



Columbus Blue Jackets Media Clips
March 6, 2026

Columbus Blue Jackets News

- PAGE 2 BlueJackets.com / Winning Thoughts: Blue Jackets keep it rolling vs. Panthers
- PAGE 5 Cleveland.com / How the Blue Jackets continue to inch closer to the playoffs despite Zach Werenski's multi-game absence
- PAGE 7 Cleveland.com / Why the Blue Jackets' win vs. the Panthers puts the pressure on Don Waddell ahead of Friday's trade deadline
- PAGE 9 The Athletic / NHL trade grades: Blue Jackets make savvy move in getting Conor Garland from Canucks
- PAGE 11 The Athletic / Canucks trade Conor Garland to Blue Jackets for 2 draft picks
- PAGE 14 The Athletic / Blue Jackets beat Florida for latest win, charge into trade deadline as buyers
- PAGE 16 The Columbus Dispatch / Columbus Blue Jackets add Conor Garland in surprise trade
- PAGE 18 The Columbus Dispatch / Who is new Columbus Blue Jackets forward Conor Garland?
- PAGE 21 The Columbus Dispatch / Columbus Blue Jackets hold on, top Florida Panthers 4-2
- PAGE 23 The Columbus Dispatch / Blue Jackets' trade deadline: What Waddell will do with free agents
- PAGE 26 The Hockey Writers / NHL Trade Grades: Blue Jackets' Garland Acquisition Has Its Risks
- PAGE 28 The Hockey Writers / Blue Jackets Acquire Conor Garland From Canucks For Draft Picks
- PAGE 30 The Hockey Writers / Blue Jackets' Boone Jenner Focused on Upcoming Playoff Chase

Cleveland Monsters / Prospect News

NHL News

- PAGE 32 The Hockey Writers / NHL Rumors: Maple Leafs Plans, Thomas Trade, Deadline Moves

Multimedia

[BlueJackets.com / Winning Thoughts: Blue Jackets keep it rolling vs. Panthers](#)

By Jeff Svoboda – March 6, 2026

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

BLUE JACKETS 4, PANTHERS 2

1. The Blue Jackets went into deadline day having stated their case (successfully as it turned out) to general manager Don Waddell.

Friday is one of the most anticipated days of the NHL calendar, with the trade deadline passing at 3 p.m. A few months ago, Waddell figured he'd be a seller, with the Blue Jackets in last place in the Eastern Conference and Boone Jenner, Charlie Coyle, Mason Marchment and Erik Gudbranson set to be unrestricted free agents.

Of course, a lot has changed since early January. The Blue Jackets improved to 13-2-1 under head coach Rick Bowness with Thursday night's victory over the Panthers; they're also 3-1-1 since the Olympic break and have moved to within one point of Boston for the East's final wild card spot and three points of Pittsburgh and the New York Islanders for third in the Metro.

Speaking on the FanDuel Sports Network's broadcast during the second period vs. Florida, Waddell said that not only did the current group deserve to stick together, he wanted to add some scoring help up front.

Mission accomplished with the late Thursday night/early Friday morning acquisition of Vancouver wing Conor Garland, an eight-year NHL veteran who has averaged 20 goals and 49 points per 82 games in his career. He'll give the team more scoring depth and is another sign from Waddell – who earlier this season acquired Mason Marchment and also brought in Bowness in a season-changing move – that he believes in his group.

The Blue Jackets left Nationwide Arena seemingly secure in the knowledge that they would not be sellers going into the deadline, and the Garland deal is a sign the team is serious about its playoff push.

“We're really happy,” forward Mathieu Olivier, who scored twice against the Panthers, said postgame. “We want to keep those (UFA) guys in this room, obviously. They're a big part of what we're trying to accomplish here, and they bring a ton of experience that we're going to need for this playoff push. Everyone is bought in, and it starts with those guys. They brought in some outside experience to help us and maybe help us realize a couple things, and it shows with their play and also off the ice. We're all happy for them to stay with us.”

Perhaps most important to Waddell was not taking away from the group, as just like a season ago, the Blue Jackets have shown they've built a tight locker room that wants to try to accomplish something special with one another.

“I think we have a great group of guys that just overall get along well off the ice and on the ice, and I think that’s very important,” defenseman Ivan Provorov said. “Everyone is ready to play for each other, and I don’t think it’s something you really want to mess with.”

2. Without Zach Werenski and Dante Fabbro, Provorov led the way as the Blue Jackets got the job done defensively against the Panthers.

When the Blue Jackets reconvened at Nationwide Arena after Wednesday's off day, they got some good news, some bad news and some status quo.

The good? Captain Boone Jenner would be able to return up front, and all the captain did vs. the Panthers was score his first goal since Jan. 13. The middle ground? Nothing was changing with Werenski, with the Norris Trophy candidate missing a third straight game because of illness. And the bad was that Fabbro had been added to the injury list, with a lower-body injury keeping him out against the Panthers.

That left Columbus without two of its top six defenseman, but Egor Zamula and Jake Christiansen filled in admirably, with each posting a plus-1 rating and Christiansen blocking four shots.

Ivan Provorov with a Powerplay Goal vs. Florida Panthers

Provorov, though, bore much of the weight of Werenski’s absence, and he certainly had an impactful game. He scored on the power play to give the Blue Jackets a 1-0 lead, added two assists for his first three-point game of the season, put four shots on goal and blocked four Florida shots. Oh, and you can’t forget his all-out effort to dive into the crease to stop a sure goal in the second period.

“Yeah, we obviously know what’s on the line,” Provorov said of what that play represented. “We all are trying our best to win every game and make the playoffs, and that’s what it takes.”

In the end, it was a Werenski-like stat line for the veteran left-shot defenseman, and head coach Rick Bowness was happy with what Provorov brought to the table.

“That’s the best game I’ve seen him play since I’ve been here,” Bowness said. “We needed him to do that tonight, and he stepped up and he did it. So yeah, very, very happy for him. He was all over the ice with the puck, without the puck, battled hard, broke it out, flipped it out, did all the right things. He made the right play at the right time, and he competed very, very hard.”

3. The Blue Jackets won a key challenge late to avoid seeing another third-period lead disappear.

Bowness – not to mention video coaches Aron Augustitus and Cam Briere – must be living right because for the third game in a row, a goaltender interference challenge went the Blue Jackets’ way.

Columbus had already seen its 3-0 third-period lead become 3-2 thanks to a deflection past goalie Jet Greaves and a power-play goal for the Panthers, and it appeared Florida had tied the score with 2:55 left when Gustav Forsling’s shot from the center point went into the net.

The issue, though, was that by the end of the play, Greaves was nearly in the right circle. He had no chance to make the save as he was shoved out of the way by a netfront battle between Provorov and Florida forward Jesper Boqvist, and Bowness quickly got the call from the video coaches to challenge.

“Once (Boqvist) goes in between the defenseman and the goalie, he’s initiating that contact,” Bowness said. “If our guy was there first and pushing him in, that’s a different contact, but when he tries to get between the D and the goalie, he’s gonna do that. The video coaches, Aron and Cam, have done a great job on that. They didn’t hesitate to call up and say, challenge it. Whatever they tell me to do, we’re gonna do.”

Consider, though, all that was on the line with the challenge. Had it gone the other way, the game would have been tied at 3 and Florida would have had a power play with a chance to win the game in regulation.

Instead, the Blue Jackets won the challenge and kept the lead, and Olivier iced the game with an empty-net goal with 1:42 to go. His only complaint postgame was just how long Columbus had to wait to see its lead go back on the board.

