haven't been lacking effort at the start of games, and the pressure of having to come back hasn't weighed on them, players and coaches noted – but the reality is in hockey, you'd rather play from in front than from behind.

Fans might have thought it was an April Fools' Day prank, then, when they saw the Blue Jackets need just 75 seconds to get on the board against the Preds. Marchenko did the honors, as Zach Werenski pulled the puck out of a scrum and set up the Russian wing in the slot for a quick shot past goalie Juuse Saros.

Columbus never trailed from there – the 58-plus minutes with a lead was a far cry from the 23 total seconds the Blue Jackets led in the previous nine games – and built leads of 3-0, 4-1 and 8-3 before Nashville set the final score.

"I think right from the hop, the boys were ready to play," Fantilli said. "Marchy scored on his first shift. He didn't stop from there. Their whole line didn't stop from there. Our power play was great today, something we've been looking for. It was a great all-around win."

Head coach Dean Evason didn't quite have the same opinion of the start, though. Even though the Blue Jackets built a three-goal advantage in the opening frame, they gave up too many chances to the Predators for the coach's liking, but he was happy with the result.

"We scored tonight early, but we didn't particularly play the right way," Evason said. "It's funny how that goes, right? We've talked for a bit now, and I scolded you guys for talking about our starts to the players all the time, but we had the results tonight but the start wasn't good. We were cheating it, we were giving up odd-man rushes. We were very fortunate early to not be behind. It kind of flipped."

3. The Blue Jackets' power play once again looked powerful.

As the calendar flipped from 2024 to '25, Columbus was the home of one of the hottest power plays in the NHL. From Dec. 8 through Jan. 11, the Blue Jackets scored a power-play goal in 13 of 17 games, tallying 16 times overall in 45 chances for a 35.5 percent success rate.

But as the weather got colder, so did the CBJ man advantage. In 27 games over a two-month-plus span, the Blue Jackets notched just three power-play goals while allowing four shorthanded tallies, which is not exactly a recipe for success in the modern NHL.

Things could be turning around, though. Columbus broke a 10-game stretch without a power-play tally Friday, and on Tuesday night, the Blue Jackets went 2-for-5 on the man advantage for its first multigoal game on the PP since Jan. 7.

"We did some different things as far as maybe not being as stagnant as we have," Evason said. "We've talked about getting some movement and we did that, but yeah, to get rewarded (was important). The penalty kill as well. Hopefully that can jump-start us in both the special teams."

Monahan had both power-play goals – beating goalie Juuse Saros from the wing in the first period and sliding the rebound of a Marchenko shot past Saros in the second – and one could argue his return to the lineup is one of the reasons the unit has started to have more success. Columbus clicked at a rate well above 20 percent before he was injured in early January in Pittsburgh, and the power-play struggles coincided with his time out of the lineup.

"I think the last couple of games, we've been moving it around pretty well," Monahan said. "It's confidence, guys getting touches and guys reading off each other. We're doing a better job with that right now."

The Hockey Writers / Blue Jackets Take Care of Business in Win Over Predators

By Mark Scheig- April 2, 2025

The Columbus Blue Jackets were in desperate need of an early lead against the Nashville Predators. Not only did they get that, their offense exploded in a much-needed way.

Kirill Marchenko scored a hat trick and added an assist. Sean Monahan added two goals and two assists while Adam Fantilli and Kent Johnson had three-point nights in an 8-4 win over the Predators on Tuesday night. Luke Evangelista paced the Predators with two helpers on the night.

The Blue Jackets have needed a game like this for some time.

Game Recap

Marchenko opened the scoring just 1:15 into the game finishing off a Zach Werenski pass. Despite the early lead, head coach Dean Evason was not happy with the start. He gathered his team around at the bench during the first TV timeout and chatted about not cheating the game.

The message was well received afterwards. Goals by Fantilli and Monahan expanded the lead to 3-0 late in the first period. Filip Forsberg then responded just 24 seconds later on a snipe to cut it to 3-1 after the first.

Marchenko scored his second of the night early in the second period to extend to a 4-1 Blue Jackets' lead. That's when the Predators were able to close the gap in short order.

Michael Bunting and Justin Barron scored 43 seconds apart to make it a 4-3 game. Some nerves started to creep in amongst the fans. Both shots were scored from the right circle with traffic in front of the net. But that was as close as the Predators would get on Tuesday.

The Blue Jackets piled on three more goals to get it to 7-3. Fantilli and Monahan each scored their second of the night. The former Predator Dante Fabbro then scored against his old team. It was his first game against them since being claimed off waivers.

