



DALLAS STARS COMMUNICATIONS

# DAILY NEWS CLIPS

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**NHL.com (Dallas Stars)**

## **Heika's Take: Stars unable to match Ducks energy, drop on second night of back-to-back**

By Mike Heika

Date: 01/14/2026

In a strange way, Tuesday's 3-1 loss to Anaheim showed just how impressive the Stars have been on the second night of back-to-back games for the past two seasons.

After a win in Los Angeles on Monday, Dallas was hoping to improve on a league-best record of 14-3-1 on the second night of back-to-backs (including 6-1-0 this season). Instead, the normal demons of diminished energy and wobbly focus spilled all over the ice at Honda Center and made the lads in Victory Green look tired and disheveled.

"Tonight, they came out with a lot of jump and we didn't have our legs, and we didn't execute," Stars coach Glen Gulutzan said.

Dallas received stellar goaltending from Casey DeSmith, as it has in these situations for the past two seasons, but that wasn't enough. A Ducks team trying to shake out of an 0-7-1 slump was faster, fiercer, and smarter.

"They came out desperate right from the start and they were all over us there," said defenseman Alexander Petrovic. "Casey was unbelievable for us tonight, it could have been a lot worse."

The game was tied at 0-0 until three minutes into the second period when Chris Kreider scored for the Ducks. Dallas had only put seven shots on goal up at the time, so it was clear the Ducks were in control. Part of the reason was the fact the Stars played an intense game the night before. Part of the reason was that leading minute defenseman Miro Heiskanen had to fly back to Texas to deal with a personal issue.

With Heiskanen out, Thomas Harley played 29 minutes and the rest of the defense had to step up, as well. That created some issues with puck possession and zone time, and put a ton of pressure on DeSmith.

"We have extra D and just mixed around our pairs to try to find a matchup," Gulutzan said. "That's the first time we've played without him this season and you could feel it. But that wasn't the issue. I felt we could have done some things better, especially early."

They looked to have low energy compared to the hungry Ducks, and also seemed to lack the physicality needed to win battles.

"They were jumping us and out-quicking us. They were winning their races and battles. When you don't have your step and a team is hungry like they are, it's tough," Gulutzan

said. "We had a hard game last night, and we have to be ready for those moments. Every team in the league is desperate for points."

The Ducks move to 23-21-2. The Stars fall to 27-11-9, so there still is a big difference in the standings. Still, Dallas is 2-5-4 in its past 11 and needs to find some traction.

"As of late, we're struggling to sustain our game," said Sam Steel. "We've seen bits and pieces, but we're trying to find something we can put on the table every night."

Dallas did end strong, holding an 18-13 advantage in shots on goal in the second half and getting a Roope Hintz goal off a pretty assist from Matt Duchene to cut the deficit to 2-1 late in the game. But they need to use that momentum to end this six-game trip strong on Thursday in Utah.

"It's going to be important," said Gulutzan. "That's another team that's desperate for points. The league is getting tighter and tighter and we'll get some rest and get up for that one."

**NHL.com**

## **Dostal makes 24 saves, Ducks hold off Stars to end 9-game slide**

By Dan Arritt

Date: 01/14/2026

ANAHEIM -- Lukas Dostal made 24 saves, and the Anaheim Ducks ended a nine-game losing streak with a 3-1 victory against the Dallas Stars at Honda Center on Tuesday.

"When we play the right way, we are getting the results," Dostal said. "It was a long time coming for us. Hopefully, the dark times are over, and we can just build on (this win)."

Chris Kreider, Beckett Sennecke and Jacob Trouba scored for the Ducks (22-21-3), who went 0-8-1 during their skid and won for the first time since Dec. 20, a 4-3 victory against the Columbus Blue Jackets. Anaheim had allowed at least five goals in each of its previous five games and seven of its past eight.

"We didn't want to have that one to get to 10 games," Sennecke said of the losing streak. "We're super pumped to finally get back into that win column and, hopefully, go on a little bit of a heater here."

Leo Carlsson missed the game with a lower-body injury, Cutter Gauthier sat out with an illness, and Troy Terry missed his third straight game for Anaheim with an upper-body injury. All three participated in the morning skate on Tuesday and were game-time decisions.

Ducks coach Joel Quenneville said all three are day to day.

Roope Hintz scored, and Casey DeSmith made 22 saves for the Stars (27-11-9), who were coming off a 3-1 win at the Los Angeles Kings on Monday.

"We had a hard, hard game last night," Dallas coach Glen Gulutzan said. "Tonight, they were desperate. You could see that it was going to be a hard game. We have to be ready for those moments, right, because every team in the League right now is desperate for points."

The Stars played without one of their top defensemen, Miro Heiskanen, who missed his first game of the season because of a personal matter.

"We're hoping it will be short-term," Gulutzan said. "This is the first time we played without him this year, so you could feel it. You could feel that he wasn't in the lineup."

Shots were 2-2 at the halfway point of a scoreless first period before Anaheim finished with a 12-7 edge.

"They also had some guys missing, so it was a desperate team," Dallas defenseman Alexander Petrovic said of the first period. "They were all over us."

The Stars took their timeout at 2:27 of the second period before starting a 17-second 5-on-3, but four seconds into the two-man advantage, Jason Robertson was called for hooking.

Both teams were skating 4-on-4 when Dallas was called for another penalty while Anaheim had possession of the puck. Dostal left the ice for an extra skater and Kreider gave the Ducks a 1-0 lead at 3:36 after coming on, receiving a pass from Mikael Granlund and scoring with a snap shot from above the right hash marks.

Sennecke extended it to 2-0 at 12:03 of the third period when he retrieved a loose puck behind the Dallas net, pulled it out front and scored with a backhand while falling down to the ice.

"One of the things they've got me focused on is getting my nose over the blue paint, so I'm just trying to go out there and do that," Sennecke said.

Hintz cut it to 2-1 at 17:48 with DeSmith pulled for the extra skater, scoring on a one-timer from the inside edge of the right circle.

"Casey kept us in the game for so long," Hintz said. "In the third, we finally started to create some chances and grind them down low, but that was the biggest thing, we started so late."

Trouba then scored into an empty net with 21 seconds left for the 3-1 final.

"There's no wiggle room in this league right now," Gulutzan said. "We have to keep grinding out points, and it is a grind to get points. You talk to anybody in the League. It's tough night in and night out. There's lots of parity. We've got to get going here a little bit."

NOTES: Ducks defenseman Jackson LaCombe extended his assist streak to five games (six assists) on Trouba's goal. ... Sennecke's first game-winning NHL goal was his 15th of the season, moving him past Ryan Getzlaf (14 in 2005-06) for the eighth-most goals in a season by an Anaheim rookie. Bobby Ryan (31 goals in 2008-2009) ranks first.