“We actually thought it took longer than it should have,” Olivier said. “It was clear as day it was goalie interference, but we knew it was going to go our way on that one.”

[Cleveland.com / How the Blue Jackets continue to inch closer to the playoffs despite Zach Werenski's multi-game absence](#)

By Tim Bielik – March 6, 2026

COLUMBUS, Ohio — No Zach Werenski, no problem?

Not exactly, but the Blue Jackets have won three straight games without their leading point getter, who has been out with an illness. But they haven't been the cleanest

Columbus won in New York on Monday night in overtime despite blowing a 4-0 lead in the third period. The Blue Jackets also nearly blew a 3-0 lead in the third on Thursday vs. the Florida Panthers. A big coach's challenge by Rick Bowness led to an overturned tying goal because of goaltender interference, and the Blue Jackets knocked off the back-to-back Stanley Cup champions, 4-2.

While those two games may have been nervy, what matters is the result.

They have seven points in the five games out of the Olympic break and enter Friday's NHL trade deadline, which is at 3 p.m., just one point behind the Boston Bruins for the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference. They are also three points behind the Pittsburgh Penguins to get into the top three in the Metropolitan Division.

There's still work to do to get into the playoffs, but Blue Jackets forward Mathieu Olivier, who scored twice on Thursday, believes the Blue Jackets are a playoff team.

"Absolutely. This is the vibe in the room right now," Olivier said. "We're playing for playoffs and we're getting ready for the playoffs, and we're aware of the challenge."

Since hiring Rick Bowness on Jan. 12, Columbus has gone 13-2-1 to vault from last place in the East to one point out of the playoffs.

Their latest win streak has come without their best player in Werenski, who has not played since Saturday's 4-3 overtime loss to the Islanders due to an illness. Werenski leads the team in assists (45) and points (65) in 51 games.

But Columbus has had different players step up in his recent absence, and Thursday night was Ivan Provorov's turn.

Provorov had the opening goal of the game with a power-play wrister at 5:08 of the first period, and he had two assists.

"That's the best I've seen him play since I've been here," Bowness said. "We needed him to do that tonight, and he stepped up and he did it. So yeah, very, very happy with him."

This was just Provorov's second multi-point game of the season. The other was back on Dec. 6 when he had two assists in a 7-6 overtime loss at Florida.

“Obviously, (Zach) is a big part of this team,” Provorov said. “Obviously, you know, him being out, I think we all needed to step up a little bit. Getting a power-play goal early in the first kind of helps, I think, the confidence and to continue to make plays.

“I think overall, myself, I think I did a good job of making plays. And I think overall as a team, we did a good job of buying in, playing the right way and making the right play at the right time.”

Provorov’s big night also included a clutch defensive play in the second. As a puck rolled past Jet Greaves who was out of his paint, Provorov dove in and made a save and poke check on Panthers forward Tomas Nosek to keep Florida off the board.

“I was amazed. That would have been in if he wasn’t there,” Greaves said. “He was definitely a plus on the night.”

Thursday night’s game capped a stretch of five in the eight days between the end of the Olympic break and the trade deadline.

But despite losing their first two out of the break, the Blue Jackets have regained the momentum they had going into the break. Bowness also noted that in those two losses, the team didn’t play poorly, including a 4-2 loss in Boston on Feb. 26 in which Joonas Korpisalo made 36 saves.

“We knew in those games, we played well enough to win. So we didn’t dwell on the loss,” Bowness said. “You play the right way like that, you’re gonna win your share of games, and we did tonight. We did all the right things tonight.

“The Boston game, we talked right after the game, we play like that, we’ll live and die with the result. You have to give yourself a chance to play to win the game.”

The Blue Jackets ultimately need Werenski back to reach their goal of getting back to the playoffs for the first time since the 2020 Toronto bubble. But without him, they have won three crucial games that solidified their stance as a potential buyer for Friday’s deadline. That stance was confirmed shortly after midnight on Friday when the Blue Jackets acquired Conor Garland from the Vancouver Canucks for a second- and third-round draft pick.

It also means keeping pending free agents Charlie Coyle, Mason Marchment, Boone Jenner and Erik Gudbranson on board through the end of the season.

“That time of the year gets a little bit of nerve wracking,” Provorov said. “But obviously I think we’ve done a great job. I think we have a great group of guys that just overall get along well off the ice and on the ice, and I think that’s very important.

“Obviously, everyone’s ready to play for each other and I don’t think it’s something you really want to mess with.”

[Cleveland.com / Why the Blue Jackets' win vs. the Panthers puts the pressure on Don Waddell ahead of Friday's trade deadline](#)

By Tim Bielik – March 5, 2026

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Blue Jackets have managed to regain their footing after a slow start from the Olympic break, winning their third in a row by beating the back-to-back Stanley Cup champion Florida Panthers, 4-2, on Thursday night.

The win almost didn't come after Gustav Forsling looked like he had the tying goal with 2:55 to go. But after a Blue Jackets challenge, the officials deemed that Panthers forward Jesper Boqvist interfered with goaltender Jet Greaves and overturned the goal.

Mathieu Olivier put the game away with an empty netter for his second goal of the night at 18:18. Greaves had 26 saves.

But this game was notable for another reason: it's the Blue Jackets' last one before the trade deadline.

After losing their first two out of the Olympic break, they have won three straight and took seven points out of a possible 10 in the five games between the break and Friday's deadline.

Now, all eyes are on the front office and general manager Don Waddell to see if he will make moves to strengthen the team's chance to get to the playoffs for the first time in six years.

Ivan Provorov scored on the powerplay for the Blue Jackets at 5:08 of the first period when his point shot deflected off Panthers defenseman Dmitri Kulikov and past Tarasov. Provorov also denied the Panthers a goal early in the second when he got down into the crease after a puck bounced away from Jet Greaves and denied Panthers forward Tomas Nosek.

Olivier made it 2-0 at 10:58 of the second when he deflected an Egor Zamula shot by Tarasov for his 10th goal of the season.

In the third, Kent Johnson's backhand pass to the slot found Boone Jenner, who beat Tarasov to give the Blue Jackets a 3-0 lead.

Florida clawed back within one in the third on back-to-back goals by Niko Mikkola and Sam Bennett. Forsling looked to have the tying goal before the Blue Jackets' challenge led to the review and overturn.

The Panthers came into Thursday night's game on an eight-game winning streak vs. the Blue Jackets.

It's unclear what this year's deadline, which is at 3 p.m. Friday, will look like for Columbus, but the Blue Jackets have to have last season in their minds a little bit.

They were in the playoffs by a point at the deadline, but they didn't do much with the only additions being a waiver claim for forward Christian Fischer and a trade for veteran forward Luke Kunin.

Those moves did very little as they combined for no points in 13 games.

The lack of reinforcements played a role in the Blue Jackets having a nightmarish March last season in which they went just 4-9, recording only nine points and getting shut out four times.

Columbus missed the playoffs by two points with its dismal March playing a massive role.

The Blue Jackets ended Thursday with wins in 14 of their last 17 games. Only twice since hiring Rick Bowness have they failed to get a point in a game.

They're still on the outside looking at the Eastern Conference playoff picture.

This isn't to say they need to make a blockbuster move before 3 p.m.

However, to give themselves the best chance to get to playoffs for the first time since the 2020 bubble in Toronto, they should be trying to find more impact that they got a year ago.

Columbus played Thursday night without defensemen Zach Werenski (illness) and Dante Fabbro (lower-body injury). Werenski has missed three consecutive games.

