



AMALIE Arena Media Clips
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1. 'Cursed' Lightning fight back, fall to Kraken in overtime – Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)
2. Pierre-Edouard Bellemare embraces fresh start with Kraken – Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)
3. The Backcheck: Overtime struggles continue – Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)

'Cursed' Lightning fight back, fall to Kraken in overtime **Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)**

TAMPA — This Lightning team is beginning to think it is star-crossed in overtime.

Following their 4-3 loss to the Seattle Kraken Monday night, their third straight overtime loss and 10th consecutive loss in games decided in the overtime session dating to last season (including three home playoff losses to Toronto), players were reaching for answers for their overtime struggles but could find few.

"I don't know, I think we're just cursed right now," Lightning forward Brandon Hagel said.

"I don't even know what to say. I think everyone knows what our record is in overtime, whether it's playoffs or now, (we've) got to find a way to get out of it. Eventually, we will sooner than later. I think it's gone on for too long."

Despite a third-period comeback that forced the extra session, the Lightning found themselves in a similar situation in overtime, barely touching the puck before seemingly inevitable misfortune. After Nick Paul's hooking penalty 1:59 into overtime gave Seattle a 4-on-3 power play, Kraken forward Jared McCann scored the game-winner with 2:07 left in overtime, rifling a one-timer from above the circles that beat Lightning goaltender Jonas Johansson on his glove side.

"It's not like we go out there and not try to get the puck or not try to score," said Hagel, whose goal with 5:28 left in regulation forced overtime. "It's just one of those things that's come to haunt us and we just can't find a way out of it right now."

Overtime losses this season in Buffalo and at home against Toronto played out to the same script, with the Lightning chasing the puck from the beginning of the 3-on-3.

"It comes down to, we haven't won a faceoff in overtime. If you're not going to win faceoffs and you're going to take penalties, it's really hard to do anything in overtime," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said.

The Lightning (4-2-3, 11 points) had one glorious scoring opportunity in overtime but Nikita Kucherov couldn't bury a chance on a 2-on-1 breakaway. In the final minute of regulation, Tanner Jeannot's look at an open net hit off the post.

Despite the Lightning's overtime woes, Cooper said the game was decided earlier, when the Lightning gave up three goals over a three-minute, 44-second stretch in the first period, including their first two at even strength one minute apart. All three goals came with the Lightning playing loose in front of their own net.

"We played hard enough to get us a point," Cooper said.

"I told the guys in the locker room, I commended them for playing two pretty damn good periods. But this is the National Hockey League. If you're going to spot a team three goals in the first period, you've got to get four to win the game. People are going to say, you hit a post here, you missed this here, that's not where the game was lost. The game was lost in the first period."

Hagel's game-tying goal came after he circled around the back of the net and put a puck on net from the right circle that hit off a Kraken player and under Seattle goaltender Philipp Grubauer. The Lightning trailed 3-1 after one period before Alex Barre-Boulet scored his third goal in four games 3:40 into the second.

Johansson – who was named the NHL second star of the week after posting back-to-back home shutouts last week against Carolina and San Jose, stopping all 55 shots he faced – made 39 saves on Monday, stopping 25 shots in a row before McCann's game-winner.

"We went down pretty quick there and then we had a big hole to climb out of." said Jeannot, who scored Tampa Bay's first goal in the first period after Seattle went up 2-0. "I thought the guys did a good job in the rest of the game after the first there. We fought back and we got the point out of it. So we're gonna learn from the bad stuff and take the good stuff and try to have a good road trip here."

Tampa Bay finished its homestand earning eight of a possible 10 points, but its two overtime losses in the stretch left players frustrated. Now, they go on the road for a four-game road trip starting Thursday in Columbus that they hope brings better results than their first trip, which ended with two regulation losses and an overtime loss.

"We play with the desperation we had the second and third, I'll take our chances," Cooper said of the upcoming trip. "If we play a little lethargic like we were in the first period, it's going to be tough for us."

Pierre-Edouard Bellemare embraces fresh start with Kraken **Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)**

TAMPA – Pierre-Edouard Bellemare made his mark with the Lightning as the consummate locker room guy, a player who could lift his teammates with his ever-positive demeanor and genuine appreciation for playing the game.

But in finding a new home with the Seattle Kraken this season at age 38, Bellemare wants to show he still has more hockey left in him on the ice.

“It was not that something was wrong here in Tampa,” Bellemare said. “It was more like, ‘OK, how can I challenge myself to be more like I was a few years ago and instead of being maybe set back a little bit.’”

In the first period of his first game back in Tampa with the Kraken, Bellemare was honored with a video tribute, and given a standing ovation by the Amalie Arena crowd. The Kraken ultimately escaped with a 4-3 overtime triumph.

Bellemare, who played an instrumental role in Tampa Bay the past two seasons as the team’s fourth-line center and a key penalty-killing forward, didn’t like the way last year went for him.

He scored just four goals — his fewest in six seasons — and was a minus-9 in 2022-23, a year after posting a plus-24 (tied for the best plus-minus among Lightning forwards that year) in his first season with the Lightning on a team that went to the Stanley Cup final.

