



AMALIE Arena Media Clips
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Lightning salvage a point from tough opening road trip **Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)**

BUFFALO – The Lightning had far greater aspirations for their first road trip of the season, especially considering it consisted of three games against division teams against whom they will be posturing for points in their fight for a playoff spot.

But given how dangerously close the Lightning were to returning to Tampa with no points on the trip, they were satisfied they could salvage something.

Their 3-2 overtime loss to the Buffalo Sabres Tuesday night at KeyBank Center ended with Dylan Cozens scoring the game-winner 1:46 into a 3-on-3 extra session in which the Lightning never touched the puck.

But Brandon Hagel's overtime-forcing goal with seven seconds remaining in regulation, poking a loose puck inside the near post past Sabres goaltender Devon Levi, allowed the Lightning to take home one point from this trip.

But maybe more importantly, it was a reward for their improved play as the game went on; losses in back-to-back nights in Detroit and Ottawa to open the trip brought them to Buffalo frustrated and disappointed.

"I hope this is kind of a step in the right direction," said Hagel, who scored both Lightning goals and now leads the team with four.

"There's ups and downs in the season and we'll find it. There's a lot of belief in this room... We want to get the two points but at the end of the day, the effort and everything has just got to continue to be there. And if we do that, I think wins are going to come."

Playing their second straight game without Steven Stamkos (day-to-day with a lower-body injury), the Lightning found themselves down early, trailing 2-0 less than 16 minutes into the game. Zemgus Girgensons slipped past Austin Watson coming in on a line change to open the scoring 8:57 into the game. Then, Owen Power threaded a pass to Jeff Skinner uncovered at the post, and Skinner roofed a shot that Lightning goaltender Jonas Johansson could do little to stop with 4:32 left in the first.

Lightning coach Jon Cooper mixed his forwards in the final minutes of the second and it provided a spark. Hagel, who moved to Anthony Cirelli's line, made it a one-goal game with 2:02 left in the second, snapping a shot in front off a feed from Cirelli, who won possession behind the net.

Forward Alex Barre-Boulet also played well after moving to the top line with Brayden Point and Nikita Kucherov, and by the end of the game, that line had produced the most shots on goal (six) and shot attempts (nine).

"Sometimes that's just how the coach sees it and he needs to switch something up and it worked out tonight," Hagel said. "(Barre-Boulet) really stepped up, played very well with Kuch and Pointer. Me and Tony, we do our thing. I love playing with him and we mesh really well together and the other lines stepped up as well."

Even though the Lightning had only 13 shots through the first two periods, Cooper was pleased with his team effort on Tuesday night. In regulation, the Lightning had only two fewer shot attempts than

the Sabres in 5-on-5 play, an indication that they possessed the puck well. Their 22 missed shots hurt, because it limited their ability to get rebounds and sustain pressure in front of the net.

“I’ll tell you, we work,” Cooper said. “Those guys work. I think we’ve been a little bit of a victim of some tough circumstances. ... You’re sitting there 2-0 down in the game, and I just thought we got better and better. I never felt that we were in trouble.

“They deserved for sure a point, maybe two, out of that,” Cooper added. “And so you’ve just got to keep plugging away. This league can humble you. And just you’ve got to have that mental fortitude to fight your way through it, but you look at a lot of what we’ve done as a group, it’s been excellent. We just haven’t been willing to generate what we’ve needed to.”

Johansson (28 saves) gave the Lightning the opportunity to tie the game, stopping the final 20 shots he faced in regulation, including fighting off Kyle Okposo’s breakaway chances in the third period with the Lightning down one — a result of another slow line change,

After Cooper pulled Johansson for an extra attacker inside the final two minutes of regulation, the Lightning struggled to get the puck into the offensive zone. Defenseman Mikhail Sergachev blocked a shot heading for an empty net with 25 seconds remaining, and the Lightning desperately dumped the puck deep and chased.

After Brayden Point made a blind fling to the net, Hagel swatted at the puck under Levi’s left skate.

“I had no idea what time it was,” Hagel said. “Everything kind of was feeling slow motion...I obviously knew that there was not much time left because I know Pointer better than that, that he’d probably try and make a play and settle it down, but he was just chucking it at the net.”

Lightning captain Steven Stamkos misses a second straight game **Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)**

BUFFALO — Steven Stamkos missed his second straight game Tuesday night in Buffalo with a lower-body injury.

Stamkos didn't take the ice for Tuesday morning's skate at KeyBank Center, and Lightning coach Jon Cooper said he is still considered day-to-day.

The Lightning captain missed just one regular-season game in each of the past two seasons. This already was his second in just four games this season.

Stamkos was injured in the second period of Saturday's 6-4 loss in Detroit. He went down the tunnel hunched over but returned soon afterward, then appeared to take a shot off his right leg. He finished the game but did not play Sunday in Ottawa.

Without Stamkos, the Lightning used two defensemen on their top power-play unit. During the morning skate, Victor Hedman quarterbacked the power play from the point, with Mikhail Sergachev in Stamkos' usual spot in the left circle in their typical 1-3-1 formation with Brayden Point, Nikita Kucherov and Nick Paul.

When Stamkos missed Sunday's 5-2 loss in Ottawa, Brandon Hagel filled his spot. The power play was 0-for-2 with only three shots on goal, and Hagel had just one attempt.

"It's about what's going to give us the best chance to score," Cooper said ahead of Tuesday's game. "We've had different looks there. We just don't have a lot of practice time right now in that situation. ... We've had guys play there, and whether it's Sergy or Hagel or somebody else we put there, we'll find a way.