The Athletic / NHL trade grades: Blue Jackets make savvy move in getting Conor Garland from Canucks

By Harman Dayal and Shayna Goldman - March 6, 2026

The trade

Columbus Blue Jackets get: Winger Conor Garland

Vancouver Canucks get: Second-round draft pick in 2028 and third-round draft pick in 2026

Harman Dayal: This is a strong value swing by the Blue Jackets. Second- and third-round picks usually only return depth players at the deadline, but Columbus has acquired a legitimate difference-maker with term beyond this season without surrendering a first-round pick or any prospects.

Yes, Garland is in the middle of a down year — he's on pace for 42 points, and his play-driving numbers have significantly declined — but Vancouver's woeful team environment has had a deflationary effect on every player. I'd bet on him rebounding with a change of scenery in Columbus.

Big picture, Garland has proven to be an excellent, play-driving middle-six winger. Garland's value exceeds his point totals; he does so many little things that help teams win with his connective passing/puck transportation, defensive work and forechecking. He can either be used as an elite, luxury third-line driver or he can capably play in the top six, provided he's got finishers to convert on the chances he's able to set up.

Garland is undersized, but one of the most competitive, high-motor players I've ever covered. He's a ferocious puck hound and has terrific wall work, both defensively and offensively. He's a slick playmaker down low, with crafty vision and very elusive edge work.

Garland's ability to hold onto the puck and set teammates up for offensive looks in the slot is why he's usually been such an effective play-driver — he elevates his linemates and won't ever be the passenger on a line. He's best paired on a line with a bigger forward who can crash the net and finish chances in tight.

The timing for this boost is also nice, considering Mason Marchment's recent injury.

Garland's six-year, \$36 million extension is a significant commitment for a soon-to-be 30-year-old, but with the cap rising so fast, there's a pretty good chance he can live up to it, at least for the first few years.

From Vancouver's perspective, the return is fine. It's not a home run by any means, but I don't think the Canucks could have realistically expected a first-round pick for an undersized winger with a sizeable extension kicking in anyway — that's just not the kind of piece GMs get in a bidding war for, no matter how highly I rate Garland as a player.

The most important thing is that the Canucks are finally leaning in toward a rebuild by stockpiling picks and shedding veteran contracts. Garland simply wasn't going to be a fit with the Canucks' timeline, and moving him for a couple of picks before his NMC kicks in on July 1 is good business. Vancouver now has multiple second-round picks in each of the next three drafts.

Blue Jackets grade: A-

Canucks grade: B

Shayna Goldman: At his best, Garland can be a pesky winger who can flex around a team's top nine and generate pressure. Whether he's digging pucks out of his own zone, helping transition play up the ice or forechecking, he tends to help facilitate his team's play on both ends. He can stir things up and contribute secondary scoring, whether he is driving the third line or jumping higher in the lineup.

On paper, it's the exact type of reinforcements the Blue Jackets need. Columbus has climbed the standings since Rick Bowness took over behind the bench, and the team is only one point behind the Bruins for the second wild-card seed, and three back of the third-place Islanders in the Metropolitan Division. The Mason Marchment injury on Thursday night only upped the team's need for an addition. So it makes sense why management is buying, and since this is just the start of the Blue Jackets' playoff window, looking for a player with term.

This one just feels a little risky. As ideal as the fit is when Garland is at his best, he hasn't been at that level enough over the last two years. His scoring has slipped over the last two seasons in Vancouver, and this year, he doesn't have as strong underlying numbers to back that up. According to AllThreeZones tracking, his forecheck pressures and recovered dump-ins are both down. And he has been on the ice for a career-high 3.51 expected goals against at five-on-five this season.

It's hard to pin all of those downticks on Garland alone, considering what a disaster the Canucks have been this season. Vancouver has literally no defensive structure, little offensive pressure and obvious holes up and down the lineup. A change in scenery could be exactly what he needs to get back on track. But betting on that *before* his six-year, \$36 million extension has even kicked in is quite the commitment.

The Blue Jackets can absorb this cap hit, and the cost of acquisition, better than most teams that were in the mix for Garland. It's not too steep a cost, but it obviously isn't a slam-dunk win for Columbus, either.

The Canucks were never going to get maximum value for a player who only has seven goals in 50 games on a long-term deal that hasn't even started yet. Moving on sooner than later benefits them too, before his game could sink any further there. No salary retention is a huge plus, but the decision to extend him a year early when the team's outlook was shaky was a choice.

Blue Jackets grade: B

Canucks grade: B-

The Athletic / Canucks trade Conor Garland to Blue Jackets for 2 draft picks

By Harman Dayal, Pierre LeBrun, Thomas Drance and Aaron Portzline – March 6, 2026

The Vancouver Canucks have traded winger Conor Garland to the Columbus Blue Jackets for a 2028 second-round pick and a 2026 third-round pick.

Garland, 29, signed a six-year extension with the Canucks last summer that takes him through 2032, with a \$6 million cap hit. But he has since seen the team pivot to a rebuild. He has seven goals and 26 points in 50 games this season.

What Conor Garland brings to the Blue Jackets

Garland is an excellent, play-driving middle-six winger who has consistently scored 45-50 points per season.

On a Stanley Cup-contending team, he's best served as a third-line driver. That's the role he occupied for the Canucks in 2023-24, when they won the Pacific Division and made it to Game 7 of the second round. That season, Garland played on what was arguably the best third line in the NHL — it controlled nearly 60 percent of scoring chances and had a plus-25 goal differential at five-on-five. Garland scored 2.45 points per 60 at five-on-five that year, which ranked 23rd among NHL players, landing in the same range as wingers like Jake Guentzel, Filip Forsberg and Alex Tuch. He was the main engine of that line, as he elevated journeyman players Dakota Joshua and Teddy Blueger to career-best seasons.

After that season, the Canucks began deploying Garland like a top-line forward in terms of ice time and matchups (he averaged 18:39 per game last season and 19:02 per game this season), and the results have been more mixed. Last year, Garland's adjustment to heavy usage was mostly smooth — he scored 50 points despite a significant dip in his five-on-five point production rate, and impressively, he continued excelling as a high-end play-driver. In particular, he continued leveling up as one of Vancouver's best defensive forwards and even took on a penalty-killing role.

This season, though? That's a different story. Garland is mired in a 23-game goal drought. His overall point production is still decent, but his usually stellar play-driving impact has cratered, as he's earned less than 45 percent of expected goals in his minutes. I'd bank on that improving once he escapes Vancouver's woeful team environment (the Canucks not only lack talent, they seem poorly coached with very little structure), but it's worth being mindful of, especially with a six-year extension kicking in next season.

Garland is undersized, but he's one of the most competitive, high-motor players I've covered. He's a ferocious puck hound and consistently leverages his low center of gravity to win puck battles against bigger, stronger opponents. He's a slick playmaker down low, with crafty vision and very elusive edge work. Garland's ability to hold onto the puck and set teammates up for offensive looks in the slot is why he's usually been such an effective play-driver — he elevates his linemates and won't ever be the passenger on a line. He's smart, hardworking and very reliable defensively. Garland's shot is probably

the biggest weakness of his game (which explains why he's never been a great goal scorer), but he's typically been an excellent five-on-five player regardless, because of all his other strengths. — *Dayal*

What this means for the Blue Jackets

The Blue Jackets have struggled to find a second scoring line that can provide consistent offensive punch. The most-used trio under coach Rick Bowness has been Sean Monahan centering Kent Johnson and Boone Jenner.

Bowness has lots of flexibility now, but Garland could easily bump Johnson or Jenner out of their spots.