## **Dallas Morning News**

### **Miro Heiskanen ruled out of Dallas Stars' game against Anaheim Ducks**

By SportsDay Staff

Date: 01/13/2026

The Dallas Stars will be a little shorthanded on Tuesday night against the Anaheim Ducks.

Just before the game, the team announced top defenseman Miro Heiskanen will be out "due to a personal family matter." Veteran defenseman Ilya Lyubushkin is stepping in to replace Heiskanen for the time being.

The Stars are on the second leg of a back-to-back after a 3-1 win over the Los Angeles Kings on Monday. Dallas is in the midst of a lengthy, coast-to-coast road trip that began on Jan. 6 against Carolina and doesn't end until Jan. 15 when the Stars visit Utah.

In 46 games this season, Heiskanen has tallied 29 assists and seven goals while providing top-shelf work along the blue line for Dallas.

## DLLS

### **Dallas Stars game notes: Not enough pressure, heavy legs, & elite DeSmith in loss at Ducks**

By Sam Nestler

Date: 01/14/2026

The Dallas Stars just didn't have the legs during the second night of a back-to-back in a 3-1 loss against the Anaheim Ducks at Honda Center on Tuesday.

#### Stars lines

Steel – Johnston – Rantanen  
Robertson – Hintz – Bourque  
Hryckowian – Duchene – Benn  
Bäck – Faksa – Blackwell

Lindell – Lundkvist  
Harley – Petrovic  
Capobianco – Lyubushkin

DeSmith  
Oettinger

Scratches: Miro Heiskanen (personal family matter), Adam Erne, Nathan Bastian

Just 20 minutes before puck drop, Stars PR announced this:

[https://x.com/samnestler/status/2011268291411468700?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E2011268291411468700%7Ctwgr%5E8a6cae6337470bb36f3b4b66ebd8d5cb19995168%7Ctwcon%5Es1\\_c10&ref\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fadlils.com%2Fdallas-stars-game-notes-not-enough-pressure-heavy-legs-elite-desmith-in-loss-at-ducks%2F](https://x.com/samnestler/status/2011268291411468700?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E2011268291411468700%7Ctwgr%5E8a6cae6337470bb36f3b4b66ebd8d5cb19995168%7Ctwcon%5Es1_c10&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fadlils.com%2Fdallas-stars-game-notes-not-enough-pressure-heavy-legs-elite-desmith-in-loss-at-ducks%2F)

Ilya Lyubushkin will enter the lineup in Heiskanen's absence and will be paired with Kyle Capobianco on the bottom duo. Up front, Nathan Bastian comes out after playing last night in Los Angeles. Colin Blackwell jumps back into the lineup, and Adam Erne remains a healthy scratch.

Casey DeSmith starts after Jake Oettinger played well in the win last night.

#### Top story

Last-minute absences.

As we showed above, Miro Heiskanen will miss tonight's game due to a personal family matter. That was announced just before (scheduled) puck drop, so hopefully everything is okay.

On the Anaheim side of the puck, the Ducks have a few key absences, also announced late. Leo Carlsson and Cutter Gauthier will miss tonight's game for unknown reasons. Troy Terry is also out with an upper-body injury. He has missed the past two games. Anaheim will have to go 11 forwards / seven defensemen tonight.

It's already a whacky one from the OC, and the puck hasn't even dropped yet. Yes, I am writing this at 9:23 CT, and the puck has still not dropped. Tsk, tsk.

Oh, and if you don't know why... It's because tonight is an exclusive national broadcast. You may be asking yourself, 'Wait, don't both teams broadcast their games on Victory+?' Good observation, class! It is true. The Victory+ bowl is blacked out on Victory+.

That's irony.

Live game notebook

Period 1

Mavrik Bourque has been flying lately, and he drilled the post with a chip shot that deflected off a stick down the right win just over one minute into the first. Mikael Granlund nearly made a spinning pass reception, as he tried to chip it past the defenseman and spin around to the outside. The puck went just out of his reach.

Nils Lundkvist was called for tripping for the second straight game. This time, he really didn't get much of Beckett Sennecke to knock him down. But Lundkvist did take a poor angle and get beaten to the middle of the ice. When you do that, you put yourself in position to be called for a penalty when a player goes down. I don't agree with the call though either way.

Lundkvist came out of the box and got a puck at center ice after Jason Robertson chipped it away from the Ducks. Lundkvist was unable to get his head up to see Robertson streaking through the middle of the ice. Probably would've been a breakaway if he made the pass, and Robertson went offside and slammed his stick on the ice in frustration.

Casey DeSmith used great positioning to stop a couple of great chances in tight. Anaheim is activating its defense a lot and getting Dallas spinning a bit in its own end. Ducks have also closed quickly, stopping Dallas in the neutral zone before it really gets going. The Stars have had a couple of rush chances, but not much in the way of sustained pressure.



DeSmith has had to be really good as the period winds down. Ducks would be up one or two if not for a couple of huge stops when things break down.

Robertson had the best chance of the night for Dallas, just barely getting stopped by Lukáš Dostál and the pipe on a shot from the bottom of the left circle, and then again on a wraparound attempt on the rebound.

DeSmith... WOW! What a save on a backdoor pass from Jackson LaCombe to Ryan Strome. DeSmith read it perfectly, getting a good push from left to right and getting a pad on it. Wow.

Two more saves for DeSmith to end the period. He stood on his head.

Stars 0, Ducks 0

Period 2

Dallas gets an early power play and now, because of a bench minor to Anaheim, will get 17 seconds of 5-on-3 time. If the Stars gave Anaheim the puck a little earlier, they could've had closer to 30 seconds up two men.

Well, nevermind. Robertson was called for hooking just off the faceoff in the offensive end. That's pretty unexcusable with two extra skaters and an offensive-zone faceoff. This next sequence was so ugly, I will just let you see how I posted it on Twitter...

Chris Kreider rips one past DeSmith as the extra attacker. The play was just a mess all around for the Stars.

Wow, the Stars were absolutely buzzing for a full two minutes in the Ducks end. It included a couple of good saves, close calls, and a big hit on Mikko Rantanen by Radko Gudas. In the end, a weak shot from Wyatt Johnston is gobbled up by Dostál. Drew Helleson took a scary puck to the head after Lundkvist's one-timer from the point was deflected up off his visor and bucket. Scary.

Anaheim has simply won battles and races all over the ice. Dallas looks tired, mentally and physically. Even Stars coach Glen Gulutzan said so on the bench, stating that his team just has not found its game yet. Gulutzan said if they don't find it soon, it will be a long night.

Despite being outplayed, Dallas has a power play chance to tie the game late in the second. Feels like one they need to score on, as the fatigue is only going to get worse in the third.

