



**AMALIE Arena Media Clips  
Tuesday, December 5, 2023**

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## **Vasilevskiy, Kucherov help Lightning shut out Stars, end 4-game skid**

### **Associated Press**

TAMPA — Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 25 shots for his first shutout of the season, NHL points leader Nikita Kucherov had a goal and an assist, and the Lightning beat the Dallas Stars 4-0 Monday night at Amalie Arena to snap a four-game skid.

Anthony Cirelli had two goals and Luke Glendening also scored for the Lightning, who were coming off an 8-1 loss at Dallas on Saturday in which Vasilevskiy allowed six goals on 25 shots before being pulled after two periods.

“I thought (Monday) the whole team played great,” Vasilevskiy said. “Great result because of that.”

Jake Oettinger stopped 19 shots as the Stars dropped to 8-2-2 on the road.

“You beat a team 8-1, especially a championship team, you know they’re going to respond,” Dallas coach Pete DeBoer said. “Their best players to a man were on a different level (Monday).”

Vasilevskiy made a terrific post-to-post save on Tyler Seguin’s left circle shot with 11.8 seconds left in the second en route to his 33rd career shutout, including six against Dallas. He is 2-3-0 in five games since returning from back surgery.

“Looks like he’s back,” Lightning coach Jon Cooper said.

Kucherov extended his point streak to 10 games when he opened the scoring from the low slot 7:47 into the game. The right wing has eight double-digit point streaks, which is the fourth-most among active players behind Connor McDavid (12), Sidney Crosby (11) and Leon Draisaitl (nine).

Kucherov tied the team record, held by Martin St. Louis and Brad Richards, with a 10-game assist streak by helping to set up Cirelli’s goal late in the first. He has 42 points in 25 games.

Glendening and Cirelli scored in the third period.

Tampa Bay defenseman Victor Hedman became the third Lightning player and 383rd NHL player to play in his 1,000th game. The team wore Hedman 1000 jerseys during the pregame warmup.

“It’s super special,” Hedman said. “Something a guy from a small town in Sweden never thought was possible.”

Dallas center Joe Pavelski had his nine-game point streak end. Pavelski came up one game short of matching his career high set in 2010-11. The 39-year old was bidding to become the second player to go 12 or more years between 10-game point streaks, joining Dave Keon who had double-digit runs in 1964-65 and 1979-80.

Stars defenseman Ryan Suter finished minus-4 in his 1,385th, which moved him past Larry Robinson into sole possession of 43rd place.

## **Lightning's Victor Hedman plays 1,000th NHL game, joins elite company** **Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)**

TAMPA — Time has flown by for Lightning defenseman Victor Hedman.

He remembers well the details of draft day in 2009 in Montreal, and his family being there when Tampa Bay selected him second overall. The franchise planned to team him with center Steven Stamkos, the top overall pick in the previous draft, as the building blocks of its future.

Now in his 15th NHL season, Hedman has accomplished more than most. He has lifted the Stanley Cup twice, winning the Conn Smythe Trophy as the postseason's top performer in 2020, as well as a Norris Trophy in 2018 as the league's top defenseman. His 677 career points are fourth-most among active defensemen.

On Monday, he reached a milestone that's a testament to his productivity and longevity. as he played his 1,000th career NHL game. He became the first Lightning defenseman and third player in franchise history to reach that mark, joining Vincent Lecavalier (1,037) and Stamkos (1,027).

Hedman, along with his family, as he presented with a silver stick by Lightning owner Jeff Vinik as Hedman becomes the 79th player in league history to play in 1,000 games for a single franchise.

Hedman, 32, is the seventh Swedish defenseman to reach the milestone. The only two to do so and have as many career points as Hedman, Nicklas Lidstrom and Borje Salming, are both in the Hockey Hall of Fame. Hedman likely will join them one day.

Hedman greets his team in the tunnel before warmups. The entire team wore the number 77 on their jersey with the number 1000 and Hedman's name on the back.

Hedman greets his team in the tunnel before warmups. The entire team wore the number 77 on their jersey with the number 1000 and Hedman's name on the back. [ DIRK SHADD | Times ]

He was honored with a pregame ceremony before Monday's game against Dallas at Amalie Arena, presented with a silver stick. All of the family members who were there 15 years ago on draft day — parents Olle and Elizabeth, brothers Oscar and Johan, and wife (then-girlfriend) Sanna — were there to celebrate the moment. His two young sons, Rio and Viggo, were recent additions.