In the third, Monahan again found Marchenko which completed his hat trick. The three goals gave Marchenko 31 on the season giving him his first 30-goal NHL season.

Postgame, Marchenko admitted being very happy playing with Monahan.

"I scored three tonight. I'm so happy for sure," Marchenko said. "He gave me great passes...He gives me confidence too & we feel each other really well right now & I enjoy playing with him. I hope we'll play together a long time."

Jordan Oesterle added a goal in the third to get to the final score of 8-4.

The game itself not only had a lot of goals. It had a lot of penalty minutes too. Near the end, Forsberg was taken down by Ivan Provorov. Ryan O'Reilly then fought Provorov. It capped off a night in which 36 PIM's were secured combined, 19 by Nashville and 17 by the Blue Jackets.

The Blue Jackets also scored two power-play goals along the way. It had badly struggled before Tuesday's game.



Elvis Merzlikins made 24 saves to get the win. Juuse Saros started and allowed seven on 26 shots. Justus Annunen came on in relief in the third and stopped 10 of 11.

The Blue Jackets were unable to gain ground as Montreal defeated Florida in overtime. They remain two points in back of the Canadiens but do hold a game in hand.

The Blue Jackets will practice Wednesday in advance of Thursday's game against the Colorado Avalanche. The Predators now head to Dallas for a Thursday game with the Stars.

1st Ohio Battery / CBJ 8, NSH 4: Marchenko's Hat Trick, Two-Goal Nights From Monahan, Fantilli Lead Blue Jackets Offensive Explosion In Win

By Ed Francis- April 2, 2025

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	1	2	1	4
	3	4	1	8

CBJ GOALS:

Marchenko (P1, 1:15)

Fantilli (P1, 16:34)

Monahan (P1, 18:50)

Marchenko (2) (P2, 4:12)

Fantilli (2) (P2, 12:00)

Monahan (2) (P2, 16:47)

Fabbro (P2, 19:41)

Marchenko (3) (P3, 5:23)

The cannon got a workout Tuesday night.

Kirill Marchenko notched the third hat trick of his career and Sean Monahan and Adam Fantilli scored two goals each Tuesday night in the Columbus Blue Jackets' dominant 8-4 victory over the Nashville Predators.

Marchenko got the scoring started early, picking up his first of the night just 1:15 into the game. The goal ended a streak of nine games in which the Blue Jackets had allowed the first goal of the game.

Fantilli and Monahan scored 2:16 apart late in the first period to extend Columbus' lead to 3-0 before the Predators would get one back to send it into the first intermission 3-1.

Marchenko, Fantilli, and Monahan would score in the same order in the second period, with Marchenko's second of the night giving Columbus a 4-1 lead before two more goals from Nashville made it a 4-3 game prior to Fantilli and Monahan striking again.

Dante Fabbro added a goal in the closing seconds of the middle frame to make it a 7-3 game entering the third.

Marchenko's second of the night made him the first 30-goal scorer for the Blue Jackets since Cam Atkinson had 41 in the 2018-19 season. He's the 8th Blue Jacket to score 30 goals in a season.

Just over five minutes into the third, Marchenko would complete the hat trick, putting hats on the ice at Nationwide Arena for the first time this season.

Here's how the eight-goal outburst went down:

1st Period:

(1:15 — CBJ Goal): Marchenko gives the Blue Jackets an early 1-0 lead. Dmitri Voronkov falls and loses the puck and it looks like an easy clear from Nashville out of their own zone — but a great effort play by Marchenko keeps it in. Seconds later, Werenski has the puck near the left dot and finds Marchenko in the low slot, sliding a pass to him for a quick snapper.

(16:34 — CBJ Goal): Nashville is gassed, Columbus knows it, and the result is a clinic of a goal. Crisp, solid passing between Kent Johnson and Denton Mateychuk leads to the latter finding Fantilli at the left dot. He fires a slapshot past a sprawling Juuse Saros to put the Blue Jackets up 2-0.

(18:10 — CBJ Goal): Monahan and the power play: a combination that the Blue Jackets sorely missed. Johnson and Werenski pass back and forth at the point before Johnson sees Monahan to his right with no one near him. He rips it from the dot and past Saros to give the Blue Jackets a 3-0 lead.

(18:34 — NSH Goal): ...the 3-0 lead lasts 24 seconds. For as good as he already is, Filip Forsberg seems to be even better against the Blue Jackets: he picks up his 15th goal in 28 games against Columbus, going off the post and in for his 29th of the season to trim the lead to 3-1.

