

DALLAS STARS COMMUNICATIONS
DAILY NEWS CLIPS

Sunday, Jan. 19, 2025



NHL.com

Lehkonen's 4 points help Avalanche defeat Stars

By Ryan Boulding
Jan. 18, 2025

DENVER -- Artturi Lehkonen had two goals and two assists for the Colorado Avalanche in a 6-3 win against the Dallas Stars at Ball Arena on Saturday.

Cale Makar scored twice, including his 100th NHL goal in his 362nd game, becoming the sixth-fastest defenseman in League history to reach the milestone.

"It's certainly impressive. You think how long the League's been around," Colorado coach Jared Bednar said. "I'm a little biased, but you're watching one of the best defensemen that's ever played the game. There's no question. And the League has a handful of guys that are super dynamic right now. I think that that's a trend that we're going to see moving forward, but in my opinion, he's the best of the best."

Jonathan Drouin and Casey Mittelstadt each had a goal and two assists for the Avalanche (28-18-1), who had lost two of their past three. Josh Manson had two assists, and Scott Wedgewood made 26 saves in his first start since sustaining an ankle injury against the Buffalo Sabres on Jan. 2.

"He hasn't played since [the 6-5 overtime win against] Buffalo," Bednar said. "It's nine games ago, and then the injury, coming off that he doesn't spend a bunch of time on the ice. At the same time, we got [MacKenzie] Blackwood, who's played now eight of nine, and he needs a break too. So there's no easy game to sort of choose, because it's [Minnesota] and it's Winnipeg. It's all divisional opponents."

"So we just felt like for the timing for Blackwood and for Wedgewood, now that it's been [16] days or so since he's played, he's got to go in, and he got the job done."

Jason Robertson had two goals and an assist, and Wyatt Johnston had three assists for the Stars (28-16-1), who have lost three of four. Matt Duchene had a goal and an assist, and Casey DeSmith made 30 saves.

"We've played these guys," Dallas coach Pete DeBoer said. "We beat them in the playoffs (in the Western Conference Second Round) last year. We've played them a lot over the last two years. So anytime you play them, you want to give your best game. I'm not sure we learned anything tonight. We know how dangerous they are and they burnt us."

"They just made us pay for any of the mistakes we made."

Duchene gave Dallas a 1-0 lead with a power-play goal at 3:24 of the first period. He scored with a wrist shot from just below the right face-off circle that went over the shoulder of Wedgewood.

"They're a skilled, fast team. We know that. We're very familiar with it," Robertson said. "I think we could have done a better job weathering instead of taking on so much water. It's only a matter of time, if you can't get enough pushback, that they're going to break through."

Mittelstadt tied it 1-1 at 13:07 from the low slot, scoring past a scrambling DeSmith into an open net after Lehkonen's centering pass was tipped off his stick by Johnston.

"'Drou' and 'Mitty' are very skillful guys," Lehkonen said. "If they get time and space in the O-zone, usually something good happens. It's great. [Mittelstadt] got us really going and got our first goal and really set the tone after that. I thought he played an unreal game today."

Makar scored a power-play goal to make it 2-1 at 10:31 of the second period. His wrist shot from the point got through traffic and a Lehkonen screen in front.

"Of course, [he] impresses anyone," Lehkonen said. "He makes it look effortless sometimes."

Lehkonen extended the lead to 3-1 at 11:56. He took Drouin's pass across the neutral zone, skated into the right circle and beat DeSmith to the far side.

Matej Blumel appeared to cut it to 3-2 at 17:10, but the goal was overturned when Colorado successfully challenged for offside.

Drouin then made it 4-1 at 18:32 with a wrist shot from the high slot. It was his 100th goal in his 578th NHL game.

"I kind of forgot. I was at 99 for a bit now," said Drouin, who had last scored Jan. 2. "But it's nice to get that 100th. It's always cool to get any milestone in the NHL. It's a hard league to play in, and you cherish those moments."

Lehkonen pushed it to 5-1 at 8:13 of the third period, scoring off a backdoor pass from Mittelstadt.

Robertson cut it to 5-2 at 11:08 with a shot from behind the Avalanche net that banked off Wedgewood. Robertson then scored again 39 seconds later on the power play to make it 5-3 when his sharp-angled shot went in off Wedgewood at the right post.

Makar one-timed a rebound in the right circle at 13:13 for the 6-3 final.

NOTES: Lehkonen tied his NHL career high for points in a game. ... It was Makar's 12th career multigoal game. Since his NHL debut in 2019-20, the only defenseman with as many is Roman Josi (13 games). ... Colorado forward Ross Colton played his 300th NHL game. He had one shot on goal in 16:17 of ice time. ... Robertson's goals were the two fastest by a Stars player since Joe Pavelski scored twice in 19 seconds on Nov. 26, 2021, also against the Avalanche.

NHL.com (Dallas Stars)

Dallas Stars, City of Farmers Branch officially open Ryse Energy StarCenter Multisport Farmers Branch

By Dallas Stars Communications
Jan. 17, 2025

FRISCO, Texas -- The Dallas Stars and the City of Farmers Branch officially opened RYSE Energy StarCenter Multisport Farmers Branch, a multi-purpose athletic facility adjacent to Children's Health StarCenter Farmers Branch. The official ribbon cutting ceremony included City of Farmers Branch Mayor Terry Lynne, Lee Lewis Construction Executive Vice President Ty Parsons and other dignitaries.

The 81,780 square-foot facility is expected to serve more than 50,000 unique youth athletes annually with the ability to configure up to eight basketball courts or up to 16 volleyball courts at one time, depending on sports programming for the day. The facility is now home to Texas Advantage Volleyball (TAV), one of the most successful club volleyball organizations in the United States.