Johnston was stopped about three times to the right of the net in tight. Now, he just barely missed the net on a backhand rebound.

Alex Killorn put the puck in the Dallas net off the shorthanded rush, but the goal was waived off immediately for goalie interference. It's close, as Thomas Harley does bump Ryan Poehling into DeSmith, but Poehling had a lot of steam heading toward the blue paint. No goal on the play. Big break for Dallas.

Here's a good visual example of how much Anaheim is outplaying Dallas tonight.

Ducks 1, Stars 0

Period 3

Rantanen and Gudas have come together a couple of times tonight. Earlier, Gudas ran over Rantanen along the wall in the Anaheim zone. And in the third, Gudas came out of the box and collided with Rantanen. No. 96 got the worst of it.

Kyle Capobianco saved a goal after Poehling out waited DeSmith and had an open net. This was a good example of DeSmith needing to be more aggressive than Oettinger because of his size. It results in more scramble plays like this.

Stars were unable to get the puck out of their net, DeSmith and co. were unable to locate the puck near the side of the net, and Sennecke tucks it in along the ice to make it 2-0. That one feels like the clincher for Anaheim.

Dallas actually created a few great chances 6-on-5, but Dostál made three quick saves, and the Ducks cleared.

After a failed Anaheim clearance, the Stars went to work. A quick one-touch pass by Matt Duchene and a diving shot by Roope Hintz in the slot made it 2-1 and gave Dallas life.

Sam Steel and Justin Hryckowian nearly connected on a 2-on-1 to tie the game just after the Stars goal.

Jacob Trouba scores into the empty net from his own Faceoff dot.

Final: Ducks 3, Stars 1

It looked an awful lot like a back-to-back for Dallas.

They weren't clean, they lacked the energy needed, and give credit to Anaheim, they played a good game and deserved to win. Stars have now lost eight of their past 10 games. Meanwhile, the Ducks win snapped a nine-game losing streak.

**D Magazine**

## **Thomas Harley's Funk Is Worse Than You Think. Is He Finally Snapping Out of it?**

By David Castillo

Date: 01/13/2026

I'm curious what Stars fans would think of this season, with its remarkable highs and deflating lows, had Thomas Harley not played in any of the first 19 games. How would that affect our analysis? Our perception?

Last year feels so long ago. Back then, it seemed Dallas was blessed with having two No. 1 defenders. Harley not only swagger-jacked Miro Heiskanen's power-play role, but he also earned the kind of Norris love that has largely eluded Heiskanen, right or wrong. But Harley wasn't just some John Klingberg facsimile. He did it with game-breaking talent in all three zones. Any wonder that his play earned him a 4 Nations role for Team Canada that he has parlayed into a spot on the Olympics roster? Or that he signed an eight-year, \$84.6 million contract? Squint and you might have seen that Harley was developing enough momentum to make people think Dallas had formed the Cale Makar to Heiskanen's Devon Toews.

Instead, this season has been a bad dream, for lack of a better, basic description. The 24-year-old's play this season calls to mind the likes of Brady Skjei, Luke Hughes, and Ivan Provorov: defensemen on big deals who have given their teams buyer's remorse. To be clear, that's not at all where the Stars are with Harley. But the on-ice numbers are so troubling that they almost make the lower-body injury Harley has weathered some kind of relief. At least it provides some sort of explanation for what has a perplexing step back.

Just how bad is it? Worse than you think. Last year, the Stars controlled 53 percent of the game's shot share with Harley on the ice, along with 54 percent of the expected goal share. In terms of shot attempts, Dallas was a plus-182 with Harley on the ice. This season, Dallas is a minus-132 with Harley on the ice. Per game, opponents are outshooting the Stars 62-48 with him on the ice, and goals are 28-23 against Dallas.

All of this is pretty intuitive when you watch him play. Harley has clearly not been his aggressive self. He's fishing for easy pokechecks where before he would attack the puck carrier head on. He's not exiting the zone with the quickness and authority he's been known for. His shooting is way down, from 13 shots per 60 last year to 10 this season. Look at any stat, and the sharp decline is evident, even his skating speed.

I want to briefly focus on his tracking data, compliments of the indispensable Corey Sznajder. Because when it comes to defenders, their impact is felt most by how they help control (or not control) the neutral zone. It's also what made Harley so unique as a fledgling talent: he was good in the defensive zone. Last season, he was excellent at

denying opponents possession of the puck as they entered the zone. (See the last two bars in the second-to-last box labeled “zone entry defense.”) This season? The polar opposite.

I don't want to get too lost in the weeds of why this might be happening, but I believe it comes down to a perfect storm of issues. First, Harley's injuries. Second, he's no longer paired with Heiskanen. Lastly, he's an attack-first defender. That's an important point when juxtaposed with the Stars' system also being the complete opposite; no team in the NHL generates fewer shot attempts at even-strength than the Stars under new coach Glen Gulutzan. Systems, teammates, injuries—a player of Harley's stature doesn't lose 166 games of goodwill to 33 games of voodoo.

Some people will tune this out, especially given the Stars' current stretch, in which they have won one of their last seven. But I do believe the Harley of last season is slowly working his way back toward being himself. The game against Washington last week felt a little too perfect; Dallas' most complete game of the season happened at the same time Harley had arguably his best game. So I wanted to see if that phenomenon was real. While this is by no means scientific, it does provide a clue. Below is a side-by-side look at Harley's shot share from game to game next to the team's shot share in the games that he played, courtesy of NaturalStatTrick. Pay attention to Game 19, which is when Harley returned from his injury.

There's a noticeable trend. As Harley has gotten better, Dallas has had a corresponding uptick in possession. Also notice the slightly higher consistency once he got back. (Harley had some serious lows early in the year.)

I think this raises the natural question ahead of the March 6 trade deadline: if Dallas can bank on Harley improving, making the blue line nearly whole again, should Nill focus on improving the forward group? Ideally, the Stars do both. Dallas has a 2027 first-rounder, a 2026 second-rounder, and Mavrik Bourque, Nils Lundkvist, Emil Hemming, and Cameron Schmidt, who is heating up again in the WHL, to dangle in trade talks. It's not a bad bag, although that would mean emptying the cupboards. That's how we will know how serious Nill is about this year.

But what if Harley starts to hit the groove that earned him a spot on Team Canada? If they had to choose one, a case could be made that the Stars should focus on bolstering their forward group. The blue line is by no means a masterpiece, but the Harley we saw last season paired with a healthy Lian Bichsel would add a lot. Isn't that a lot better than the Stars playing the still-unproven Bourque and the limited Sam Steel in the top six? It's not a rhetorical question. As long as Harley is a question mark, there's no easy answer.