2nd Period:

(4:12 — CBJ Goal): Marchenko becomes the first Blue Jacket to get his second of the night here. A little good back and forth here between him and Monahan once they enter the zone. Marchenko has room to skate in on Saros and does just that, taking a pass from Monahan near the low slot and giving Columbus a 4-1 lead just over four minutes into the second.

(5:43 — NSH Goal): Nashville's goal starts with Kent Johnson misplaying the puck in Columbus' own end. Michael Bunting ends up with the puck, turns and fires from the dot and it gets through traffic and past Merzlikins to cut Columbus' lead to 4-2.

(6:26 — NSH Goal): One quick response from Nashville was bad enough, but just 43 seconds after they get one back, they get another back and make it a 4-3 game. Justin Barron takes a pass from Jakub Vrana behind the net and buries it from nearly the same spot Bunting did just seconds earlier.

(12:00 — CBJ Goal): Fantilli joins Marchenko in the two-goal party to give Columbus a 5-3 lead. The Predators sloppily turn it over in their own zone and it ends up on the stick of Jenner. He dishes to Fantilli just past center-ice and Mo has just one defender to beat. He does it, skates in on Saros and beats him five-hole to restore a two-goal lead.

(16:47 — CBJ Goal): Another 'second goal of the night' as Monahan and the power play strike again. Smart hockey by the Blue Jackets man-advantage unit as they keep the puck along the boards until Boone Jenner sees Marchenko in the slot. He fires and Saros make the save but gives up a rebound that is quickly spotted by Monahan, who tucks it around and behind Saros before tapping it in to give Columbus a 6-3 lead.

(19:41 — CBJ Goal): Fabbro joins in the fun as the Blue Jackets again capitalize on strong play along the boards. There's not much else to this one as Fabbro gets the puck just inside the blue line and fires. It

gets through some limited traffic and past Saros to send Columbus into the second intermission with a four-goal lead at 7-3.

3rd Period:

(5:23 — CBJ Goal): Marchenko completes the hat trick to make it 8-3. The Blue Jackets win the faceoff and quickly fire on Justus Annunen, who replaced Saros after the second period. He makes the first save, but the Blue Jackets get it back on the rebound and quickly reset. Fabbro gets it to Monahan in the slot, who taps it to Marchenko. His slapshot beats Annunen glove-side and the hats come raining down.

(9:02 — NSH Goal): Jordan Oesterle scores for Nashville, making it an 8-4 game. He beats Merzlikins from just outside the circle.

NSH	GAME STATS	CBJ
28	SHOTS	37
43%	FACEOFFS	57%
0/4	POWER PLAY	2/5
3/5	PENALTY KILL	4/4
10	HITS	22
11	GIVEAWAYS	12
2	TAKEAWAYS	6
14	BLOCKED SHOTS	12
ALL SITUATIONS ADVANCED STATS		
3.72	EXPECTED GOALS	2.76
59	SHOT ATTEMPTS	62

NSH	GAME STATS	CBJ
31	SCORING CHANCES	25
14	HIGH-DANGER CHANCES	13
Data via NHL.com & NaturalStatTrick.com		

Stat Chat:

- Tonight's game was the third time in franchise history that four or more players had three or more points in a game. It happened in the inaugural 2000-01 season, and then again in the 2018-19 season.
- Marchenko's hat trick was the third in his career, tying Tyler Wright for the third-most in franchise history. Only Atkinson (6) and Rick Nash (5) have more.
- Columbus' two power-play goals was just the third time this season they've scored 2+ on the man-advantage and the first since Jan. 7th, the game Monahan went out with his wrist injury.
- The Blue Jackets scored eight or more goals for the first time since a 9-4 win in Buffalo on Dec. 19th, 2023. It was their first time firing the cannon at Nationwide Arena eight times or more since opening night of the 2021-22 season.

Up Next:

Another home game awaits Thursday night, but it's a big test this time as the Colorado Avalanche come to town. Puck drop is 30 minutes later than typical: 7:30 p.m.

ESPN / NHL playoff standings: Who wins the Presidents' Trophy?

By ESPN staff- April 2, 2025

The NHL began handing out the Presidents' Trophy to the team with the best regular-season record beginning in the 1985-86 campaign. In its history, it has been awarded 37 times to 18 clubs.