The Blue Jackets can't match the top-end firepower of other playoff clubs in the Eastern Conference, but Garland gives them a really good chance to have three scoring lines, making them a difficult club to match up against.

Bowness has found favor with a top line of Adam Fantilli centering Mason Marchment and Kirill Marchenko, and a third line of Charlie Coyle centering Cole Sillinger and Mathieu Olivier. The other two have been in a constant state of change.

Earlier this season, Marchment struggled mightily — and seemed plenty unhappy — with the Seattle Kraken, but his trade to the Blue Jackets in late December revitalized his season. The Blue Jackets have to hope the same for Garland. — *Portzline*

What this means for the Canucks

In a 2026 third-round pick and Columbus' own 2028 second-round pick, the value coming back for Garland is relatively light, especially compared to some of the other deadline prices we're seeing, but that's a reflection of Garland's age and the term and structure remaining on his contract. It's also a reflection of the fact that Vancouver isn't taking any salary back in this deal, and the Canucks are opening up a contract slot.

That the Blue Jackets were able to make this acquisition as painless as possible for the Canucks from all of those structural vantage points, restrained the acquisition cost.

It also hints at Vancouver's primary motivation, which is to clean house in terms of contract slots and salary liability, and shake up a veteran core that has too frequently underperformed across the past half-decade.

This isn't to pin the club's struggles on Garland, who was probably Vancouver's most consistent forward of the post-Bo Horvat era and one of its most reliable five-on-five play drivers. Garland, by virtue of being on a contract with a no-move clause that doesn't kick in until July 1, was simply the easiest of the Canucks' cast of veteran players to move at this time.

The club will continue to explore its options in offloading additional veterans between now and the trade deadline, its efforts to shed salary cap commitments, add valuable future assets and proceed into a rebuild with a clean slate are advancing at a rapid clip. It's most likely that the club will have to settle for moving off of expiring free agent players on deadline day itself, but the combination of trading

Garland and Tyler Myers this week demonstrates that the club is as serious about looking to the future as it has been in a generation.

[The Athletic / Blue Jackets beat Florida for latest win, charge into trade deadline as buyers](#)

By Aaron Portzline – March 5, 2026

COLUMBUS, Ohio — When the Columbus Blue Jackets started stringing together wins back in mid-January, it seemed as if they were setting up GM Don Waddell to make tough decisions at the NHL trade deadline.

But they've done so much winning — and so much climbing up the standings — that Waddell's job Friday is clear. Not only is he keeping the Blue Jackets' four pending unrestricted free agents, he arrives at the 3 p.m. ET deadline as a buyer.

The latest statement from the dressing room to Waddell's desk came Thursday, when the Blue Jackets held on to beat the Florida Panthers 4-2 before 16,669 in Nationwide Arena, their 14th win in 17 games. Mathieu Olivier had two goals, defenseman Ivan Provorov had a goal and two assists, and goaltender Jet Greaves made 26 saves as the Blue Jackets snapped a nine-game losing streak (0-6-3) against the Panthers.

That win, coupled with Boston's 6-3 loss in Nashville, pulls the Jackets to within one point of the Bruins for the second wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference.

"This time of year gets a little bit nerve-wracking," Provorov said. "But we've done a great job. I think we have a great group of guys who get along really well, on and off the ice, and that's very important. Everybody's ready to play for each other, and I don't think that's something you really want to mess with."

The Blue Jackets have four crucial players — forwards Charlie Coyle, Boone Jenner and Mason Marchment, plus defenseman Erik Gudbranson — with contracts that expire after this season, but Waddell has indicated he's willing to risk losing them this summer to let this group make a run.

"We want to keep those guys in the room," Olivier said.

Waddell is hoping to add some scoring punch to a Blue Jackets team that has struggled to get more than one scoring line going at a time this season. Whether he can pull that off remains to be seen.

In recent conversations, Waddell has made it clear he's willing to move high-end draft picks and prospects for the right player(s), but he's not keen on giving up a big package for a "rental." That is, he wants players with remaining contract term.

This is exactly what Waddell wanted to happen, of course. When he fired coach Dean Evason on Jan. 12 and replaced him with Rick Bowness, the hope was that he'd made the move early enough to make this kind of run possible.

Thursday, the Blue Jackets won despite playing without defensemen Zach Werenski and Dante Fabbro. Werenski missed his third straight game with an illness — no guarantees that he plays Saturday, either, Bowness said — and Fabbro is slowed by a lower-body injury. Marchment also did not play in the third period after a lower-body injury.

But the Blue Jackets, incredibly, improved to 6-1 when Werenski is out of the lineup, and Provorov had been a big reason for that. He was particularly crucial Thursday, playing 26:22 with Werenski sidelined.

It was Provorov's first three-point game of the season and his second since joining the Blue Jackets three seasons ago. His power-play goal at 5:08 of the first period — playing the point in Werenski's stead — gave the Jackets a 1-0 lead.

But his talents shone beyond the scoresheet. Early in the second period, just after Greaves got caught out of the net while playing a puck to his right, Provorov hustled to the other side of the net and sprawled across the ice, blocking a shot by Florida's Tomas Nosek that would have tied the score at 1.

"I was amazed," Greaves said. "That would have been in if he wasn't there.

"When Werenski's out, a lot of guys have to step up," Greaves added, "and Provy was definitely one of those guys for us. He's just playing every situation for us. He's doing such a great job. You saw it tonight. He contributes in every area."

The Blue Jackets took a 3-0 lead on goals by Olivier midway through the second and Jenner early in the third. But if you've watched the Blue Jackets this season, you know the third period was anything but routine.

The Panthers made it 3-1 at 9:08 and 3-2 at 14:44 of the third. With 2:55 remaining, it appeared they tied the score when Gustav Forsling scored from atop the zone just as Provorov and Florida's Jesper Boqvist were battling in front of the net. Provorov was clearly leaning on Boqvist, and Boqvist was certainly pushing Greaves out of the way. The Blue Jackets challenged the goal, but nothing is "clear" or "certain" when a goal is reviewed by the NHL.

After a short review, the goal was taken off the board.

"Actually, we thought it took longer than it should have," Olivier said. "Clear goaltender interference."

Bowness said he leaves the decision with his video coaches, Aron Augustitus and Cam Briere, and they were quick and clear to signal.

"Once (Boqvist) goes in between the defenseman (Provorov) and the goalie (Greaves), he's initiating the contact," Bowness said. "Aron and Cam do a great job on that, and they didn't hesitate to call us (on the bench)."

A Blue Jackets empty-net goal from Olivier barely a minute later capped the scoring. Shortly after the game, the Blue Jackets canceled practice so the players could rest for Saturday's game vs. Utah.

The only one working on Friday will be Waddell. But he'll be buying, not selling.

[The Columbus Dispatch / Columbus Blue Jackets add Conor Garland in surprise trade](#)

By Brian Hedger – March 6, 2026

While many in Columbus slept shortly after midnight March 6, Blue Jackets president/general manager Don Waddell was busy completing a trade to acquire forward Conor Garland from the Vancouver Canucks.

Garland, who will turn 30 on March 11, was acquired in exchange for the Blue Jackets' third-round pick in 2026 and second-round pick in 2028. Vancouver isn't retaining any salary on Garland, who is making \$4.95 million in the final year of his current deal and signed a six-year, \$36 million contract extension on July 1 that annually costs \$6 million against the NHL's salary cap.