Still, it's not time to panic. Don't forget the Stars are the second-best team in the league by record and points percentage. When you look at the list of contenders, they check a lot of boxes. But that panic meter is dependent on whether Harley finds his game. Nill can go down a lot of roads to fix this team. The recent rough stretch should be



illuminating in that regard. But his job would be made a heck of a lot easier if he knew what he is going to get out of Harley. In that way, Dallas is the ultimate paradox: an elite team with big problems. Until Harley is back to his old self, it's hard to say just how big those problems are.

## Stars Thoughts

### Game 47 AfterThoughts: No Miro, No Hero

By Robert Tiffin

Date: 01/14/2026

SotG

<https://youtu.be/vJb1uD6V8zo>

Tonight marked the Stars' first game without Miro Heiskanen this season, as the defenseman was away from the team attending to a family situation.

The hope might have been that Thomas Harley & Co. could step up in Heiskanen's absence like they did in February and March of last season, but this game unfortunately ended up looking a lot more like April of last year, when the Stars started dropping multiple games in a row during an end-of-season slide that only two playoff round victories drove from their short-term memory.

"Obviously, it's the first time we played without him this year," Gulutzan said, "And you could feel it. You could feel that [Heiskanen] wasn't in the lineup, certainly, but that wasn't the issue. I thought we could have done some things a bit better, especially early."

Gulutzan went on to praise Casey DeSmith for keeping the Stars in the game, particularly early on, when Anaheim was getting chances aplenty while Dallas struggled to get any kind of rhythm. Despite the fact that this was a 1-0 game for a long stretch, this really didn't feel much like a 1-0 game at all, as both teams were making mistakes, and both teams were gripping sticks a bit too tightly at times in an effort to either break a long losing streak or avoid slipping into another one.

Look, the fact is, the Stars are nearing the end of a season-long road trip, and this is their second back-to-back of the trip. They're 27-11-9, just a nose ahead of the Minnesota Wild who lost to a New Jersey Devils team the other night that felt about as desperate as Anaheim probably was in this one.

Sometimes, the midseason malaise catches you at a bad time, and you just don't have the legs to match the team on the other side. And even with enough talent to more than compensate for that fact, sometimes you just find yourself one goal short, and that's the difference. Tonight, it was exactly that, as yet another late-game push by Dallas came shockingly close to canceling out what was otherwise a very forgettable game.

This team was missing its most important player, and their best player (Mikko Rantanen) showed signs of frustration tonight, too. This was One Of Those Nights.

Toronto beat Colorado on Monday, only to get rinsed 6-1 in Utah on Tuesday. It's that time of year.

But Sam Steel put it well tonight, I think, when asked how the Stars are balancing their second-best record in the NHL (third in points percentage now, behind Tampa Bay) with the reality that they're not playing their best hockey as of late. Here's what Steel said:

"We're not trying to just make the playoffs and kind of go up and down all year. There's a high standard here. When we're not at that standard, everybody knows it, and everybody wants more."

That's probably the right mindset, too. As much as fans can take solace in the fact that Dallas can afford a few "up and down" stretches after their incredible start to the year, the nature of this year's Stars team is to perpetually wait for the chickens to come home to roost. They don't dominate in shots or possession, and their forward depth looks a bit iffy on nights like this. It's hard to draw much confidence from what we assume to be The Process when you can't espy much cohesion in the practice of it.

At their worst, the Stars can feel like a team just trying to hold on until someone steps up and makes a big play, rather than a team that gets rolling and takes control of a game. They can do the latter, as Washington and others have experienced in decisive Dallas victories. But when a Dallas team aspiring to Stanley Cup glory can't find a way to put more than one goal past a defensively suspect Anaheim team that's missing even more players than they are, it's really hard to believe the Stars are building the sort of momentum and belief that results in special springs.

Roope Hintz said after the game that the plan was to "grind them down," limiting Anaheim's offense and rush chances in a similar way that Dallas did in Los Angeles. Obviously, they weren't able to execute on that, and the ensuing chaos resulted in a couple of goals that ended up being enough to win a late-night Pacific Division tilt on TNT.

But then again, it's January. This Stars team split a back-to-back and nearly got points out of the second game. That is not a terrible result, on paper. It happens.

If Mavrik Bourque's shot hits the inside of the post and goes in early in the first, maybe everything is different. The margins are that fine, but you can be absolutely forgiven for wishing that they didn't always have to be. Because if you really are one of the best teams in the league, you ought to be able to buy just a bit more peace of mind than the Stars have done so far.

With the Ducks missing Leo Carlsson, Cutter Gauthier, and Troy Terry, you expected to get a sense for just what sort of night we were in for right off the bat.

So when Mavrik Bourque hit the post on his first shift of the night, you kind of felt like Dallas was going to get more than a few chances to break the Ducks' spirit early and

often. And given that Anaheim came into the game in the midst of an 0-8-1 freefall, you wouldn't have thought it would take much to do so.

That Bourque chance was the best Dallas would muster for a good ten minutes, though. Beckett Sennecke drew a tripping penalty on Nils Lundkvist with a nice move inside, during which Blackwell and Steel got a shorthanded look that never made it on net. All told, the Stars had to content themselves with a killed penalty to punctuate the opening ten minutes, and nothing more. Momentum would not be on the Stars' side for most of this night.

The Ducks tested Casey DeSmith a couple of times in tight after getting the Stars a bit out of sorts in their own zone, but both times the Dallas goaltender got his shoulders where they needed to be. Even bigger stops were needed as the first ticked away, with the Stars struggling to generate much possession up ice, and DeSmith facing multiple just-about's that he either had to stop or saw trickle just wide.

It was not a very cohesive first period for Dallas, is what we're saying here. But because it's the 2025-26 Dallas Stars, the Ducks didn't find a way to convert any of those chances, and the Stars remained in the game a whole lot longer than most teams would have any right to do.

Jason Robertson nearly converted a one-on-one look from the left circle, as his shot trickled through Lukáš Dostál's arm and off the far post. Robertson circled behind the net and nearly stuffed the loose puck home, but Dostál's pad was quicker.

The biggest save of the period, however, was by Casey DeSmith on Ryan Strome at the back post. I'm still not certain how DeSmith got over after McTavish fed the puck to the slot, only to see the puck no-looked down low to Strome, who one-timed it into a lunging DeSmith for a highlight-reel save.

