



Columbus Blue Jackets News Clips

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The Columbus Dispatch / Johnny and Matthew Gaudreau's widows talk to Good Morning America

By Brian Hedger – August 12, 2025

Nearing the one-year anniversary of their husbands' deaths, the widows of Johnny and Matthew Gaudreau will discuss the tragedy that took their lives with ABC's Good Morning America on Aug. 13.

A recorded interview with Meredith and Madeline Gaudreau will air on the nationally televised morning show on what would've been Blue Jackets star Johnny Gaudreau's 32nd birthday.

To preview the exclusive interview, GMA released a segment of the discussion via social media. In it, the widows discuss the evening Johnny and Matthew Gaudreau were killed on Aug. 29, 2024 after being struck by an alleged drunk driver while biking together in Oldmans Township, New Jersey near their parents' home.

Their sister Katie, the youngest of four siblings, was preparing for her wedding the next day. Asked what she remembers about the evening of the accident, Meredith Gaudreau recalled the brothers' departure.

"(John) kissed all of us goodbye, just in the driveway of his parents' house," she said. "That was the last time I saw him."

The couple had two young children at the time – a daughter, Noa, and her infant brother, Johnny – and Meredith announced during her eulogy that she was pregnant with their third child, Carter, another boy.

Madeline Gaudreau was also pregnant with she and Matthew's only child, Tripp, whom they'd already named together.

"There's no healing when you didn't get a goodbye," Madeline Gaudreau said in the preview of the GMA interview.

The widows were also asked what they said in their final goodbyes to their husbands.

"I just said that I would take care of our kids," Meredith Gaudreau said, "and I thanked him for such a great life."

Madeline gave viewers a heartbreaking vision of her message for Matthew.

"I was, I can't remember, maybe four months pregnant at the time," she said. "Tripp was kicking a lot, so I just held Matt's hand on my belly for Tripp. I don't want to say 'goodbye' to either one of them (Johnny or Matthew), because I know I will see them again one day."

Good Morning America airs at 7 a.m. weekdays.

ABC News / Gaudreau brothers' widows speak out nearly 1 year after deadly crash: 'Didn't get a goodbye'

By Emily Shapiro and Kendall Coughlin – August 12, 2025

The Gaudreau brothers died last August while bicycling in New Jersey, where they were struck by an alleged drunk driver.

The widows of hockey player brothers Matthew and Johnny Gaudreau are speaking out about their grief nearly one year after their husbands were killed by an alleged drunk driver.

"He kissed all of us goodbye -- just in the driveway at his parents' house. And that was the last time I saw him," Johnny Gaudreau's wife, Meredith Gaudreau, told ABC News.

Johnny Gaudreau, 31, a Columbus Blue Jackets star, and Matthew Gaudreau, 29, a former pro hockey player, died on Aug. 29, 2024. The brothers, who were home in New Jersey for their sister Katie's wedding, were riding bikes when they were struck by a driver suspected of being under the influence of alcohol, according to police. The suspected driver was arrested and has pleaded not guilty to charges of aggravated manslaughter, vehicular homicide, evidence tampering and leaving the scene of an accident.

"Our kids didn't deserve this," Meredith said. "John and Matty didn't even deserve that, especially the way it happened. It keeps me up at night."

"There's no healing when you didn't get a goodbye," Matthew Gaudreau's wife, Madeline Gaudreau, said.

At the brothers' funeral, Meredith said she told her husband "that I would take care of our kids, and I thanked him for such a great life."

At the time of the brothers' deaths, Meredith was a mom to her and Johnny's two young children.

Madeline and Meredith were also both pregnant when their husbands died.

Madeline's baby, Tripp, was born four months later and Meredith -- who announced her pregnancy at the funeral -- gave birth to baby Carter eight months after the crash.

Madeline said that at the funeral "Tripp was kicking a lot, so I just held Matt's hand on my belly for Tripp."

"I didn't wanna say goodbye to either of them because I know I'll see them again one day," she said.

WHL.com / NHL Prospect Watch: Columbus Blue Jackets

By Cami Kepke – August 11, 2025

Charlie Elick

The 6-foot-3, 203-pound defender with the all-important right-hand shot took his formidable presence south of the border in a blockbuster trade that sent him from Brandon to the Tri-City Americans. Elick closed out the season with two goals and 13 assists for 15 points in 66 games, while holding down the Ams' blueline with fellow Columbus prospect Jackson Smith. The Calgarian added two more playoff assists in five games and quickly joined the AHL's Cleveland Monsters on an amateur tryout agreement following the conclusion of Tri-City's postseason run. His tremendous spring also saw the 19-year-old put pen to paper on a three-year, entry-level deal with the Blue Jackets in late March. Elick, a 2024 second-round NHL Draft pick, recently garnered an invitation to represent Hockey Canada at the 2025 World Junior Summer Showcase- the first step towards representing the Maple Leaf at the 2026 IIHF World Junior Championship.