Those teams have been anything but a shoo-in to win the Stanley Cup, however. Just two clubs in the salary cap era (since 2005-06) have won the Presidents' Trophy and hoisted the Stanley Cup: the 2007-08 Detroit Red Wings and the 2012-13 Chicago Blackhawks. Two of the past six Presidents' Trophy winners have lost in the first round.

So, that's the challenge ahead for whomever claims the trophy this season. At this juncture, it appears to have been whittled down to one of two teams: the Winnipeg Jets (with 106 points through 74 games) or the Washington Capitals (103 through 73).

The Capitals will face off against the Boston Bruins on Tuesday (7 p.m. ET, ESPN+), while the Jets will take on the Los Angeles Kings (10:30 p.m. ET, ESPN+).

From an overall strength of schedule standpoint, the Jets have a more difficult route. According to Stathletes, the win percentage of their remaining opponents is 51.3%, which is 12th toughest. Compare that to 47.3% -- the 28th toughest -- for the Capitals.

Despite that, Stathletes gives Winnipeg the edge, projecting the Jets for 115.9 points and the Caps for 114.7. It appears this race will come down to the very end!

There are less than three weeks left until season's end on April 17, and we'll help you track it all with the NHL playoff watch. As we traverse the final stretch, we'll provide details on all the playoff races, along with the teams jockeying for position in the 2025 NHL draft lottery.

Note: Playoff chances are via Stathletes.

Jump ahead:

Current playoff matchups

Clinching scenarios

Today's schedule

Yesterday's scores

Expanded standings

Race for No. 1 pick

Current playoff matchups

Eastern Conference

A1 Toronto Maple Leafs vs. WC1 Ottawa Senators

A2 Tampa Bay Lightning vs. A3 Florida Panthers

M1 Washington Capitals vs. WC2 Montreal Canadiens

M2 Carolina Hurricanes vs. M3 New Jersey Devils

Western Conference

C1 Winnipeg Jets vs. WC2 St. Louis Blues

C2 Dallas Stars vs. C3 Colorado Avalanche

P1 Vegas Golden Knights vs. WC1 Minnesota Wild

P2 Los Angeles Kings vs. P3 Edmonton Oilers

Clinching scenarios

The Carolina Hurricanes and Toronto Maple Leafs will both clinch a playoff berth if either of the following occurs:

- The Montreal Canadiens lose to the Florida Panthers in any fashion

- The Columbus Blue Jackets lose to the Nashville Predators in any fashion

The Tampa Bay Lightning will clinch a playoff berth if they defeat the New York Islanders in any fashion, AND both of the following occur:

- The Canadiens lose to the Panthers in regulation

- The Blue Jackets lose to the Predators in regulation

The Panthers will clinch a playoff berth if they defeat the Canadiens in regulation AND the Blue Jackets lose to the Predators in regulation.

The Vegas Golden Knights will clinch a playoff berth if they defeat the Edmonton Oilers in any fashion, OR:

They lose in OT/shootout to the Oilers and either:

- The Calgary Flames lose to the Utah Hockey Club in any fashion

- The St. Louis Blues lose to the Detroit Red Wings in regulation

The Golden Knights also clinch a playoff spot regardless of their own outcome if the Flames lose to the Hockey Club in regulation.

Tuesday's games

Note: All times ET. All games not on TNT or NHL Network are available to stream on ESPN+ (local blackout restrictions apply).

Washington Capitals at Boston Bruins, 7 p.m.

Florida Panthers at Montreal Canadiens, 7 p.m.

Buffalo Sabres at Ottawa Senators, 7 p.m.

Nashville Predators at Columbus Blue Jackets, 7 p.m.

Tampa Bay Lightning at New York Islanders, 7:30 p.m. (ESPN+/Hulu/Disney+)

Detroit Red Wings at St. Louis Blues, 8 p.m.

Calgary Flames at Utah Hockey Club, 9 p.m.

Edmonton Oilers at Vegas Golden Knights, 10 p.m.

San Jose Sharks at Anaheim Ducks, 10 p.m.

Winnipeg Jets at Los Angeles Kings, 10:30 p.m.