Dallas was exceedingly fortunate to escape their first 20 minutes sans-Heiskanen without trailing. And if you don't believe me, just look at the workload DeSmith faced:

[https://substackcdn.com/image/fetch/\\$s !su3Z!,w 1456,c limit,f webp,q auto:good,fl p rogressive:steep/https%3A%2F%2Fsubstack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com%2Fpublic%2Fimages%2Fb13c4b88-5b60-40ee-8a3f-15f63d91b415\\_2046x1260.png](https://substackcdn.com/image/fetch/$s !su3Z!,w 1456,c limit,f webp,q auto:good,fl p rogressive:steep/https%3A%2F%2Fsubstack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com%2Fpublic%2Fimages%2Fb13c4b88-5b60-40ee-8a3f-15f63d91b415_2046x1260.png)

Then again, we've seen the Stars do this all season long and wind up with something to show for their survival instincts. Anyone who flinches after 20 minutes of hockey in January is going to have a tough time in April, that's for sure.

Anyway, the Stars drew their first power play since San Jose after Esa Lindell made a nice defensive play on Team Finland associate Mikael Granlund in the defensive zone. Apparently Granlund took that personally, because he would serve two minutes for holding the stick when he tracked back into the Ducks' zone.



Unfortunately for Dallas, Miro Heiskanen also plays on the power play, and that meant his absence was felt just as acutely at 5-on-4 as it had been at evens. But after the Stars surrendered more looks to the shorthanded Ducks than they generated themselves, Anaheim got a bit overzealous with a line change, and they took a Too Many Men on the Ice penalty that Dallas didn't quite realize was upcoming until 17 seconds were left on the first call.

Still, 17 seconds is 17 seconds, so Gulutzan called his timeout to draw up a play for the short 5-on-3. But the universe loves itself a good joke, and Robertson would get nailed for a hooking minor right off the faceoff, rendering all plans moot.

And sure enough, things got even worse when Dallas took a delayed penalty during the subsequent 4-on-4, and Chris Kreider came off the bench unmarked and right down the center of the ice, beating DeSmith blocker side on a shot so fated to go in that DeSmith didn't even bother moving. 1-0, Ducks.

The Stars nearly got the goal back right afterwards, when a good rush by the Faksa line (during which it looked like Faksa got seat-belted in the slot without a call) led right into a dominant O-zone shift by the Johnston line, but Dostál would end up freezing the puck despite multiple scares both low and high. Still, it was a much-needed sign of life from Dallas in the right end of the ice, and the hope was that it was something to build upon.

Wyatt Johnston certainly seemed to think so, as he danced all but one of the Ducks on the ice just minutes later, finishing his shift with an efficient one-timer setup that saw Drew Helleson take a Lundkvist slapper to the helmet. Thankfully, Helleson appeared to be unharmed, and he left the ice without too much fuss after play was blown down for safety reasons—though Dallas certainly would have preferred to play on.

Rantanen's frustration with the game was marked by a slam of his stick against the boards after a missed connection with Duchene late in the second, but it wouldn't be the last time Duchene was moved up to the wing, as Gulutzan searched for a spark of any kind.

Ian Moore, meanwhile, created a spark of his own while cosplaying as a forward when he got around Lindell and forced a couple of great stops out of DeSmith, who nonetheless refused to succumb to the same malaise that the Stars had been fighting off in the first period.

Mavrik Bourque nearly tied things up with a second Almost There after a bad Anaheim turnover, but once again, he was close to the result without finding it, as Dostál snagged the puck before he could tuck it around the goalie.

Radko Gudas put Dallas back on the power play when he got a piece of Johnston after the forward had dipped by the worst of the check along the wall, forcing Gudas to trip the Stars' forward. Johnston was on a mission in this second period, without question. But despite a much better-looking power play to start the set, an optimistic keep attempt

led to a 2-on-1 shorthanded rush, during which Ryan Poehling passed over to an open Killorn at the last second, only to spill himself right on top of Casey DeSmith right before Killorn scored. That resulted in a goal that was immediately waved off for goaltender interference. The decision was not challenged by the Ducks, and the second intermission arrived without any other damage to either side.

It was a double let-off for Dallas, as Hintz probably could have been nailed for interference (or somesuch) on Poehling back at the start of the rush. But when you're losing and you haven't scored any goals, it's probably hard to feel all that great about these sorts of things. In a lot of ways, the second period was better for Dallas than the first. But in the most important way (goals), it was not.

The third period started off with another strong push from Anaheim, but Dallas started to find some legs of their own after a bit more active play from their blue line. Kyla Capobianco in particular stepped up through the middle of the ice to gain the zone on a rush that led to a good chance for Dallas, and you got the feeling both sides were going to see the score change from 1-0 before too long, even if the direction it would go wasn't at all clear.

This was a third period with a desperate team trying to snap a losing streak, and a bitterly confident Dallas team that has spent all season finding ways to claw good things out of bad games like this one. The pendulum was swinging more and more violently in both directions, and you could only guess where the tension would finally give out.

The answer was obvious, in retrospect: It was chaos in the Stars' zone and not clean enough defending that doomed them. The Ducks got a second goal after a messy bit of work behind DeSmith's net when Sennecke managed to find a backhand shot as he was falling, stuffing a puck into the far side with too much watching and not enough Defense-ing going on for Dallas.

That should have killed any flickering hopes for Dallas, but life was not altogether absent from this team.

Gulutzan asked the top guys to empty the tank in the final five minutes and change with six skaters out there, and they did just that. Harley would end up with almost 29 minutes of ice time, and Rantanen over 23. A good chunk of that came with DeSmith pulled for an extra attacker with five minutes to go (the sixth skater was Duchene, for the most part).

Dallas leaned as hard as they could, and eventually, with just over two minutes remaining, they managed to prove that they could indeed still score when Roope Hintz buried a nice touch pass from Duchene:

[VIDEO]

You probably don't want to hear it, but Dallas did get a couple more looks in the final minutes in what would have been a ridiculous way to make it to overtime. They were, very much, that close.

But pucks either didn't get through to the net, or else they did and weren't collected and put home. So after Jacob Trouba finally found the empty net with 30 seconds to go, six very exhausted Stars skaters finally admitted defeat, and the Stars packed their bags for Utah. At least this time, they'll have a day to rest.

## Lineups

Dallas rolled these lines:

Robertson-Hintz-Bourque  
Steel-Johnston-Rantanen  
Hryckowian-Duchene-Benn  
Bäck-Faksa-Blackwell

Lindell-Lundkvist  
Harley-Petrovic  
Capobianco-Lyubushkin

DeSmith

Anaheim tried this group of players out:

Kreider-McTavish-Strome  
Killorn-Granlund-Sennecke  
Johnston-Poehling-Harkins  
Nesterenko-Washe

LaCombe-Trouba  
Mintyukov-Helleson  
Zellweger-Gudas  
Moore

Dostál

## After-AfterThoughts

Tonight was my first time attending or covering a game in Anaheim with the new OC Vibe project finally beginning to take effect. The gigantic parking garage on the west side of the rink is a welcome addition, with a ton of free parking (up to 7,000 spaces, supposedly) as close to the arena as you could ask for. With a Metro stop right across the street, it's never been more accessible. And from everything I've heard, it's only the first part of what promises to be a huge overhaul of the area, creating a lot of what the

Stars have talked about building in areas like Plano, should they end up leaving downtown for a suburb of their own.