The cap ceiling is \$95.5 million this season and has scheduled increases to \$104 million in 2026-27 and \$113.5 million in 2027-28, making Garland's cap number economical for a player capable of scoring 20 goals and 50 points a season.

"Conor is a versatile player who brings great energy to the lineup every night, and we couldn't be more excited to welcome he and his family to Columbus," Waddell said in a statement. "He has tremendous character, plays a reliable two-way game and will be an important part of our club now and in the future."

This was the type of trade Waddell told The Dispatch in late February that he would consider before the NHL's 3 p.m. ET March 6 trade deadline. Garland isn't a pending unrestricted free agent, so he's not a rental who can leave when free agency opens July 1, and he has played as a top-six forward most of his NHL career.

Though slightly built at 5 feet 10, 165 pounds, he's two-way player who can help in all three zones and carries a manageable cap hit. He also didn't cost a first-round pick.

Garland's production has lagged this season while skating at right wing on the top line for a team that's out of the playoff mix, but over his career he has averaged 19 goals and 47 points, and he has played at least 68 games in every season.

His scoring line through 50 games this season is seven goals, 19 assists and 26 points. Over 535 NHL games with the former Arizona Coyotes (2018-2021) and Canucks (2021-2026), Garland has 129 goals, 188 assists, 317 points and a +3 plus/minus rating.

Where will Conor Garland fit in Columbus Blue Jackets' lineup?

Garland skated at right wing on the Canucks' top line, which is a spot that Kirill Marchenko has locked up with the Blue Jackets. Marchenko has formed a dangerous combination with center Adam Fantilli and Mason Marchment at left wing.

Marchment left with an apparent leg injury in the second period of the Blue Jackets' 4-2 victory over the Florida Panthers on March 5. He didn't return in the third period and coach Rick Bowness didn't provide a medical update other than to call it a lower-body injury.

Marchment will be re-evaluated March 6 on a day off for the Blue Jackets, who have won three straight games to climb within three points of a playoff spot.

Marchenko doesn't prefer skating on the left wing with a right-handed shot unless it's a power play. He likes skating on the right, his strong side, so it's unlikely he and the Jackets' new winger will be put together if Garland feels the same. Instead, Garland may fit on a second line that featured Kent Johnson at left wing, Sean Monahan at center and captain Boone Jenner on the right against the Panthers.

Matching Garland with Monahan and Johnson could help all three boost their numbers. Should Marchment be sidelined for multiple games, either Johnson, Jenner or Dmitri Voronkov could move up to skate with Fantilli and Marchenko, or it could be Garland if he's willing left wing.

What else do Columbus Blue Jackets want before deadline expires?

Waddell has stated that he's not interested in adding rental forwards in deadline deals. He already has a handful of impact players who are unsigned as pending unrestricted free agents.

That said, adding further depth to the forwards could be accomplished before the deadline arrives. Those type of rentals might work because they wouldn't be acquired to play a top role and wouldn't create a big hole in the lineup should they leave in the summer.

Bringing former Blue Jackets captain Nick Foligno to Columbus from the Chicago Blackhawks would qualify as that type of move. He'd add size, grit and sneaky skill to the lineup, likely on the fourth line, while giving the Jackets another veteran leader.

The Columbus Dispatch / Who is new Columbus Blue Jackets forward Conor Garland?

By Brian Hedger – March 6, 2026

- The Columbus Blue Jackets acquired forward Conor Garland from the Vancouver Canucks in a late-night trade.
- Garland was previously drafted by the Arizona Coyotes in 2015 and has played for the Coyotes and Canucks.
- Columbus traded a 2026 third-round pick and a 2028 second-round pick to acquire Garland.
- Garland is under contract for six more years with a salary cap hit of \$6 million starting in 2025.

Connor Garland's path to joining the Blue Jackets won't soon be forgotten, by him or anybody who was still awake in Columbus when it happened.

The news broke roughly two hours after the Blue Jackets won their third straight game March 5 at Nationwide Arena, where they fended off a late comeback push for a 4-2 victory against the twice defending Stanley Cup champion Florida Panthers. It was also just past midnight on March 6, about 15 hours before the 3 p.m. arrival of the trade deadline.

It was shortly after 9 p.m. in Vancouver when Garland, 29, and his family found out, so the timing wasn't quite as bonkers for them, but it certainly was for the Blue Jackets and their fans. He steps into a key role with the Jackets' core group for the foreseeable future, not some fly-by-night bounty hunter who can skip town July 1 when free agency opens.

He's a Blue Jacket now, and he'll be one for six more years barring another trade that sends him to another NHL home in the future. So, who is this guy?

Here's a glance at who the Blue Jackets just added:

Where has Conor Garland played before joining Columbus Blue Jackets?

Garland's NHL path began at the 2015 draft, in which the former Arizona Coyotes selected him in the fifth round with the 123rd pick. Defenseman Zach Werenski was taken eighth in the same draft by the Blue Jackets.

After returning to the Moncton Wildcast of the Quebec Maritimes Junior Hockey League for one more season (2015-16), Garland started his professional career in 2016-17 and played three years in Tucson, Arizona, with the AHL's Tucson Roadrunners before making his NHL debut Dec. 8, 2018, with the Coyotes.

After spending the remaining 47 games of that season in the NHL, scoring 13 goals as a rookie, Garland played his first full NHL season in 2019-20 and finished it with 22 goals, 17 assists and 39 points in 68

games. He played one more season (2019-20) with the Coyotes before a trade July 23, 2021, sent him to Vancouver along with defenseman Oliver Ekman-Larsson.

Garland played the past five season with the Canucks, tallying 82 goals, 139 assists and 221 points in 371 games before being traded to the Blue Jackets.

What did the Columbus Blue Jackets give up to get Conor Garland?

Garland was acquired from the Canucks in exchange for the the Blue Jackets' third-round pick in 2026 and second-round pick in 2028. Not having to part with a first-round pick likely was a big factor in the Blue Jackets accepting the terms.

They had 16 picks in the next two drafts prior to the trade and gave up only one with the 2026 third-round pick, which was one of two they had in that round. The Jackets still have seven 2026 picks, with one in each round. They no longer own second-round picks in 2027 or 2028 but kept each of the next four first-round picks and own three 2027 third-round selections.

What is Columbus Blue Jackets forward Conor Garland's contract situation?

The Canucks aren't retaining any salary on Garland, who is making \$4.95 million in the final year of his current deal and signed a six-year, \$36 million contract extension July 1, 2025, that has a \$6 million charge against the NHL's salary cap.

The cap ceiling for this season is \$95.5 million, but will climb to \$104 million in 2026-27 and \$113.5 million in 2027-28, making Garland's cap number economical for a player who's capable of reaching 20 goals and 50 points a season.

What are Columbus Blue Jackets forward Conor Garland's career stats?

Garland has played 535 NHL games, split between the Coyotes and Canucks, and has a career scoring line of 129 goals, 188 assists and 317 points. This season, he has tallied 7-19-26 in 50 games with a plus/minus of -15 for a team that quickly dropped out of playoff contention.

Garland is shooting a career low 6.8% on 103 shots, so there's reason to believe he'll score more often if that percentage regresses back toward his 10.3% career percentage on 1,255 shots.

What number will Columbus Blue Jackets forward Conor Garland wear?

Well, it won't be No. 8, which belongs to Werenski on the Blue Jackets. Garland wore No. 8 for the Canucks after starting his NHL career wearing No. 83 for the Coyotes. Should Garland go back to No. 83, he'll become the first Blue Jackets player to wear it.

Where is Columbus Blue Jackets forward Conor Garland from?