Monday's scoreboard

New Jersey Devils 3, Minnesota Wild 2 (SO)

Philadelphia Flyers 2, Nashville Predators 1

Calgary Flames 3, Colorado Avalanche 2 (SO)

Dallas Stars 3, Seattle Kraken 1

Expanded standings

Atlantic Division

Toronto Maple Leafs

Points: 94

Regulation wins: 37

Playoff position: A1

Games left: 8

Points pace: 104.2

Next game: vs. FLA (Wednesday)

Playoff chances: 99.9%

Tragic number: N/A

Tampa Bay Lightning

Points: 91

Regulation wins: 37

Playoff position: A2

Games left: 9

Points pace: 102.2

Next game: @ NYI (Tuesday)

Playoff chances: 99.9%

Tragic number: N/A

Florida Panthers

Points: 91

Regulation wins: 35

Playoff position: A3

Games left: 9

Points pace: 102.2

Next game: @ MTL (Tuesday)

Playoff chances: 99.9%

Tragic number: N/A

Ottawa Senators

Points: 84

Regulation wins: 30

Playoff position: WC1

Games left: 9

Points pace: 94.4

Next game: vs. BUF (Tuesday)

Playoff chances: 99.8%

Tragic number: N/A

Montreal Canadiens

Points: 77

Regulation wins: 25

Playoff position: WC2

Games left: 9

Points pace: 86.5

Next game: vs. FLA (Tuesday)

Playoff chances: 44%

Tragic number: N/A

Detroit Red Wings

Points: 74

Regulation wins: 26

Playoff position: N/A

Games left: 9

Points pace: 83.1

Next game: @ STL (Tuesday)

Playoff chances: 2.9%

Tragic number: 16

Boston Bruins

Points: 69

Regulation wins: 23

Playoff position: N/A

Games left: 8

Points pace: 76.5
Next game: vs. WSH (Tuesday)
Playoff chances: 0.1%
Tragic number: 9
Buffalo Sabres
Points: 68
Regulation wins: 25
Playoff position: N/A
Games left: 9
Points pace: 76.4
Next game: @ OTT (Tuesday)
Playoff chances: 0.1%
Tragic number: 10
Metro Division
x - Washington Capitals
Points: 103
Regulation wins: 40
Playoff position: M1
Games left: 9
Points pace: 115.7
Next game: @ BOS (Tuesday)
Playoff chances: 100%
Tragic number: N/A
Carolina Hurricanes
Points: 94
Regulation wins: 40
Playoff position: M2
Games left: 9
Points pace: 105.6
Next game: vs. WSH (Wednesday)
Playoff chances: 99.9%
Tragic number: N/A
New Jersey Devils

Points: 87

Regulation wins: 35

Playoff position: M3

Games left: 6

Points pace: 93.9

Next game: vs. NYR (Saturday)

Playoff chances: 99.6%

Tragic number: N/A

New York Rangers

Points: 77

Regulation wins: 32

Playoff position: N/A

Games left: 8

Points pace: 85.3

Next game: vs. MIN (Wednesday)

Playoff chances: 27.8%

Tragic number: 17

Columbus Blue Jackets

Points: 75

Regulation wins: 23

Playoff position: N/A

Games left: 10

Points pace: 85.4

Next game: vs. NSH (Tuesday)

Playoff chances: 17.1%

Tragic number: 19

New York Islanders

Points: 74

Regulation wins: 25

Playoff position: N/A

Games left: 9

Points pace: 83.1

Next game: vs. TB (Tuesday)

Playoff chances: 8.7%

Tragic number: 16

Pittsburgh Penguins

Points: 71

Regulation wins: 20

Playoff position: N/A

Games left: 7

Points pace: 77.6

Next game: @ STL (Thursday)

Playoff chances: 0.1%

Tragic number: 9

Philadelphia Flyers

Points: 71

Regulation wins: 20

Playoff position: N/A

Games left: 6

Points pace: 76.6

Next game: @ MTL (Saturday)

Playoff chances: ~0%

Tragic number: 7

Central Division

x - Winnipeg Jets

Points: 106

Regulation wins: 40

Playoff position: C1

Games left: 8

Points pace: 117.5

Next game: @ LA (Tuesday)

Playoff chances: 100%

Tragic number: N/A

x - Dallas Stars

Points: 102

Regulation wins: 40

Playoff position: C2
Games left: 8
Points pace: 113.0
Next game: vs. NSH (Thursday)
Playoff chances: 100%
Tragic number: N/A
Colorado Avalanche
Points: 94
Regulation wins: 38
Playoff position: C3
Games left: 7
Points pace: 102.8
Next game: @ CHI (Wednesday)
Playoff chances: 99.9%
Tragic number: N/A
Minnesota Wild
Points: 88
Regulation wins: 33
Playoff position: WC1
Games left: 7
Points pace: 96.2
Next game: @ NYR (Wednesday)
Playoff chances: 93.4%
Tragic number: N/A
St. Louis Blues
Points: 87
Regulation wins: 30
Playoff position: WC2
Games left: 7
Points pace: 95.1
Next game: vs. DET (Tuesday)
Playoff chances: 95.5%
Tragic number: N/A