(With that said, I confess I already miss the charm of the old Arrowhead Pond. Nothing like a truly rinky-dink setup to watch a power play-infested 2007 game.)

After talking about Nils Lundkvist's potentially precarious position in the lineup, a game without Miro Heiskanen seemed like an opportunity for a player like Lundkvist to step up. Playing on a pairing with Esa Lindell seemed like as good an opportunity as Lundkvist could ask for.

He started off the game with a crucial shot block, but he also took the game's first penalty after getting beaten inside by Beckett Sennecke. And perhaps most frustrating of all, he held the puck too long on what looked like a chance to send Jason Robertson in, putting a potentially dangerous Dallas rush offside. When a player like Lundkvist is second-guessing plays like that, it's a tough spot indeed.

The first period of this game is a pretty good explanation for why the Stars may have chosen to roll with Casey DeSmith for two straight games prior to LA last night. When things haven't been as they should be this year, DeSmith has been extraordinary at coping with chaos. What a find he's been, especially this season.

Nobody covered themselves in glory early in this one for Dallas, but it wasn't a shock to see the Hryckowian-Duchene-Benn line broken up, as it had been largely caved in for the first half of the game.

On the other end of things, Duchene found himself playing the right wing with Hintz and Robertson as the third period began, and looking pretty dangerous while doing so. In a game where Dallas was practically spelunking for forward chemistry, that was a surprising trio to see mount a good push.

When asked about that trio after the game, Gulutzan was blunt: "We didn't have anything going on." The Stars coach said he was just looking for a change, so we'll have to see if the 21-24-95 trio makes another appearance in the near future.

Jamie Benn had the least ice time of any Dallas skater with just 9:38. It was not his best game tonight, but then I imagine playing back-to-backs right after having facial surgery (of whatever kind) is a tall task for any player. He was not the only one who didn't have his A-game tonight. Not by a long shot.

Jackson LaCombe also didn't look quite as good as he has in some other games, tonight. I imagine a nine-game skid will take its toll on everyone, though.

I don't know that this is anything other than subjective nonsense, but I'll end with this: A lot of sequences in this game reminded me of Anaheim games 10-15 years ago. The ice seemed slow at times, and players on both sides were fighting pucks that you



sometimes expected them to do better with. It was a slog in multiple senses, and I have to believe it was as frustrating for them to play as it was to watch, at times. But hey: that's hockey.

Gulutzan did say that Heiskanen isn't expected to be away from the team for long, though whether he'll be back in time for the final game of the road trip (in Utah on Thursday) is still TBD.

## **The Hockey News**

### **Line Combinations: Stars at Ducks**

By Jake Tye

Date: 01/13/2026

The Dallas Stars found their footing Monday night, snapping a recent skid with a much needed 3–1 victory over the Los Angeles Kings.

The win halted a rough stretch for Dallas, which had dropped seven of its previous eight games, and came at a pivotal moment late in a lengthy road trip. With only two stops remaining, the Stars now turn their attention to one of the toughest challenges on the swing, a Tuesday night matchup against the Anaheim Ducks.

Anaheim opened the season in impressive fashion and appeared poised to contend for a playoff spot, but momentum has shifted sharply in recent weeks. The Ducks have just one win in their last 10 games and enter the contest riding a five game losing streak, making the matchup a meeting of two teams eager to reverse recent struggles.

Despite their slump, the Ducks boast one of the more balanced lineups in the league, something that could test a Dallas team that has had issues on the defensive end. Anaheim's depth is spread across its top three lines, each featuring players capable of making an impact.

The top unit is headlined by Mason McTavish centering highly touted prospect Cutter Gauthier alongside former Stars forward Mikael Granlund, while young standout Leo Carlsson anchors a dangerous second line. Veteran leadership further down the lineup adds another layer of challenge for Dallas.

The Stars may catch a break, however, as Anaheim is without several key contributors, including forwards Frank Vatrano and Troy Terry, absences that could tilt the matchup in Dallas' favor.

Monday's win also marked an important step forward in goal for the Stars. Jake Oettinger delivered a confidence boosting performance against Los Angeles, and with Dallas playing the second leg of a back to back, Casey DeSmith is expected to get the start in net against Anaheim.

With both teams searching for traction, Tuesday's contest sets up as a critical opportunity. The Stars are fighting to stay firmly in the playoff hunt, while the Ducks are looking to rediscover the form that defined their early season success.

Dallas Stars' Expected Line Combinations vs. LA (Monday):

Steel - Johnston - Rantanen

Robertson - Hintz - Bourque  
Benn - Duchene - Hryckowian  
Back - Faksa - Bastian

Lindell - Heiskanen  
Harley - Lundkvist  
Capobianco - Petrovic

DeSmith

## **The Hockey News**

### **Report: Stars Have Checked In On Canucks' Kiefer Sherwood**

By Jake Tye

Date: 01/13/2026

The Dallas Stars are still looking to add as they hunt down their first Stanley Cup final since 2020 and hope to end their current skid of losing in the Western Conference Finals three consecutive seasons.

They are desperately trying to end this streak and with superstar winger Jason Robertson not being selected to Team USA, they can feel confident they'll have most of their standout players ready to go into the playoffs for a deep run.

However, Dallas GM Jim Nill is looking to make sure this roster is foolproof and has seen the Stars linked to several big name trade targets with Vancouver's Kiefer Sherwood being linked to the Stars several times with some recent insider reports suggesting a trade could happen at any moment.

TSN's Chris Johnston spoke on the situation with the Canucks and spoke to what kind of return that they are expecting for Sherwood, saying "I think the Canucks would love to get a 1st rounder for him, we'll see if they are able to, might end up being a 2nd rounder; but he's someone I think could be moved quickly."

Other reports from the Fourth Period's David Pagnotta explained that the Stars have "been in" on Sherwood for quite some time as well as some other teams. Sherwood recently suffered a minor injury and was sidelined for Vancouver's matchup against the Montreal Canadiens on Monday. His absence was significant, marking his first missed game of the season. The Canucks fell 6–3 to the Habs and clearly felt the loss of one of their top penalty killers, a key power-play contributor, and their leading goal scorer.

<https://youtu.be/6FmotUOSQCQ>

An all-around contributor, Sherwood has established himself as one of the most complete players in the NHL. The 30-year-old Columbus native has recorded 17 goals and six assists for 23 points in 44 games this season, putting him on pace for a second consecutive 40-point campaign.