Hedman says hello to his wife and two sons through the glass during warmups. His family joined him on the ice as he was honored with a pregame ceremony before the game.

Hedman's teammates took the ice for the pregame skate wearing jerseys with his name on the back, his No. 77 on the shoulders and the No. 1,000 on the back. A video montage was narrated by Stamkos, and former teammates Ondrej Palat, Pat Maroon, Ryan McDonagh and Alex Killorn offered their congratulations in a video compilation.

"You don't take anything for granted in this league," Hedman said before the game. "It was kind of a rough start to my career, there were lots of ups and downs. But I found my way, and here we are today. So I'm going to embrace this whole day, treat it like a normal game day during the day, but then tonight it's going to be very, very special with all my family and friends in town for tonight. So, it's going to be a blast."

## **In Their Own Words**

### **Olle Hedman**

Victor,

Where did the time go?

It feels like just yesterday you were three years old, and I was lacing up your skates for the very first time. Now, you're lacing them up on your own for the 1,000<sup>th</sup> time in the NHL.

One thousand games. Your name will forever be on a list with some of the legends of our country – Nicklas, Markus, Borje, Mats, Daniel and Henrik.

As I try to think of the right words to describe this journey, I find it nearly impossible to convey just how proud of you I truly am.

I'm proud of everything you've accomplished on the ice.

I'm proud of how you've treated everyone along the way.

I'm proud of the son you've always been.

I'm proud of the husband and father you've become.

I'm proud of the man you are today.

Do you remember all the days at Kempevallen, when you and your teammates would huddle around the door to watch the senior team walk out to the ice? They were superheroes. They were your idols.

Now, that's you. You're the one the kids are watching walk onto the ice. You're the one they're idolizing. You're the one they look up to.

All the recognition you're going to receive tonight, you deserve all of it. Enjoy every single second.

You've made your friends, family and country prouder than you ever could have imagined. And you did it all through your dedication. Your work ethic never faltered. You put the team before yourself. Everything you have today, you earned.

Almost 15 years later, I can still hear your name being called from the Bell Centre stage in Montreal.

"The Tampa Bay Lightning are proud to select from MODO and the Swedish Elite League, Victor Hedman."

I had goosebumps then. I get goosebumps now just thinking about it.

You wanted Tampa. We wanted Tampa. Now, you've played more games in Tampa than any defenseman ever. Just think about that.

Only two players have put that jersey on more times than you have. Soon it will only be one.

Do you remember how different things were when you started here? From the day you arrived to today, you and Steven are the only players left. And look at the impact the two of you have had.

For over 300 straight games, every seat in the arena has been accounted for. Tampa has become a hockey town.

Two more Stanley Cup banners are hanging from the rafters. You can't go anywhere in town without seeing that Lightning bolt. The team has captivated an entire city.

You are a pillar in all of that. But you'd never say that yourself. And that's just another reason why I'm so proud to be your father.

You have no ego. You think of yourself last. You're kind. Nobody has a bad word to say about you. You're a good man. And you've made everyone around you so proud.

On the ice, you're a champion. Your growth as a player has been remarkable to watch. Your explosiveness, the way you see the ice, the way you impact the game – all of it makes me incredibly proud. You've done it all.

And with everything you've accomplished on the ice, it's tough to imagine being prouder of you for anything else.

But as I sit here today and write this letter, nothing is more gratifying than seeing the man you've become off the ice.

You will never think you're any better than the person next to you. You treat everyone with respect. Son, you've done it all the right way.

You came to this town at 18 years old with the weight of the world on your shoulders. They labeled you "the best Swedish defenseman since Nicklas Lidstrom."

You took that pressure as a privilege. You embraced it and took it in stride.

Looking back at your career to this point, could this journey have gone any better? Victor, you haven't just met the expectations. You've exceeded them. You became everything your fans could have wanted and more.

You've been consistently active in helping your community become a better place. You've used your platform to bring joy to those less fortunate than you.

You've proven all there is to prove on the ice. You're an incredible hockey player – a world-class hockey player.

But beyond that, as a human being, you are as good as they come.

As a boy, you were always kind to everyone. As a man, through all the stardom and recognition, nothing has changed.

You're a loving husband and father. You'd do anything for the people you care about. As lucky as you are to have Sanna, Rio and Viggo in your life, they are just as fortunate to have you in theirs.