Physically, he never felt right. He had knee surgery going into that season, and looking back, Bellemare said he probably rushed his way back. It took him much longer to get his legs under him, he said Monday before his first return to Tampa as a visiting player since last season.

And off the ice, he was emotionally elsewhere. He found out before the season opener that his mother’s cancer has resurfaced. Across the Atlantic in Bellemare’s native France, her health deteriorated, and she died in January. His perseverance earned him last season’s Tampa Bay nomination for the Masterton Award.

He signed with Seattle, a team that won its first playoff series last season in its third year of existence, in July (for the league-minimum \$775,000) after the Lightning told him they weren’t going to re-sign him. From the roster to the system, Bellemare said Seattle offered him the opportunity to rebound from what he called a disappointing season in Tampa Bay.

“I wouldn’t say I’ve maybe been a little bit too complacent or satisfied, but I feel like they have a system where it’s demanding from each forward because of the fact that you don’t have maybe as many power names in the house,” Bellemare said. “Then every man on the roster has to contribute, skating-wise at least.

“The day I stop learning is the day that I will retire and this decision to come to Seattle was also, if I go there, they’re going to demand for me to skate way more. I’m not going to have a choice. Otherwise I’m not going to play and I feel like their system kind of forces me to skate way more. And that’s something that I wanted to learn back in a way.

“And it’s no offense to the system here, they have a good system and everything, but I feel like at times, because of those big names, you expect them to do the job, right? And I feel like in Seattle,

they have big guys, but they're not as star name-like and so the whole lineup has to produce, the whole lineup has to do the work and you're going to be relied on every night."

Bellemare, who emerged from having few resources and a tough home life growing up in France to debut in the NHL at the age of 29 after eight seasons in Sweden, has already made his presence felt.

"He brings a lot of leadership," Kraken center and former Lightning player Yanni Gourde said. "He's a very vocal guy. He brings a calm demeanor on the bench, which really helps this group."

Notes: Lightning goaltender Jonas Johansson was named the NHL's second star of the week after posting back-to-back shutouts in home wins over Carolina and San Jose. He stopped all 55 shots he faced in those games. ... The Lightning's Community Hero program, founded in 2011 under owner Jeff Vinik, eclipsed \$300 million in total grants on Monday. Over 13 seasons, the program has awarded 553 local champions and 748 different non-profit organizations.

The Backcheck: Overtime struggles continue **Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)**

The Tampa Bay Lightning suffered a 4-3 loss to the Seattle Kraken Monday night at AMALIE Arena in a fashion that's starting to become a little bit too familiar. The defeat marked the third time the Bolts have dropped a game in overtime this season. Including playoff games, the Lightning have lost 10 of their last 11 contests that have gone to overtime.

Still, the Bolts were able to salvage a point Monday night after overcoming multiple two-goal deficits. And while Tampa Bay may have dropped the game in overtime, it was the first period that set the stage for the disappointing defeat.

With Seattle tilting the ice and starting to generate chances, the Kraken opened the scoring at the 12:08 mark of the first with Brian Dumoulin cashing in for his first goal of the season. After Jonas Johansson was able to make the initial save on a heavy one-timer from Justin Schultz, the rebound popped right out to Dumoulin, who quickly fired the puck into the back of the net to make it a 1-0 game.

Exactly one minute later, a familiar face doubled the Kraken lead with Yannick Gourde scoring his second goal of the campaign to make it 2-0 with 6:52 left in the first. Finding a soft spot in the high slot, Gourde took a pass from Kailer Yamamoto and fired a shot past Johansson to give Seattle the multi-goal lead.

But Tampa Bay punched right back and made it a one-goal game just 29 seconds later when Tanner Jeannot scored his second goal of the season with 6:23 remaining in the opening frame. With Jeannot in on the forecheck alongside Anthony Cirelli and Waltteri Merela, Cirelli was able to send the puck up to the point for Darren Raddysh, who then fed a pass across the blue line to Haydn Fleury. With his head up the whole way, Fleury fired a shot toward the net that was blocked by Will Borgen, but Jeannot was right there to win the loose puck and shovel a backhand shot on goal that beat Grubauer to make it a 2-1 game.

With Mikey Eyssimont sent off for tripping 1:30 after Jeannot got the Lightning back within one, Bolts fans saw something they haven't seen much of so far this season – Tampa Bay giving up a power-play goal. After Johansson was able to fight off an initial shot and a rebound attempt from Seattle, a third shot on goal came from Yamamoto and found the back of the net to make it a 3-1 game with 4:08 left in the first. The goal marked the first time that the Lightning have allowed the opposition to score a power-play goal since the first game of the year against the Nashville Predators.

Heading into the second period down by two, the Bolts came out with a purpose and got rewarded early with Alex Barre-Boulet netting his third goal of the season and extending his point streak to four games. With Jamie Oleksiak in the penalty box for holding, Jeannot and Brandon Hagel both tried to jam a loose puck past Grubauer before it found its way right onto the stick of Barre-Boulet, who buried his first power-play goal of the year to make it 3-2 with 16:20 remaining in the middle frame.