While his offensive production stands out, Sherwood is best known for his relentless physical play. He ranks second in the league with 210 hits this season and leads all NHL players in hits over the past four seasons, totaling 1,009 in 222 games, 11 more than the next closest player.

Sherwood would instantly inject energy and physicality into the lineup and could help lift the Stars out of their recent slump. His versatility makes him a seamless fit in a middle-six role, a position he has comfortably occupied during his time with the Canucks.

## **Breakaway on Sports Illustrated**

### **Stars' Jason Robertson Continues to Prove He Belongs on Team USA**

By Seth Dowdle

Date: 01/13/2026

Jason Robertson's snub from Team USA's Olympic Winter Games roster reverberated throughout the hockey world. Fans and pundits came out of the woodwork to ask one simple question: "Why?"

A week and a half later, that question still persists. How could the United States, a country that desperately wants to win its first gold medal since the historic "Miracle on Ice" of the 1980 Winter Games at Lake Placid, leave one of the nation's most prolific scorers off its roster? How, if this country was to be taken seriously by the Canadians could it decide that Robertson — a player who has consistently proven he has what it takes at the highest levels of hockey — was not worthy?

For Robertson, the disappointment was evident. In his first media availability following the snub, the 26-year-old from California said that he believed he was good enough, but at the end of the day it was Team USA's decision.

"I mean, obviously it hurts your ego, but I'm not going to change the way I play," Robertson said. "I'm happy to keep doing what I do. ... I strive to be the best at whatever I can be. It so happened that this year was the Olympic year, and that's not gonna stop me from doing that the rest of the season. I love the game. I just keep playing. And that's the beauty of it."

And keep playing Robertson has.

#### **Proving the Naysayers Wrong**

Since the dawn of the New Year, Robertson has been on a roll. He's scored four goals over the Stars' first six games, including the game-winning tally in the team's 3-1 victory over the Los Angeles Kings on Jan. 12. In total, he's put up nine points over the past week and a half, which is just a continuation of the greatness he's been displaying all season.

Robertson's 27 goals this season are the third-most in the NHL up to this point, behind only Colorado Avalanche forward Nathan MacKinnon (36) and Edmonton Oilers center Connor McDavid (30). Both those players are contenders for the Hart Memorial Trophy, which just goes to show what good company Robertson has been keeping so far in 2025-26. To make the case for Robertson even clearer, he's tied for eighth in the league in points at 55, with his fellow Stars teammate and Team Finland star Mikko Rantanen placing sixth with 62.



Those numbers alone should have been enough for the people in charge to know that Robertson deserved a spot on Team USA's roster. Alas, that was unfortunately not the case, and now the only chance for him to go to Milan rests on the off chance that somebody gets hurt. While nobody wishes ill on anyone on the roster, Team USA's hopes of winning the gold medal would skyrocket the second Robertson put on his country's sweater. Unfortunately, Team USA general manager Bill Guerin — who just happens to be the GM for the Stars' bitter rival, the Minnesota Wild — thought differently.

So, while Team USA is off gallivanting in Italy, trying to take home the gold, Robertson will be back home in Texas, doing everything he can to make sure the Stars win the Stanley Cup. How will he do that? He'll just score and score some more, which is exactly what he's done for his entire career.

**The Athletic**

## **Stars' Jason Robertson discusses his Olympic snub and big contract year**

By Eric Stephens

Date: 01/13/2026

LOS ANGELES — It has been almost two weeks since Jason Robertson found out that he won't be on the United States roster when it heads to Milan for the Olympic men's hockey tournament. And it's hard to tell who was more disappointed.

Robertson, one of the NHL's most prolific goal scorers, drew support from across the sport. When Team USA was officially announced on Jan. 2, the tone of the discourse on the Dallas Stars sniper switched from "Will Jason Robertson make the team?" to "How could Team USA not pick Jason Robertson?"

Time has alleviated the initial dismay in a season where Robertson feels he has done enough to wear the red, white and blue. It has also allowed him to take a broader look at how he became a central figure in the Olympic hockey roster discussion and how many, from hockey insiders to die-hard Robertson fans, voiced their support for his candidacy.

"Obviously, if you want your ego to feel better, that is something that would help it," Robertson told The Athletic on Monday ahead of the Stars' game against the Los Angeles Kings. "But at the end of the day, it's not their decision, right? And it wouldn't have mattered if it were the opposite, where someone was called to go to the Olympics and then everyone said, 'Why?' (he shouldn't).

"The only thing that really matters is if you do."

The support from those who broke down his case did make Robertson feel good, but it didn't affect what Team USA general manager Bill Guerin or his staff would decide when picking the 25 players. However, the left wing's case was a hard one to push aside.

Robertson's 55 points are more than any other U.S. player in the NHL. Kyle Connor (Michigan) of the Winnipeg Jets is behind him with 52 and is Olympics-bound. Only one American player has as many goals as Robertson's 27. Matt Boldy (Massachusetts), who plays for Minnesota Wild GM Guerin, is heading to Milan.

Ever since he broke out as a sophomore for the first of consecutive 40-goal seasons for Dallas in 2021-22, Robertson has 178 goals in the last four-plus years. Only 10 players of any nationality have scored more in the NHL. Only two — Auston Matthews and Tage Thompson — of those 10 have American birth certificates. Matthews and Thompson will be Olympians.

What did Robertson need to do to be among those picked? Score 40 goals? It was a purposely outlandish question that made Dallas' leading scorer chuckle. But he'd go on to say, "Well, I mean, I thought I put a performance that can warrant that, and that's all I could have done."

After the roster was announced, Guerin defended the selections and the omissions of Robertson and other highly productive American players this season.

"Those guys are all great players," Guerin said. "But we have to make a team. If we're doing it like that, then you don't need a general manager. You don't need a coach. Like, just do it by stats."

"We actually have to build a team. We have to fill roles. We have certain responsibilities that go up and down the lineup that we need players that are elite in those categories."

The Stars have seven players headed to the Olympics — Mikko Rantanen, Miro Heiskanen, Roope Hintz and Esa Lindell for Finland, Thomas Harley for Canada, Radek Faksa for Czechia and Jake Oettinger for the U.S. That didn't assuage the feeling that Robertson was left out, given that he is on track to have his best season since putting up across-the-board career highs of 46 goals, 63 assists and 109 points in 2022-23.

"I think we all know how many good players there are in both countries, Canada and U.S.," Stars forward Matt Duchene said. "Obviously, I think we're all surprised with the year he's having. Disappointing for him. I know I've talked to him about it. Kind of gave him my empathy on it, I guess. I don't know how much more he could have really done."

"He's had a great year. But at the same time, those teams are built a certain way. And especially these days, I think they're all building, kind of reproducing an NHL kind of structured team. I think he's handled it well and he's kept his game."