Tonight, I hope you feel the love and appreciation your teammates, the organization and the city have for you.

Victor, I couldn't be more proud of you. There's nothing that brings me more joy than being your father.

From floorball in our basement to 1,000 games in the NHL. What a ride it's been. And you're not done yet. Keep making us proud like I know you will. Congratulations, son.

Jag älskar dig,

Dad

## **The Backcheck: Bolts bounce back with shutout win over Stars**

### **Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)**

On a special night celebrating Victor Hedman's 1,000th career game, the Tampa Bay Lightning got just what the doctor ordered and snapped a four-game losing streak with a 4-0 win over the Dallas Stars at AMALIE Arena.

It was an emotional pregame ceremony for Hedman, with a video tribute from his best friend and team captain Steven Stamkos, along with more congratulatory messages from former teammates Ondrej Palat, Pat Maroon, Ryan McDonagh and Alex Killorn.

With his family alongside him on the ice, Hedman received some very well-deserved recognition, along with a few gifts, before the ice was cleared and everyone's focus shifted to the game.

Nikita Kucherov pulled his team into the fight and opened the scoring 7:47 into the first period with his 16th goal of the season. After Steven Stamkos collected the puck along the boards in the offensive zone, he sent a pass to the point for Mikhail Sergachev, who had his head up the whole way and found Kucherov open in the low slot. Within a second, Kucherov turned toward the net and ripped a quick shot into the top left corner to give the Lightning a 1-0 lead.

As time ticked away on the remainder of the period, Anthony Cirelli doubled Tampa Bay's lead and made it a 2-0 game when he scored his fourth goal of the year with 1:39 remaining in the first. After Kucherov dropped the puck off to Erik Cernak at the Bolts blue line, the big defenseman skated down the right boards and patiently waited before putting a pass right onto the tape of Cirelli, who beat Oettinger blocker side to give the Lightning a multi-goal lead heading into the first intermission.

Neither team found the back of the net in the second period and a big part of that was Andrei Vasilevskiy, who played arguably his best game of the season Monday night in a game that the Bolts really needed to secure some points. He was sharp throughout the contest and made some huge saves in the middle frame when Tampa Bay got outshot 10-4 by Dallas.

Heading into the final frame with a 2-0 lead, the Lightning quickly pushed the score to 3-0 with Luke Glendening netting his fourth goal of the season just 3:05 into the third period.

Glendening did everything himself to put the Bolts up by three, blocking a shot attempt from Ty Dellandrea before tracking down the puck, racing down the ice and beating Oettinger with a backhand shot that went off the blocker and into the back of the net.

With 7:48 remaining in the third, Cirelli put a bow on the win when Alex Barre-Boulet and Brandon Hagel helped force a Stars turnover before Cirelli jumped on the loose puck and beat Oettinger with a backhand shot for his second goal of the night and fifth of the season.

In total, Vasilevskiy made 25 saves in his first shutout of the season and 33rd of his career, looking extremely sharp throughout the duration of the contest.

### **Bolts by the Numbers**

- Victor Hedman skated in his 1,000th career NHL game and became the 10th active NHL defenseman to reach the milestone.

- Hedman became the third skater in Lightning history to play in 1,000 games with the club, joining Vincent Lecavalier and Steven Stamkos.

- Hedman became just the seventh Swedish-born defensemen to skate in 1,000 career games.

- Nikita Kucherov scored one goal and added an assist to push his assist/point streak to 10 games, marking his eighth career point streak of 10 or more games. The only active players with more are Connor McDavid (12), Sidney Crosby (11) and Leon Draisaitl (9).

- Kucherov's 10-game assist streak is the longest of his career and is tied for the longest in Lightning franchise history.

- With 25 saves on 25 shots against, Andrei Vasilevskiy recorded his 33rd career shutout, six of which have come against the Dallas Stars.

### **Bolts Quotes**

- Jon Cooper on Victor Hedman and Steven Stamkos, the Lightning's two active skaters to play in 1,000 career games: "You can tell the true love those guys have for each other & this city & the team. To be a part of these things, knowing that all the winning we've done in between & the ups & the downs - that's what memories are. And these are ones we'll take with us forever."

- Victor Hedman on 1,000 games: "It's breathtaking. It's just super special. Something a guy from a small town in Sweden never thought was possible, but I guess they're doing something good where I'm from. I'm proud to join the club."