"When you think about our playoffs in 2020, we went the whole playoff season without Stammer there and we did OK, so we'll find a way. Obviously, you want him there. He's one of the best ever to play in that spot in this league. So, it's tough not having him there, but we'll find a way."

Sergachev played in the left circle during the 2020 playoffs, but it's definitely different than running the power play from the point.

"We have some really good players on the ice, so we'll try to keep the puck there," Sergachev said after practice. "It's nothing new to me, but I have to see what's behind me. I'm no Kuch, so that's tougher for me, but I'll try to figure it out (Tuesday night)."

"You just have to realize you have more time than you think, because those four, they're not going to go out of their way to try to get the puck away from you. So that's why you have to kind of take a look before you make a play."

With the Lightning's two top defensemen on the No. 1 unit, defenseman Darren Raddysh operated the second power-play group. His presence gives it a different look up top, since he's a right-shot defenseman.

The Backcheck: Bolts rally late but fall to Buffalo in OT

Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)

The Tampa Bay Lightning concluded their first road trip of the season Tuesday night with a 3-2 overtime loss to the Buffalo Sabres at KeyBank Center. After dropping the first two games of the trip in Detroit and Ottawa, it looked like the Bolts may return home with zero of a possible six points, but a late goal from Brandon Hagel evened the score and sent the game to overtime to secure a point.

Buffalo opened the scoring 8:57 into the first period when the Lightning got caught in a line change, allowing Tyson Jost to send a stretch pass to Zemgus Girgensons, who got a clean look at the net and beat Jonas Johansson with a quick snap shot to the far post.

After some miscommunication by the Bolts in the defensive zone, Owen Power found Jeff Skinner all alone on the back door and he scored his first goal of the season with 4:32 left in the opening frame to send the Sabres to the locker room with a 2-0 lead after 20 minutes.

Tampa Bay got on the board with 2:02 remaining in the second period with Hagel scoring his first goal of the night and third of the season. Working on the forecheck with Tanner Jeannot and Anthony Cirelli below the goal line, Hagel slid out to the front of the net before Cirelli and Jeannot were able to work the puck into the low slot, where Hagel was waiting to quickly fire a shot far side and over the glove of Devon Levi.

As the Lightning continued to push for the game-tying goal, they began to tilt the ice in the third period and got the equalizer with just seven seconds remaining to earn a point and send the game to overtime. With Jonas Johansson on the bench for an extra attacker, the Bolts continued to throw shots towards the net, where Hagel was working relentlessly and got rewarded by jumping on a loose puck and jamming it past Levi for his fourth goal in as many games.

With a big point in the bank for Lightning, they hoped to grab the second one in overtime, but after Buffalo won the opening faceoff, they were able to maintain possession and Dylan Cozens netted the game-winner with a shot off the post 1:46 into the extra frame.

Johansson made 28 saves on 31 shots against in his third start of the season.

Bolts Quotes

Jon Cooper: "You're sitting there 2-0 down in the game and I just thought we got better and better. I never felt that we were in trouble and it's unfortunate we didn't touch the puck in overtime, but they deserved for sure a point, maybe two out of that. We've just got to keep plugging away. This league can humble you. You've got to have that mental fortitude to fight your way through it. But you look at a lot of what we've done as a group, it's been excellent. We just haven't been able to generate when we needed to."

Brandon Hagel: "It's frustrating for everyone. Everyone wants to win...It's not fun. It's not what we're here to do. We want to get the two points, but at the end of the day, the effort and everything just have to continue to be there and if we do that, I think wins are going to come."

Jon Cooper: "Another big thing too is we had [23] missed shots. We had some glorious looks and we just kept missing the net. If you're going to do that, now you're taking away chances for rebounds or taking away chances just blatantly to score. I thought that hurt us a little bit, but I've got to look at this game and say this was a step forward."

Jon Cooper: “The one thing, as you try to find an identity with a team, we work. Those guys work.”

Bolts by the Numbers

- Tampa Bay missed the net 23 times Tuesday night, tied for the second-most missed shots they've had in a game over the past five seasons.
- Brandon Hagel has scored four goals through the first four games of the season. He's tied for the second-most goals among all NHL skaters this season.
- Erik Cernak skated in his 300th career game with Tampa Bay, making him the 13th defenseman in franchise history to hit the milestone.
- Anthony Cirelli has picked up points in three consecutive contests with a goal and two assists over the three-game road trip.
- Tanner Jeannot finished the road trip with three points as well. He had a two-point night in Ottawa with a goal and an assist before recording one assist Tuesday in Buffalo.
- Brayden Point recorded his fourth assist of the season, tying him with Victor Hedman for the most among all Lightning skaters. Point's assist was the 467th point of his career, moving him past Alex Killorn and into seventh place for the most points in Lightning franchise history.
- Brayden Point logged 26:26 time on ice, the second-highest total of his career.
- Darren Raddysh played 23:06, a new career high.

Krenner's Three Stars

1. Brandon Hagel
2. Dylan Cozens
3. Anthony Cirelli

Lightning Look Ahead

- Thursday, October 19 vs. Vancouver Canucks, 7 p.m. ET, AMALIE Arena
- Saturday, October 21 vs. Toronto Maple Leafs, 7 p.m. ET, AMALIE Arena
- Tuesday, October 24 vs. Carolina Hurricanes, 7 p.m. ET, AMALIE Arena