Evan Gardner

Sophomore slump? Not for Evan Gardner. The 19-year-old netminder was a force for the rebuilding Saskatoon Blades, going 23-13-4-1 with a 2.82 goals-against average, a .911 save percentage and three shutouts in his second WHL campaign. Gardner ranked fifth among all goalies in save percentage, eighth in wins, 10th in goals-against average and helped the Blades return to the postseason and stay in the race for the East Division title. He signed his entry-level contract with Columbus on March 18, 2025, and snagged WHL Goaltender of the Month honours for November and two Goaltender of the Week wins. Gardner, who lives with type-1 diabetes, was named a finalist for WHL Humanitarian of the Year for his advocacy work and initiatives that will directly impact young people in Saskatchewan who also live with the disease. He made his professional debut with the Monsters on April 19, yielding three goals and posting a .842 save percentage in a loss to the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins. The 2024 second-round selection also made Hockey Canada's Summer Showcase squad in pursuit of World Juniors glory.

Daemon Hunt

A change of scenery is bringing about big opportunities for defenceman Daemon Hunt. The 23-year-old started 2024-25 as an alternate captain for the Iowa Wild and suited up for one game with the Minnesota Wild before being acquired by the Blue Jackets in a trade in December of 2024. Hunt totalled two goals and 12 assists for 14 points in 48 games with the Cleveland Monsters, in addition to four apples in nine tilts with Iowa to wrap up his third professional season. The Brandon, Man. product spent his entire WHL career with the Moose Jaw Warriors, piling up 33 goals and 61 assists for 94 points in 163 games- highlighted by a 39-point (17G-22A) run in his final campaign. Drafted by Minnesota in the third round of the 2020 NHL Draft, Hunt is also known for his leadership qualities. In addition to wearing the 'A' in Iowa, Hunt served as captain of the Warriors for two seasons and was succeeded by none other than 2024 WHL Champion and fellow Blue Jacket and Manitoban Denton Mateychuk.

Cayden Lindstrom

After spending more than a year sidelined by a back injury, Cayden Lindstrom made his return to the ice in style in the 2025 WHL Playoffs. The 6-foot-4, 215-pound centreman assisted Flames prospect Andrew Basha's game-opening goal just 54 seconds into Game 1 of the Championship Series and opened the scoring himself in Game 2. Lindstrom bagged two goals and two assists in four games to help the Medicine Hat Tigers hoist the Ed Chynoweth Cup and suited up for three games at the 2025 Memorial

Cup. As the fourth overall selection in Las Vegas, Lindstrom was the highest-selected WHLer at the 2024 NHL Draft. The Chetwynd, B.C. product had three goals in three games for Canada at the World Junior Summer Showcase and hopes to make the jump to the NHL sooner rather than later. Lindstrom, 19, owns 46 goals and 42 assists for 88 points in 99 regular-season WHL games over parts of three seasons.

Jackson Smith

Columbus used its top pick at the 2025 NHL Draft to take 6-foot-4, 199-pound blueliner Jackson Smith at 14th overall. The Calgary, Alta. product potted 11 goals and 43 assists for 54 points in 68 games with Tri-City this season, finishing fourth on the squad in points and third in assists. He also led his team and tied for first among all WHL defencemen in game-winning goals with four, three of which came in overtime. Smith helped Tri-City return to the playoffs and led the squad in postseason scoring with a goal and two assists in five outings. The 18-year-old bookended his season with gold medals at the 2024 Hlinka Gretzky Cup (3A) and 2025 IIHF U18 World Championship (4G-1A) and represented the WHL at the first-ever CHL USA Prospects Challenge, which saw the CHL sweep the US NTDP, in November.

Stanislav Svozil

The 6-foot, 181-pound defender was one of Cleveland's finest in the AHL in his second pro season, adding four goals and 20 assists for 24 points in 63 games. Svozil's 20 assists were fourth among all Monsters skaters and led all defencemen, while his 24 points were second among blueliners (trailing only Denton Mateychuk prior to his NHL promotion). Now 22 years old, Svozil was originally drafted in the third round of the 2021 NHL Draft. Over two seasons in the Queen City, Svozil totalled 21 goals and 98 assists for 119 points in 115 regular-season matches. The Prerov, Czechia product tallied 11 goals and 67 assists for 78 points as the alternate captain of Regina Pats in 2022-23, earning WHL East Division First All-Star Team and CHL Third All-Star Team honours.