- Victor Hedman: "Time flies. Super special. I told the guys, 'I don't get emotional a lot when it comes to hockey, but that was very special.' To have Stamkos do that presentation and reading my dad's letter before the game was super special."

### **Krenner's Three Stars**

1. Victor Hedman
2. Andrei Vasilevskiy
3. Anthony Cirelli

### **Lightning Look Ahead**

- Wednesday, December 6 vs. Pittsburgh Penguins, 7 p.m. ET, AMALIE Arena

- Thursday, December 7 at Nashville Predators, 8 p.m. ET, Bridgestone Arena

- Saturday, December 9 at Seattle Kraken, 10 p.m. ET, Climate Pledge Arena



## **On Victor Hedman's special night, Tampa Bay Lightning and Andrei Vasilevskiy respond Erik Erlendsson (Lightning Insider)**

TAMPA – The Tampa Bay Lightning played a numbers game on Monday in a return to home ice.

Tampa Bay sought to straighten out a couple of crooked numbers while honoring a significant numerical milestone for a franchise pillar.

It all added up to **one** memorable night.

Tampa Bay entered Monday on a season-long **four**-game losing streak.

In their last outing, the Lightning allowed **eight** goals to the Dallas Stars.

So as they hit the ice on Monday, they looked for a bounce-back on a night that No. **77** was set to appear in Game No. **1,000**.

Following an emotional pregame ceremony to honor Victor Hedman, the Lightning turned the four into a **one** and the eight to a **zero**.

So here are **five** talking points from **one** big night.

### **HEDMAN'S BIG NIGHT**

Hedman, the No. 2 overall pick in the 2009 draft behind John Tavares, owns nearly every conceivable franchise record for a defenseman. He won the Norris Trophy as the league's top defenseman in 2018. Hedman was the 2020 Conn Smythe Trophy winner as playoff MVP. He's won two Stanley Cups.

On Monday, Hedman became the first defenseman in Lightning history and third player in franchise history to appear in 1,000 games in a Lightning jersey. He was honored for the accomplishment in a pregame ceremony.

The team took part in pregame warmup all wearing jerseys with the No. 77 on the sleeve and 1,000 on the back. Then before puck drop, a ceremony was held that included a pretape video montage narrated by Steven Stamkos that highlighted Hedman's career. A handful of former teammates also recorded a congratulatory message, including Ondrej Palat, Alex Killorn, Pat Maroon and Ryan McDonagh.

Hedman was joined on the ice by his wife, Sanna, and two boys, Rio and Viggo, along with his parents and brothers. Hedman was presented a series of gifts by his teammates, along with a commemorative silver stick presented by owner Jeff Vinik. ThunderBug also delivered a pair of mini-silver sticks to the boys.

It was an emotional presentation for Hedman, minutes before he had to take the ice to play a game.

"I told the guys I don't get emotional a lot when it comes to hockey but that was very special," Hedman said. "To have Stamkos do that presentation was special. Reading my dad's letter before the game was super special. Then having my whole family on the ice . . . my wife, who's been with me through everything, the ups and downs and now my two boys, Rio and Viggo, it's just breathtaking and super special. Never thought this was possible. I'm proud to join the club. It means the world to me."

How did he put the emotions aside so close to game time?

“It was tough,” he said. “I didn’t play particularly well today. So the guys bailed me out.”

## **TURNING A SNOWMAN INTO A PUDDLE OF WATER**

Avoiding long losing streaks is paramount for teams that want to earn a postseason berth. Already this season the Lightning have had a three-game losing streak. Entering Monday, they were on a four-game slide.

The last time Tampa Bay lost five consecutive games in regulation occurred during a six-game losing streak from February 24-March 4, 2013. The last game of that streak was nine games before Jon Cooper took over the team from Guy Boucher.

Coming off what felt like the low-point of the season on Saturday in Dallas after allowing eight goals, the Lightning simply could not afford to sink any further.

“Obviously it sucks losing especially, in that fashion,” Anthony Cirelli said. “We knew that we’d have to be a lot better.”

The Lightning were far from perfect, but they were better. Tampa Bay did give up puck possession in all three periods. They allowed 29 scoring chances and eight high danger chances.

But they competed. They were on pucks. Tampa Bay pushed. They gave up zero goals.