Utah Hockey Club

Points: 78

Regulation wins: 25

Playoff position: N/A

Games left: 8

Points pace: 86.4

Next game: vs. CGY (Tuesday)

Playoff chances: 0.5%

Tragic number: 8

e - Nashville Predators

Points: 62

Regulation wins: 23

Playoff position: N/A

Games left: 8

Points pace: 68.7

Next game: @ CBJ (Tuesday)

Playoff chances: 0%

Tragic number: E

e - Chicago Blackhawks

Points: 51

Regulation wins: 18

Playoff position: N/A

Games left: 8

Points pace: 56.5

Next game: vs. COL (Wednesday)

Playoff chances: 0%

Tragic number: E

Pacific Division

Vegas Golden Knights

Points: 98

Regulation wins: 42

Playoff position: P1

Games left: 9

Points pace: 110.1

Next game: vs. EDM (Tuesday)

Playoff chances: 99.9%

Tragic number: N/A

Los Angeles Kings

Points: 91

Regulation wins: 36

Playoff position: P3

Games left: 9

Points pace: 102.2

Next game: vs. WPG (Tuesday)

Playoff chances: 99.9%

Tragic number: N/A

Edmonton Oilers

Points: 89

Regulation wins: 30

Playoff position: P2

Games left: 9

Points pace: 100.0

Next game: @ VGK (Tuesday)

Playoff chances: 99.5%

Tragic number: N/A

Calgary Flames

Points: 82

Regulation wins: 26

Playoff position: N/A

Games left: 9

Points pace: 92.1

Next game: @ UTA (Tuesday)

Playoff chances: 7.9%

Tragic number: 14

Vancouver Canucks

Points: 81

Regulation wins: 26
Playoff position: N/A
Games left: 8
Points pace: 89.8
Next game: vs. SEA (Wednesday)
Playoff chances: 3.3%
Tragic number: 11
Anaheim Ducks
Points: 72
Regulation wins: 23
Playoff position: N/A
Games left: 9
Points pace: 80.9
Next game: vs. SJ (Tuesday)
Playoff chances: 0%
Tragic number: 4
e - Seattle Kraken
Points: 68
Regulation wins: 25
Playoff position: N/A
Games left: 7
Points pace: 74.4
Next game: @ VAN (Wednesday)
Playoff chances: 0%
Tragic number: E
e - San Jose Sharks
Points: 49
Regulation wins: 14
Playoff position: N/A
Games left: 9
Points pace: 55.0
Next game: @ ANA (Tuesday)
Playoff chances: 0%

Tragic number: E

Note: An "x" means that the team has clinched a playoff berth. An "e" means that the team has been eliminated from playoff contention.

Race for the No. 1 pick

The NHL uses a draft lottery to determine the order of the first round, so the team that finishes in last place is not guaranteed the No. 1 selection. As of 2021, a team can move up a maximum of 10 spots if it wins the lottery, so only 11 teams are eligible for the No. 1 pick. Full details on the process are here. Matthew Schaefer, a defenseman for the OHL's Erie Otters, is No. 1 on the draft board.

1. San Jose Sharks

Points: 49

Regulation wins: 14

2. Chicago Blackhawks

Points: 51

Regulation wins: 18

3. Nashville Predators

Points: 62

Regulation wins: 23

4. Seattle Kraken

Points: 68

Regulation wins: 25

5. Buffalo Sabres

Points: 68

Regulation wins: 25

6. Boston Bruins

Points: 69

Regulation wins: 23

7. Philadelphia Flyers

Points: 71

Regulation wins: 20

8. Pittsburgh Penguins

Points: 71

Regulation wins: 20

9. Anaheim Ducks

Points: 72

Regulation wins: 23

10. New York Islanders

Points: 74

Regulation wins: 25

11. Detroit Red Wings

Points: 74

Regulation wins: 26

12. Columbus Blue Jackets

Points: 75

Regulation wins: 23

13. New York Rangers

Points: 77

Regulation wins: 32

14. Utah Hockey Club

Points: 78

Regulation wins: 25

15. Vancouver Canucks

Points: 81

Regulation wins: 26

16. Calgary Flames

Points: 82

Regulation wins: 26