Garland is from Scituate, Massachusetts, and has played for United States national teams at the 2021, 2023 and 2025 men's world championships, winning a bronze medal in 2021 and a gold medal in May 2025 on a team that included Werenski.

Is Columbus Blue Jackets forward Conor Garland a dad?

Yes, Garland and his wife, Meghan, have a son, Quinton, whom they call Quint. He was born in November 2024.

The Columbus Dispatch / Columbus Blue Jackets hold on, top Florida Panthers 4-2

By Brian Hedger – March 5, 2026

Make it three wins in a row for the Blue Jackets, who staved off a late comeback to down the Florida Panthers 4-2 on March 5 at Nationwide Arena.

The win, combined with the Boston Bruins' 6-3 loss at the Nashville Predators, moves the Blue Jackets (72 points) to within one point of the Bruins (73 points) for the East's second wild-card spot. It also moved the Jackets to within three points of the Pittsburgh Penguins (75 points) and New York Islanders (75 points) for second and third, respectively, in the Metropolitan Division.

Pittsburgh lost 5-1 to the Buffalo Sabres and the Islanders lost to the Los Angeles Kings.

Behind the Jackets, the Philadelphia Flyers lost 3-0 to the Utah Mammoth to remain at 67 points and the Toronto Maple Leafs (65 points) failed to keep pace by losing 6-2 to the New York Rangers.

Florida appeared to have tied it 3-3 on a shot from the point by Gustav Forsling with 2:55 left in the third period, nearly completing a comeback from a 3-0 deficit, but the goal was overturned on a Columbus challenge for goaltender interference.

Replays showed Panthers forward Jesper Boqvist blocked Blue Jackets goalie Jet Greaves (26 saves) from getting over to make the save. Mathieu Olivier then scored his second of two goals in the game into an empty net to seal it for the Blue Jackets (32-21-8).

"Obviously, there was some contact there," Greaves said. "You never know how those are going to go ... who initiated it, whether there was a push or not. But I was happy when it went our way and it was a great job by our video guys. I was happy it was no goal."

The Blue Jackets got captain Boone Jenner back after a one-game absence due to a lower-body injury and played without defensemen Zach Werenski (illness) and Dante Fabbro (lower-body injury). They also finished the game with only 11 forwards after losing left wing Mason Marchment to a lower-body injury in the second period.

Werenski missed his third straight game, while Fabbro was out with an issue that happened in the Jackets' 3-2 victory March 3 over the Nashville Predators.

Ivan Provorov, Olivier and Jenner scored the first three goals for the Blue Jackets, who improved to 3-1-1 since returning from the NHL's Olympic break. Provorov added two assists for a three-point game and even made a save in the second period to keep it 1-0 with Greaves caught outside the left post.

"The veterans did a great job (without Werenski and Fabbro)," Blue Jackets coach Rick Bowness said. "Provy was great, Goody (Erik Gudbranson) was great and Sevo (Damon Severson) was great. I give the

(defensemen) a lot of credit tonight because we're missing two of our top six. Jake (Christiansen) did a wonderful job, (Egor) Zamula did a good job. They all stepped up tonight."

Niko Mikkola and Sam Bennett scored for the Panthers, who started former Blue Jackets goalie Daniil Tarasov (23 saves) in his first visit to Columbus since being traded to Florida on June 26, 2025.

The Blue Jackets scored the game's first two goals off long shots by defensemen.

Provorov scored the first 5:08 into the game, giving the Jackets a 1-0 lead on a power play by sending a shot from the center point through traffic to beat Tarasov for his seventh goal of the season.

It remained that score until 10:50 into the second, when Olivier made it 2-0 by deflecting a shot by Egor Zamula from the left wall into the net for his 10th goal. It stayed 2-0 to start the third thanks to Greaves and the Blue Jackets' penalty-kill groups thwarting a Panthers power play with 3:50 left in the second.

Rather than sitting back in a defensive mindset in the third, the Jackets forced the issue early and pushed their lead to 3-0 on Jenner's goal 1:41 into the period. Getting a pass from Kent Johnson, Jenner beat Tarasov from the slot for his ninth goal of the season.

Mikkola and Bennett scored the next two for the Panthers, cutting it to 3-2 on Mikkola's deflection of Aaron Ekblad's shot and Bennett's wrist shot to cap a late power play.

The Columbus Dispatch / Blue Jackets' trade deadline: What Waddell will do with free agents

By Brian Hedger – March 5, 2026

- The Columbus Blue Jackets' playoff chances could influence their strategy at the March 6 NHL trade deadline.
- President/GM Don Waddell may keep pending unrestricted free agents like Boone Jenner and Charlie Coyle as "rentals."
- The team possesses valuable trade assets, including coveted players, numerous draft picks, and significant salary-cap space.
- While a major trade is unlikely, the Blue Jackets might add depth for a potential playoff run.

The NHL's countdown clock to this season's trade deadline of 3 p.m. March 6 is ticking down to its final stages.

Front offices across the league are making plans and sorting through potential moves, including Blue Jackets president/general manager Don Waddell and his staff. Depending on the outcome of a game against the Florida Panthers on March 5 at Nationwide Arena, the Jackets could be as close as one point from a playoff spot or face a five-point gap when the deadline arrives.

Whichever end of the spectrum they're nearest to could factor into which path is taken with one or more of their pending unrestricted free agents who are occupying full-time roles.

Waddell said on Feb. 24 that he's expecting to keep UFAs Boone Jenner, Charlie Coyle, Mason Marchment, Erik Gudbranson and Danton Heinen, but nothing is set in stone until the deadline expires.

Keeping that in mind, here's a glance at the Blue Jackets' situation as the deadline looms:

Columbus Blue Jackets assets at NHL trade deadline

If the Blue Jackets were in a rebuilding mode, Waddell would be sitting pretty.

Coyle and Jenner are coveted as two-way forwards who can play at center or a wing position, Marchment has ignited his offensive production while providing a power forward's frame and the Blue Jackets could supply experienced grit with Gudbranson and Heinen. All would fit nicely on a playoff roster, which means buyers would likely have interest.

Coyle turned 34 on March 2, so he's aging, but he has put together an outstanding season for the Jackets, who acquired him along with Miles Wood in a June 27 trade with the Colorado Avalanche. Coyle centers a physical checking line with Mathieu Olivier at right wing and Cole Sillinger on the left, and Blue Jackets coach Rick Bowness recently called that group his second line.

That's how vital Coyle has become while contributing 16 goals, 30 assists and 46 points in 60 games.

The Boston Bruins traded him to the Avalanche in a deadline deal last year to get center Casey Mittelstadt, a 19-year-old forward and 2025 second-round pick, and Coyle wasn't having nearly as much success as he is now.

Jenner, meanwhile, has long been coveted by opposing GMs for his ability to win board battles and faceoffs while playing with grit.

His production has dropped playing on the wing, which sometimes keeps him from getting to prime scoring areas, but the Blue Jackets' captain has chipped in 8-19-27 in 45 games. Jenner is dealing with a lower-body injury, but he'd probably return an impressive haul if made available.

Marchment would, too, since he is built for the grind of the playoffs. It took a 2026 fourth-round pick and 2027 second-round pick for Waddell to get him in a trade with the Seattle Kraken on Dec. 19, so the price tag for inquiring GMs is likely inflated.

Marchment has also found a home on the Jackets' top line with Adam Fantilli and Kirill Marchenko and has added 10-7-17 in 18 games since the trade. That leaves Gudbranson and Heinen, two UFA vets who offer quality depth and bite. Gudbranson has entrenched himself as a leader in the Blue Jackets' locker room, so that's another desirable trait.