Sportsnet / NHL Power Rankings: How teams stack up midway through off-season

By Ryan Dixon – August 11, 2025

An NHL power ranking in August should probably be accompanied by at least a small explainer.

Given we're in the dog days of the summer, you could be forgiven for assuming this exercise was about ranking teams' off-seasons. Or, perhaps, you could think it's something akin to a 2026 Stanley Cup odds piece since we're not that *that* far from predictions season.

But we're not handing out medals purely for off-season moves, nor are we ranking teams based on their chances to be the last club standing in 2026.

The question we're asking is, if they decided to drop the puck on a new NHL season tomorrow, how would the teams stack up? Basically, it's a regular ol' power ranking like you'll find all season long on Sportsnet.ca, but dropped when most players are still swinging sticks on the golf course.

So, with our preamble out of the way, here's our summertime ranking of all 32 clubs.

1. Dallas Stars – Had the Stars finished last season 3-3-1 instead of 0-5-2, they probably would have finished second overall. Combine Mikko Rantanen's first full year in Texas with a new-coach bump from hiring Glen Gulutzan, and Dallas is a great bet to hit the ground running.

2. Vegas Golden Knights – Mitch Marner was the biggest addition any team made this off-season, and he transforms Vegas' previously underwhelming winger situation. Even with the loss of Alex Pietrangelo on the blueline, the Knights will be a wagon.

3. Washington Capitals – It's tempting to say the Caps will take a step back after surprising so many people last season, and maybe that's true. That said, Washington didn't sustain any high-level losses from its roster, has a great goalie duo in Logan Thompson and Charlie Lindgren and seems like it's just getting started under reigning Jack Adams winner Spencer Carbery.

4. Carolina Hurricanes – Free agent signing Nikolaj Ehlers is a meaningful add to a forward group that should see some internal growth, too, with the likes of Logan Stankoven and Jackson Blake finding their NHL footing.

5. Colorado Avalanche – The Avs will benefit from having a competent goalie battery right out of the gate in Mackenzie Blackwood and Scott Wedgewood. Of course, captain Gabriel Landeskog will start the regular season for this club for the first time since 2021, and unlike last year when he was still serving a suspension, Colorado will have scorer Valeri Nichushkin right from puck-drop this October.

6. Edmonton Oilers – Are the Oilers more fatigued or hungry after two straight losses in the final? It's hard to imagine they'll have the pedal to the metal out of the gate, but — with the high-end talent on the club — Edmonton can still be one of the best teams in the league even before hitting top gear.

7. Winnipeg Jets – The Presidents' Trophy winners from 2024-25 have a high floor thanks to back-to-back Vezina winner Connor Hellebuyck manning the crease. Still, it's going to be an interesting scene down the middle, as Adam Lowry misses a chunk of time recovering from hip surgery and newcomer Jonathan Toews finds his way after two full years out of the league.

8. Toronto Maple Leafs – Losing Mitch Marner hurts, but the Leafs could conceivably have a 50-goal scorer in Auston Matthews, a 40-goal guy in William Nylander and two 30-goal scorers in Matthew Knies

and John Tavares. Plus, you have to think the remaining group will be determined to show there's still a strong team here despite Marner's departure.

9. Florida Panthers – The Panthers aren't trying to be the best team in November; they're trying to win a third straight Cup. Even if the Cats achieve that goal — and are you really betting against them? — that doesn't mean they're going to come flying out of the gates. With Matthew Tkachuk possibly sidelined for a while and the toll of three consecutive long springs wearing on their bones, it's hard to see Florida setting the world on fire right from the jump.

10. New Jersey Devils – The Devils have had a season to adjust to coach Sheldon Keefe and will at least start the year in good health after losing Jack Hughes in February last season. Speaking of the name 'Hughes,' could Year 3 be a monster breakout for Luke Hughes on the Devils' blueline?

11. Los Angeles Kings – The Kings were surely hoping for a needle-moving add up front this off-season, but it never happened. The frame of a strong team is here, but L.A. is still lacking that top-tier finish.

12. Tampa Bay Lightning – Other than 35-year-old Victor Hedman, nobody in Tampa's upper-level core is older than 32. One of these seasons, the bill for the good times will come due, but we're not there yet.