Jim Nill, the Stars' longtime general manager, was one of those who went to Robertson after the announcement. He wanted to make sure his winger stayed in a positive frame of mind.

"It was disappointing for him," Nill said. "I talked to him and I just told him that he did what he could control. There's a lot of good players in this league. The U.S. had to make some tough decisions. But I told him you've just done anything you can do. Keep doing it. Let's hope there's no injuries, but if there is and if it does happen, I think you're in the mix. And that's all you can do."

In the five games since Team USA revealed its roster, Robertson has three goals and four assists. The latest goal came late in the third period Monday night as he managed to weave a backhand shot through multiple bodies and past Kings goalie Darcy Kuemper for the tiebreaking goal in a 3-1 win.

All players can do that, but some have the knack to find shooting lanes consistently. That's always been Robertson, a native of Arcadia, Calif., who developed as a competitive player in Michigan but still has family living in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains.

However, those around the Stars have seen a difference in him, more than the goal scorer he is.

"I just think he's competing," said Duchene, calling this season Robertson's best. "He's moving, he's forechecking. When he's doing those things and that consistency has been there for him, I think he brings more than just the offense and that's what you need."

"You can't be a one-dimensional player in this league and have success. I think he's brought a pretty good all-around game this year. Yeah, I've definitely noticed a difference this year for sure, and it's been good to see."

This season for Robertson has been free of obstacles, unlike a year ago. He had surgery to remove a cyst from his foot in July 2024, and the lack of a regular training routine and training camp left him trying to play catch-up. He had only five goals in his first 26 games and 10 in the first half of 2024-25. A big second half resulted in a productive 35-goal, 80-point season, but an MCL sprain in the regular-season finale kept him out of the Stars' seven-game victory over Colorado in the first round.

A third consecutive run to the Western Conference finals ended with another loss to the Edmonton Oilers. However, Robertson returned to score four times in his 11 playoff games. The offseason would become his launching point for a year full of incentives to perform well.

"When I was good to go this (past) summer, it was important for me to not only reach where I think I can go but use this opportunity to try to excel and go another level," he said.

One carrot was the chance to play in the Olympics, the first one for NHL players since 2014. But another is this being a contract year for Robertson. He is finishing a four-year deal that carries a \$7.75 million average annual value. He'll still be a restricted free agent at the end of the deal. However, he will be a year from unrestricted status, which is one reason his future in Dallas remains in question.

Nill has locked up much of his core in Rantanen, Hintz, Lindell and Wyatt Johnston to keep the Stars in the Stanley Cup hunt well into the future. He's got a top goalie in Oettinger, who is signed for eight years, extended Duchene another four years and inked Thomas Harley to a massive eight-year, \$84.7 million extension.

No new deal for Robertson has popped on the horizon. Nill said he has kept in contact with Robertson's agent, Pat Brisson, but both sides haven't bridged a gap on what each feels the winger is worth.

“Really, just wanted to say let’s just go have a good year, and we’re going to figure things out,” Nill said. “And that’s where we’re at. He wanted to see where his game was at. We want to see where it’s at. I know he’s a good hockey player. He’s a big part of our team. We’re going to find a way to get it done.”

There have been rumblings that Robertson is seeking a contract worth north of \$12 million on average — the amount Rantanen signed for over eight years after Dallas acquired him from Carolina.

With a cap of \$104 million next season and rising sharply again after, there is more room available for the Stars to get Robertson signed. However, Nill might also face the prospect of making Robertson the Stars’ highest-paid player and using up a lot of their space with another huge contract, while ensuring there is enough left to fill the roster with quality depth.

If Robertson feels like he’s the odd man out when it comes to the team taking care of its important players, he isn’t showing it. The lack of an extension has added fuel to trade rumors dating back to last season. Whether it’s in Dallas or another NHL home, a big payday is coming.

“Obviously, I love Dallas,” Robertson said. “It’s been great. It’s my home and everything. It has been my home for so many years, but a lot of things are changing and moving around, and hopefully, we’ll find the right thing.”

Added Duchene: “Anyone going into a contract year, they know it’s an opportunity. I don’t think he’s any different. It’s not surprising he’s as motivated as he is.”

The four-year deal Robertson is on has made it perfect timing for his earning potential. He doesn’t consider the contract talk a distraction and figures that there is time until training camp next fall to get an extension done.

“I’m happy that I have a good support system too,” Robertson said. “My mom and dad do a good job keeping me in check and doing that.”

**The Associated Press**

## **Lukas Dostal has 24 saves as Ducks beat Stars 3-1 to snap nine-game skid**

By Mike Digiovanna

Date: 01/14/2026

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Chris Kreider and Beckett Sennecke scored goals, Lukas Dostal survived a barrage of shots in the final minutes, and the Anaheim Ducks beat the Dallas Stars 3-1 on Tuesday night to snap a nine-game skid.

Jacob Trouba also scored for Anaheim, and Dostal stopped 24 shots — many of them from point-blank range after Dallas pulled the goalie twice in the final minutes. The Ducks were 0-8-1 since a 4-1 win against Columbus on Dec. 20.

Roope Hintz scored for Dallas and Casey DeSmith had 22 saves. The Stars lost for the fourth time in six games (2-2-2).

Hintz's snap from the slot with a man advantage pulled the Stars to 2-1 with 2:12 left in the third, but Trouba sealed the Ducks' win with an empty netter the length of the ice with 20.5 seconds remaining.

The Ducks had given up five goals or more in each of their last five games, and they played one of the NHL's best teams without their three top point scorers in Leo Carlsson, Troy Terry and Cutter Gauthier, who sat out because of injury or illness.

But they rediscovered some of their early season mojo, out-skating, out-hitting and out-hustling the Stars for much of the game and taking advantage of a delayed penalty call on Kyle Capobianco to score their first goal in the second period.

Dostal skated to the bench, giving the Ducks a man advantage. Mikael Granlund took a blue-line pass from Radko Gudas at the bottom of the right circle and found a wide open Kreider, who beat DeSmith stick-side with a snap shot from the high slot for a 1-0 lead 3:36 into the period.

Anaheim appeared to push the lead to 2-0 when Alex Killorn took a spectacular backhand pass from Ryan Poehling and scored a short-handed goal with 39.8 seconds left in the second, but Poehling crashed into DeSmith and into the net, and the goal was waved off because of interference.

With 7:58 left in the third, Sennecke gathered the rebound of Granlund's shot that caromed off the end board and toward the left post. Sennecke shielded himself from a defender and backhanded an unassisted goal past DeSmith for a 2-0 lead.

Up next

Ducks: At Los Angeles on Friday night.

Stars: At Utah on Thursday night.