Waddell also has valuable trade chips with 16 picks over the next two drafts plus lots of salary-cap space. According to PuckPedia, the Blue Jackets could have enough space at the deadline to absorb up to \$45.5 million in cap hits, which could generate incentivized offers from GMs looking to offload contracts.

What do the Columbus Blue Jackets need at the NHL trade deadline?

The short answer is nothing, as Waddell already has a bunch of productive UFAs who are equivalent to rental players. A more in-depth answer would include depth for the playoffs, which every playoff-hunting GM seeks.

The Blue Jackets have eight NHL defensemen instead of the more standard seven, and they have AHL forwards with solid NHL experience, including Zach Aston-Reese and Brendan Gaunce. That doesn't mean Waddell won't look to add around the edges as he did a year ago by acquiring depth forwards Christian Fischer off waivers and Luke Kunin via a trade with the San Jose Sharks.

That deal required a 2025 fourth-round pick for Kunin, so it wouldn't be a surprise if Waddell acquires additional depth by similar means this year. Would a mid-round pick offered to the Chicago Blackhawks be enough to bring back former Blue Jackets captain Nick Foligno, a gritty power forward who's still beloved in Columbus?

It's worth considering. Foligno has an expiring contract and would add instant leadership value along with skill and depth.

Will the Columbus Blue Jackets pull off a blockbuster swap?

Waddell likes to leave all options open, but don't count on it. Sending away draft capital and/or prospects to add a big-name UFA rental for the stretch run doesn't make sense for the Blue Jackets.

They already have a handful of rental types occupying spots in the active lineup, leaving little need for outside UFAs to fill gaps. Waddell said he'd be willing to consider trades for NHL players with term remaining on their contracts, but deals like those are rare and usually happen around the draft in late June or the July 1 start of free agency.

The Hockey Writers / NHL Trade Grades: Blue Jackets' Garland Acquisition Has Its Risks

By Alex Chauvancy - March 6, 2026

We're burning the midnight oil here. Just after the clock struck midnight on the East Coast, reports surfaced that the Columbus Blue Jackets had acquired winger Conor Garland from the Vancouver Canucks in exchange for a couple of draft picks. Here are the full details:

Blue Jackets acquire:

- Garland

Canucks acquire:

- 2026 3rd-round pick
- 2028 2nd-round pick

Garland has totaled just seven goals and 26 points in 49 games for the Canucks this season, but his underlying metrics have been decent. He will give the Blue Jackets some more scoring pop in their middle six, but there are some meaningful long-term ramifications in acquiring him.

Garland Comes With His Risks

The Blue Jackets have been white hot since Rick Bowness took over as head coach, so it's not a surprise that GM Don Waddell is a buyer, even though they still have some catching up to do in the standings.

At his best, Garland is a solid middle-six winger with play-driving ability. It hasn't happened this season with the Canucks, but he's moving to a better environment with the Blue Jackets. His playmaking ability, which is his strength, should be utilized more effectively alongside players like Kirill Marchenko and Adam Fantilli, among others.

Despite his size, 5-foot-10, 165 pounds, Garland is one of the more effective forecheckers in the NHL. He's a pest and is not afraid to play a style of game that will get under his opponent's skin. However, if there's a flaw in his game, it's that he's not exactly a high-end finisher. He's shooting just 6.8 percent this season, which is below his career average of 10.3 percent, but don't expect more than 15-20 goals per season from him.

The Garland acquisition makes sense from an on-ice perspective for the Blue Jackets, but there are some major concerns about how this will affect the team's cap situation down the road.

Garland recently signed a six-year extension that does not kick in until July 1. It comes with a no-move clause and has a \$6 million cap hit. The cap hit may not be the worst with the salary cap projected to rise over the next couple of years, but his extension does not project to age all that well:

That's probably part of why the Blue Jackets only gave up second- and third-round picks to acquire him, but they should be concerned about how his contract projects to age. It may not be easy to move him, either, since he'll have a no-move clause for the first few years of his extension. That makes this move a mixed bag for the Blue Jackets because Garland's contract seems like the type they should be avoiding, given where they are as an organization.

Blue Jackets Grade: C+

Canucks Net a Modest Return But Gain Cap Flexibility

I am a bit surprised the Canucks pulled the trigger on just second and third-round picks for Garland. He was one of their better trade chips, and there's no doubt that it's been a seller's market up to this point. The rationale for the Canucks must have been that they wanted to trade him before the no-move clause kicked in, and it would have been more difficult to do so around the NHL Draft in June. Just take what you can get for him now and move on.

At the very least, it gives the Canucks more roster and cap flexibility as they begin their rebuild, and getting out of that contract is a plus. I suppose you could say they won the deal, even though the return for one of their better trade chips was modest. We'll see if they have any more trades in the works before the 3 PM deadline today (March 6).

Canucks Grade: B

The Hockey Writers / Blue Jackets Acquire Conor Garland From Canucks For Draft Picks

By Mark Scheig – March 6, 2026

The Columbus Blue Jackets won a big game Thursday night against the Florida Panthers. That may very well have prompted GM Don Waddell to jump into action. He wasted no time.

Early Friday morning, the Blue Jackets acquired Conor Garland from the Vancouver Canucks in exchange for two draft picks, a 2026 third-round pick and a 2028 second-round pick. Both of these picks are the Blue Jackets' own picks.

Garland is in the final year of his current year. He signed a six-year extension that kicks in next season at \$6 million AAV.

For the Blue Jackets, the reason they made this move is simple. They needed scoring help on the wing. Given their run under new coach Rick Bowness, 13-2-1 since he took over from Dean Evason, the time was now to make this trade.

What Garland Brings to the Blue Jackets

Here is what Waddell had to say about acquiring Garland.

“Conor is a versatile player who brings great energy to the lineup every night and we couldn't be more excited to welcome he and his family to Columbus. He has tremendous character, plays a reliable two-way game and will be an important part of our club now and in the future.”

The key to this whole thing for Waddell and the Blue Jackets was term. He was on record stating that he wasn't necessarily interested in trading first-round picks for rentals. He prioritized players with term should the opportunity arise.

Given where the Canucks are heading, it made sense to find Garland a new home before his no-move clause kicked in at the start of his new contract. The first three years have a full no-move clause while the last three years have a modified no-trade clause. The belief is that helped drive the price the Blue Jackets had to pay down so they didn't have to part with any top prospects or first-round picks.

It has been a tough year for Garland with the Canucks. But when he's on top of his game, he brings energy, speed and intelligence. He's averaged in the 17-20 goal range in his four previous seasons before this. His point totals were 52, 46, 47 and 50.

The Blue Jackets' second line has been a source of frustration all season. Although that line played very well on Thursday night against the Panthers, Garland can fit in on the right side of that line giving them a boost in multiple areas of the game.

Garland and Zach Werenski played together for Team U.S.A. at the Men's World Championships. They won gold as alternate captains of the team.

Garland plays the kind of game the Blue Jackets value. His tenacious style along with his playmaking ability will give opponents something else they have to account for. Should the Blue Jackets make the playoffs, his style is perfect for tight, close-checking games.

As for the Canucks, they will have multiple second-round picks in the next three drafts, perfect for a team looking to rebuild from the ground up.

The Blue Jackets may or may not be done. They still have around 14 hours as of this writing to see if they have any more tricks up their sleeve.