13. Ottawa Senators – Ottawa looks great down the middle now that deadline acquisition Dylan Cozens will be the 2C for an entire season. Jordan Spence was also a nice add to the right side of the defence corps, and you wonder if Year 2 in Ottawa will be a little smoother for goalie Linus Ullmark.

14. St. Louis Blues – The Blues' strong finish was not smoke and mirrors. Robert Thomas is officially a stud 1C, Jim Montgomery — one of the league's best coaches — gets to start the year with this club, and he's overseeing a roster bolstered by the emergence of under-25 players like Dylan Holloway, Jake Neighbours, Philip Broberg and maybe even rookie Jimmy Snuggerud.

15. New York Rangers – What exactly does the bounce back look like? This is obviously a better team than it showed last year, and J.T. Miller getting a full year on Broadway will help. The problem with just putting the Rangers back in the playoffs, though, is a couple of Eastern Conference teams that took steps last year — we'll get to them shortly — figure to be right back in the post-season chase again.

16. Minnesota Wild – Two of Filip Gustavsson's three years in Minnesota have been good ones. If he can be solid this year in tandem with fellow Swede Jesper Wallstedt, it's very easy to envision Minny back in the playoffs. This team made it last year with Kirill Kaprizov missing half the season.

17. Montreal Canadiens – On one hand, you could say the Habs massively overachieved last season by sneaking into the playoffs. On the other, Montreal is adding two pretty serious talents — defenceman Noah Dobson and rookie Ivan Demidov — to a squad that was good enough to make the dance last year.

18. Columbus Blue Jackets – The Jackets took a meaningful step last season and have several young pieces — from Adam Fantilli to Kirill Marchenko to Kent Johnson — who are ascending. How much faith are we putting in goalie Jet Greaves' .938 save percentage in 11 outings?

19. Utah Mammoth – Cracking the top 8 in the West will be tough, but Utah is clearly headed in the right direction. Adding JJ Peterka to the top six is fantastic, and the defence will look better as a whole with Sean Durzi and John Marino not being sidelined for over half the season, as was the case last year.

20. Vancouver Canucks – If Elias Pettersson returns to top form, you can talk yourself into this roster. If not, Vancouver is just too thin down the middle to believe in. More than most, the Canucks seem like a high-variance team.

- 21. Detroit Red Wings** – While you can certainly still talk yourself into some existing Wings players like Moritz Seider, Lucas Raymond and Simon Edvinsson moving the team forward, it just feels like Detroit needs an acquisition to give this thing a meaningful push.
- 22. Anaheim Ducks** – You have to think new coach Joel Quenneville is going to make an impact on this group. There's a lot to like in terms of existing young players driving the Ducks forward and veteran adds like Chris Kreider and Mikael Granlund also improving the squad. Who knows, maybe the biggest development will be Lukas Dostal — who turned 25 this summer — breaking into the top tier of NHL goalies.
- 23. Calgary Flames** – The Flames had a marvellous, Dustin Wolf-driven showing last year. I think we all understand that the margin for error, however, is very thin.
- 24. New York Islanders** – It's slightly uncomfortable ranking the Isles this low because they're still just a monster Ilya Sorokin season away from pushing very hard for a playoff spot.
- 25. Boston Bruins** – One year after Hampus Lindholm was limited to 17 games and Charlie McAvoy played 50, the Bruins will have their top pair — which is a great one — back in order. Throw in a bounce-back year for Jeremy Swayman, and challenging for a playoff spot is not unthinkable one year after the B's finished last in the Atlantic.
- 26. Buffalo Sabres** – We're way past "believe it when I see it" with this group. Surely this is GM Kevyn Adam's final kick at the playoff can.
- 27. Nashville Predators** – It's hard to put Nashville any higher given what an unmitigated disaster last season was. That said, if a team on this list was going to outstrip its ranking by 10 spots, it might be the Preds 14 months after they went out and bought everyone on the 2024 UFA market.
- 28. Chicago Blackhawks** – We've finally hit the point of the ranking where it would be a shock-the-world situation if the club made the playoffs. For the Hawks, it's all about just taking a significant step forward.
- 29. Philadelphia Flyers** – How long will Trevor Zegras last at centre under new coach Rick Tocchet?
- 30. Seattle Kraken** – As much as any team in the league, it's just hard to find juice anywhere in this lineup.
- 31. Pittsburgh Penguins** – The Pens are the only franchise we can safely say would love to finish 32nd, but we can't quite rank a squad Sidney Crosby still plays on there.
- 32. San Jose Sharks** – Last year down here? As awesome as the Sharks' rebuild is going — and it is — jumping up the standings still takes time.