“I think we actually played better in some games that we lost than we did today,” Hedman said. “But that was big and guys were working hard and were able to capitalize on opportunities.”

## **VASILEVSKIY BOUNCES BACK**

Monday marked the fifth start of the season for Andrei Vasilevskiy since returning from back surgery. His numbers were not kind with one win in four games with an uncharacteristic 3.87 goals against average and .859 save percentage.

Some of Vasilevskiy’s rust showed up on Saturday in Dallas when he was pulled after allowing six goals through two periods. Vasilevskiy does not like being pulled from the net.

“He didn’t want to come out of the game the other night,” head coach Jon Cooper said.

On Monday, against the same team, Vasilevskiy stopped all 25 shots he faced to record his first shutout of the season, his sixth all-time against Dallas in the regular season and 33rd of his career. With one game, his goals against averaged dropped to 3.03 and his save percentage rose to .887.

“I have to say it wasn’t a great feeling last game,” Vasilevskiy said. “I was just turning the page on that and tried to play my best game this season. Especially on such a big night for our team and for Victor. The whole team had a great bounce back game.”

But it was big for Vasilevskiy, who went from April to October without playing a game. The road back to the top is not without potholes and speed bumps.

“For him to step right in there and shut the door for the entire night, it’s why he’s the best in the world,” Cooper said. “But in saying that, just because your name is Andrei Vasilevskiy doesn’t mean you can take 207 days off and then to say you’re going to step in the league and be Vezina-caliber. Again, he’s got to get his feet wet just like any other player does. And I think as he gets into a rhythm, which he is now, you’ll hopefully see the more consistent game that he wants to play. I know he wasn’t happy with what happened the other night, but it’s just too good of a league. He missed

training camp, all those other things. So you can see he's beating pucks now. East-west plays at his feet. It looks like he's back."

Vasilevskiy said he feels like he's back, too.

After surgery, it's really hard," Vasilevskiy said. "I can prepare my stamina, my physical ability but to save the puck, you can't really practice that. So only through through the games, I can do better at it. This was just the first game that I felt like myself. But it's only one game, there's many games ahead. So just have fun tonight and turn the page."

## **KUCHEROV REMAINS ON A HEATER**

Nikita Kucherov continues to be the quiet superstar that few talk about.

Kucherov opened the scoring in the first period for his 16th goal of the season, second most in the league. Later in the first period, he registered the secondary assist on Anthony Cirelli's first goal for his 26th assist of the season, second most in the league.

Kucherov now has 42 points, six more than any other player in the league.

Kucherov extended his scoring streak to 10 games, his eighth career scoring streak of at least 10 games, passing Patrick Kane and David Pastrnak for fourth most among active players. Only Connor McDavid (12), Sidney Crosby (11) and Leon Draisaitl (9) have more.

Kucherov also has assists in 10 consecutive games to tie the franchise record also accomplished by Marty St. Louis (2x) and Brad Richards. It also matches the longest assist streak in the league this season.

Kucherov recorded his 215th career multi-point game, tying Ken Hodge for 135th most in league history.

## **REVERSAL OF FORTUNE**

In Saturday's loss at Dallas, every Lightning skater finished with a minus rating with the exception of Austin Watson, who logged less than 10 minutes in the game.

On Monday, 15 of the 18 Tampa Bay skaters finished with a plus rating. Only the line combination of Tanner Jeannot, Nick Paul and Mikey Eyssimont finished with an even rating.

## **NOTES**

Tampa Bay scratched D Hayden Fleury and LW Cole Koepke. ... C Luke Glendening recorded his fourth goal of the season, surpassing his total from last season with Dallas. ... D Erik Cernak recorded his 80th career point, one short of Milan Jurcina for sixth most by a Slovakian defenseman. ... Anthony Cirelli recorded his seventh career multi-goal game, his first since Feb. 11, also against Dallas. ... Hedman is the seventh Swedish-born defenseman to appear in 1,000 career games in the NHL. ... Monday's game featured zero shots on goal from either power play unit. Both teams were only called for two minutes apiece, resulting in just 2:06 of power play time for each team.

## **MY THREE STARS**

1. Lightning D Victor Hedman – 1000th career game, plus-1, four shot attempts, two blocked shots

2. Lightning G Andrei Vasilevskiy – Stopped all 25 shots for his 33rd career shutout, first since April 1.
3. Lightning C Anthony Cirelli – Two goals, plus-2, two blocked shots