The Hockey Writers / Blue Jackets' Boone Jenner Focused on Upcoming Playoff Chase

By Mark Scheig – March 5, 2026

The Columbus Blue Jackets had to overcome a sluggish start to their game Tuesday night against the Nashville Predators. It was the second half of a back-to-back set. They played without both Boone Jenner and Zach Werenski. Yet, they found a way to win.

The Blue Jackets scored twice in the third to defeat the Predators 3-2. That puts them in position to potentially get closer to the playoff cutoff when they host the Florida Panthers at Nationwide Arena on Thursday night.

While coach Rick Bowness said that Werenski will be a gametime decision Thursday, Jenner is ready to return. Although Bowness didn't give any specifics to the lineup because of other potential gametime decisions, the captain declared himself ready to go.

"Great. Ready to go," Jenner said when asked how he was feeling.

Jenner missed Tuesday night's game against the Predators due to what the Blue Jackets called "maintenance." Jenner acknowledged that he was dealing with a lower-body injury that cropped up in New York. But he has no concerns of it being a lingering thing and feels good now.

Managing Another Deadline

Jenner is no stranger to having to deal with the NHL Trade Deadline. He's been on both sides when the Blue Jackets have bought and when they've had to sell.

This season, it appears things will fall somewhere in the middle from a team standpoint. It will be somewhat different for Jenner in the sense that he is a pending unrestricted free agent after this season. While there has been some talk about a potential extension, nothing has been signed.

Jenner's focus remains as it does every season with doing his part to help the Blue Jackets make the playoffs despite the chatter and business that could go on.

"For myself, I just focus on what's at hand here," Jenner said. "It's a huge game for us tonight. That's the way I look at it. Just looking to go out there tonight. I'm happy to be back with the group."

The Blue Jackets are not expected to do a lot at this trade deadline. They may bring in another veteran if the opportunity and price fit. No matter what the team does, Jenner remains confident that this group can get it done.

"We're very confident in the group in here and very confident in management," Jenner said. "I think we know what's at stake right now and we're excited for the challenge. The games are only going to get harder and we're ready for that. Looking forward to it."

Task At Hand

Thursday night's game against the Panthers is massive. If everything out of town works in their favor, the Blue Jackets could end the night one point out of a playoff spot and three points in back of a top-three spot in the Metropolitan Division.

Werenski didn't take part in the morning skate so there is a real chance he won't play Thursday night. No matter if he plays or not, Jenner says it's up to them to be the same team.

"Other guys have been stepping up," Jenner said. "No matter who's in the lineup, we want to be the same team with playing the same way and the same details. Obviously, we hope to get him back soon. It's that next man up mentality."

Without Werenski, the Blue Jackets have found a way to get a pair of wins this week. Both of them, 5-4 in New York and 3-2 over Nashville, involved a level of resiliency.

"We have a lot of resilience in this room," Jenner said. Good teams find a way to win those games. A little adversity there in New York. Obviously, we didn't want to give up four in the third. But (we) find a way to come back and get the two points. Last game into the third, down 2-1, we find a way to get it done and that's what good teams do. We're a resilient group in here and you could see that in that game."

Jenner skated on the right wing at the morning skate with Sean Monahan at center and Kent Johnson on the left. They know they need to help contribute offensively when the opportunity presents itself. What is the key to do that?

"It's tough to pinpoint one thing or another," Jenner said. "We want to be a line that's dangerous and chipping in offensively too without giving anything up defensively. I think with us with our skill set, it's more of getting down there, getting some zone time, getting to the net, banging in some dirty goals and inside at their net making it difficult for their goalie. We want to do that as well."

Gameday Notes

It will be former Blue Jacket Daniil Tarasov starting for the Panthers tonight opposite Jet Greaves. Panthers' coach Paul Maurice said he wouldn't know his lineup until they got to the rink. "It's that time of year," Maurice said. He couldn't say for certain if anyone would be scratched for roster management purposes.

Sergei Bobrovsky and A.J. Greer both took part in the morning skate. Bobrovsky is slated to backup Tarasov. It remains to be seen if Bobrovsky will be traded by Friday's deadline.

The Hockey Writers / NHL Rumors: Maple Leafs Plans, Thomas Trade, Deadline Moves

By Jim Parsons - March 5, 2026

In today's NHL Rumors Rundown, the Toronto Maple Leafs may still have a contract decision looming with Bobby McMann, and their asking price for Nicolas Roy remains high. Meanwhile, the Columbus Blue Jackets are suddenly pumping the brakes on selling, and the Utah Mammoth could remain in the mix for Robert Thomas.

There Will Be No Maple Leafs Blockbuster Moves at the 2026 Trade Deadline

With the trade deadline approaching quickly, there were some big trades on Wednesday, but could even bigger deals be announced on Thursday? Several situations remain fluid across the league.

Maple Leafs Weigh McMann Extension vs. Trade

When McMann, Scott Laughton, and Oliver Ekman-Larsson were scratched for roster management reasons ahead of Wednesday's game against the New Jersey Devils, many assumed a trade was imminent. However, that didn't materialize, and the decision appears to have been precautionary.

According to TSN insider Chris Johnston, Toronto hasn't ruled out the possibility of extending McMann instead of trading him. The 29-year-old winger has 32 points (19 goals, 13 assists) in 60 games this season and is set to become a pending unrestricted free agent.

Johnston wrote:

"While the Leafs continue to explore the trade market on Bobby McMann, they haven't ruled out signing him to a new contract. Yesterday's Kiefer Sherwood extension (5x\$5.75M AAV) is a favorable comparable for McMann, although he likely has to come in under \$5M to stay in Toronto."

One thing seems clear: McMann won't remain in Toronto past the deadline without either signing an extension or being moved.

Maple Leafs Hold Firm on Nicolas Roy Price

Meanwhile, another Toronto-related rumor continues to circulate around center Nicolas Roy. Sources say the Maple Leafs' asking price has remained steady at a first-round pick plus a prospect.

The Leafs are also reportedly unwilling to retain salary at that price point. Roy, 29, carries a \$3 million cap hit and has one year remaining on his contract after this season.

Toronto's firm stance suggests the team believes it holds leverage in negotiations, particularly with several contenders searching for help down the middle. Whether another club meets that price remains to be seen, but with the deadline fast approaching, Roy's situation could become one of the more closely watched developments in the final hours.

Utah Still in the Mix for Robert Thomas

The trade market for Robert Thomas remains one of the most intriguing storylines heading into deadline day. While several teams have been linked to the St. Louis Blues center (and the Buffalo Sabres were reportedly close), the Utah Mammoth are believed to still be in a strong position to pursue him.

Despite recently acquiring defenseman MacKenzie Weegar from the Calgary Flames, Utah managed to keep its top assets intact. The Mammoth reportedly held onto all of their top-five prospects and still possess their first-round picks in both the upcoming draft and the following year.

That flexibility keeps them well-positioned if the Thomas sweepstakes heat up again. It is expected they will on Thursday. Any potential trade would require the player's approval under his full no-trade clause, meaning the decision timeline could stretch close to the deadline as Thomas evaluates his options.

Blue Jackets Pull Back on Potential Rentals

While many teams around the league are aggressively selling pending UFAs, Columbus appears to be taking the opposite approach. According to reports, teams that have called about Charlie Coyle and Mason Marchment have been told the two forwards are currently unavailable.

The Blue Jackets are suddenly winning. Under head coach Rick Bowness, Columbus has gone an impressive 13-2-1 and now sits just three points behind the Boston Bruins for the final wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference. This is not the time to abandon ship.

Rather than selling off assets, the Blue Jackets may choose to ride their momentum and see if they can push into a playoff position.