Down by one to begin the third period, Tampa Bay continued to push for the game-tying goal, recording a 13-5 shot advantage over the Kraken in the final 20 minutes. And with 5:28 remaining in regulation, the Bolts evened the score with Hagel scoring his sixth goal of the season, tied with Nikita Kucherov for the Lightning team lead.

Gaining possession in the offensive zone, Hagel attempted to send a pass to the slot, but the puck deflected off the skate of Alex Wennberg and slipped through the five hole of Grubauer to make it a 3-3 game with Cirelli and Barre-Boulet picking up the helpers.

Entering overtime with an 0-2 record in the extra frame this season, the Bolts wanted to show improvement after working on 3-on-3 during multiple practices since the most recent overtime loss to Toronto.

But after losing the opening faceoff once again, the Lightning were forced to chase the puck to start the extra frame. Tampa Bay was able to gain possession and generated a great scoring chance that ended with Kucherov hitting the post, but shortly after, Nick Paul was whistled for hooking and sent Seattle to a 4-on-3 power play. Fifty-four seconds into the man advantage, Jared McCann blasted a one-timer past Johansson to give Seattle the 4-3 win.

The Lightning fell to 4-2-3 on the season with a home record of 4-0-2.

Bolts Quotes

Jon Cooper: "Do I think we're a better team now than day one of the season? I do. Do I feel like we're a better team than we were a week ago? I do. Is that going to translate into points? I can't sit here and say that. If we play with the desperation we had in the second and third, I'll take our chances. If we play how a little lethargic we were in the first period, it's going to be tough for us. That's what it comes down to."

Brandon Hagel: "I don't know. I think we're just cursed right now. I don't even know what to say. I think everyone knows what our record is in overtime, whether it's the playoffs or now. We've got to find a way to get out of it. Eventually we will, sooner than later. I think it's gone on for too long. It sucks. We want to get out of it, but it is what it is."

Jon Cooper: "We've had a little bit of time off and you could tell. We didn't game it out near to the desperation we played with as that game went on in the second and third. Disappointing from that respect, but if you're going to sit here and spot them three goals and say you're going to get a point out of it, we'll take it."

Tanner Jeannot: "You've got to have the puck. It can be a lot of work out there if you don't have the puck and you're just kind of trying to get it away from them. That's the way it goes sometimes. You've just got to try to play it the best you can, stick with your guy and wait for your opportunity to get it. We've been working on it and we're just going to continue to do that."

Jon Cooper: "They played hard enough to get us a point. I told the guys in the locker room - I commended them for coming out and playing two pretty damn good periods. But it's the National Hockey League. If you're going to spot a team three goals in the first period, you've got to get the next four to win the game. Four, in two periods. People are going to look and say, 'Oh, you hit a post here. You missed this here at the end.' But that's not where the game was lost. The game was lost in the first period."

Jon Cooper: "We haven't won a faceoff in overtime. If you're not going to win faceoffs and then you're going to take penalties, it's really hard to do anything in overtime. I thought we played it OK. Again, they had possession. We made them turn it over at one point and ended up getting the 2-on-1 out of it and we were that close to winning it in the limited time we did have the puck. But you turn around, lose another faceoff, take a penalty and that's it. Now, you're in a little bit of trouble and we couldn't kill it off."

Bolts by the Numbers

- The Lightning wrapped up the five-game homestand with eight of a possible 10 points. The Bolts have collected points in six consecutive contests dating back to October 17.
- After back-to-back shutouts, Jonas Johansson went 132:08 without allowing a goal, the longest shutout streak in the NHL this season.
- Jonas Johansson has made 260 saves this season, the most among all NHL goaltenders.
- Brandon Hagel scored his 40th goal with the Lightning in his 112th game, requiring the sixth-fewest games in franchise history to reach the mark, trailing Brian Bradley (76 GP), Ryan Malone (91 GP), Dino Ciccarelli (99 GP), Petr Klima (100 GP) and Steven Stamkos (103 GP).
- Brandon Hagel is up to six goals on the season, tied with Nikita Kucherov for the Lightning team lead. His 10 points are tied with Brayden Point for the second-most on the team.
- Alex Barre-Boulet scored his third goal of the campaign, tying his career high for a single season, and added an assist for the first multi-point game of his career. He has picked up points in four straight games.
- With a goal and an assist, Tanner Jeannot recorded his second multi-point game of the season.
- Haydn Fleury collected one assist for his first point of the season.
- The Lightning have scored a power-play goal in every home game this season and seven of their nine contests overall.

Krenner's Three Stars

1. Jared McCann
2. Tanner Jeannot
3. Jonas Johansson

Lightning Look Ahead

Thursday, November 2 at Columbus Blue Jackets, 7 p.m. ET, Nationwide Arena

Saturday, November 4 at Ottawa Senators, 7 p.m. ET, Canadian Tire Centre

Monday November 6 at Toronto Maple Leafs, 7 p.m. ET, Scotiabank Arena