"We are thrilled to officially open our multisport facility in Farmers Branch," Alberts said. "Mayor Lynne and the City of Farmers Branch have been tremendous partners in creating a shared vision for creating a unique athletic space that can benefit individuals of all ages. As the demand continues to grow for our multisport facilities, the Stars are focused on continuing to expand our organization's footprint across the Lone Star State."

As a leader in youth and recreational sports with over 80,000 active participants and 8.5 million visitors per year through their ten facilities, the Dallas Stars' investment in multisport properties is the next step in their reach beyond their core ice-related customers into additional youth sports for athletes across the Metroplex.

"Farmers Branch is proud to partner with the Dallas Stars in opening the StarCenter Multisport facility, which will serve as a beacon for youth sports in North Texas and strengthen community engagement," Lynne said. "The launch of this state-of-the-art complex embodies the City's commitment to providing world-class amenities, fostering athletic excellence, teamwork, and community connection for families in Farmers Branch and across the region."

Construction on the project was overseen by Lee Lewis Construction, Inc. which has four offices in Texas and has been a leader in commercial construction since 1976.

The facility is the second multisport facility in the Dallas Stars' portfolio of athletic facilities, along with the eight Children's Health StarCenters across the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. In October 2022, the Stars purchased RYSE Energy StarCenter Multisport at The MAC in Lewisville, Texas as the club's first investment in multisport facilities. A 38,000-square-foot, air-conditioned multisport activity center, the facility features eight USA Volleyball regulation courts, four NBA regulation hardwood basketball courts, a full concession stand, and strength and conditioning

space. The MAC also proudly serves as the new home to the Drive Nation Volleyball Club, acquired by the Stars in December 2024.

In April 2024, the Stars and the City of Northlake, Texas officially broke ground on StarCenter Multisport Northlake. The 225,000 square-foot multi-purpose athletic facility will feature two NHL regulation sheets of ice and eight basketball courts, which can be converted to 16 volleyball courts. The facility is scheduled to open in January of 2026.

For more information about RYSE Energy StarCenter Multisport Farmers Branch, please visit StarCenterMultisport.com

NHL.com (Dallas Stars)

Heika's Take: Stars can't match Avs intensity, fall in lopsided 6-3 loss

By Mike Heika

Jan. 18, 2025

As midterm exams go, this was a bit of a learning experience.

In losing a 6-3 game to Colorado at Ball Arena on Saturday afternoon, the Dallas Stars showed off a number of flaws. They got on their heels early, handed out too many power plays, and made mistakes in their own end. As a result, goalie Casey DeSmith was under great duress and the game was mostly out of hand by the mid-way point.

"It was a tough one," Stars coach Pete DeBoer said. "I thought we survived the first period and then it felt like we had a couple of breakdowns that ended up in our net and took a couple of penalties 200 feet from our goal, which you can't do against that team. They made us pay for any of the mistakes we made."

Colorado was buzzing the entire game. Dallas took advantage of a power play three minutes into the game and Matt Duchene wired a shot over former Stars goalie Scott Wedgewood for a 1-0 lead. But the Avalanche then had the shots on goal at 13-1 and were able to tie things up by the first intermission.

Dallas then put Colorado on the power play and DeSmith couldn't save them anymore. Cale Makar, Jonathan Drouin and Artturi Lehkonen (twice) made it 5-1 before the Stars could blink. Jason Robertson scored twice on Wedgewood to make it interesting late in the third, but then Makar got his second of the game for the final 6-3 score.

It was a hard night.

"We've played them enough times to know they're going to come out hard, especially in this building," said Wyatt Johnston, who stepped in at center for the injured Roope Hintz and won 20 of 24 faceoffs. "It's on us to match that intensity and match that push and ultimately get our game going a lot quicker."

Robertson said he felt bad for DeSmith, who allowed six goals on 36 shots.

"We really hung Case out today, that's unacceptable," Robertson said. "It could have been 10 goals. We need to be better for him."

Dallas moves to 28-16-1 (57 points), while Colorado is now 28-18-1 (57 points). The two are in a four-team battle at the top of the Central Division, and every point matters. The top team at the end of the season gets home ice and a wildcard opponent. The second place team gets home ice against the third place team.

That's a lot to digest at Game 45, but it is real.

“Looking at the standings, points are so important and it’s already tight,” said Johnston. “We know how important these points are come the end of the season.”

Even with the loss, Dallas is 11-4-1 in the division, so it understands the task. After all, it defeated Colorado in six games in the Second Round last season.

“It’s always a lesson,” DeBoer said. “We beat them in the playoffs last year, we’ve played them a lot over the past two years. Any time you play them you want to give your best game. I’m not sure we learned anything tonight... we know how dangerous they are and they burned us.”

That said, there will be a rematch on March 16, and the Stars can definitely start picking up points outside of the division to help in the battle. Dallas will play host to Detroit on Sunday, Carolina on Tuesday, and Vegas on Friday.

“No rest,” said DeBoer. “This might be the toughest week of the season for us. We’re in the gauntlet of it right now.”

NHL.com (Dallas Stars)

Game Day Guide: Stars vs Red Wings

By Stars Staff

Jan. 18, 2025

When: Sunday, January 19 at 7:00 PM CT

Where: American Airlines Center

TV: Victory+

Radio: The Ticket 96.7-FM, 1310-AM

Live Stats: NHL Game Center

Tickets: Single Game / Rentals

Local Parking: AAC Parking Options

Arena Bag Policy: Frequently Asked Questions

Party on PNC Plaza: 5:00 PM South Entrance

AAC Food Highlight: Bonanno Brothers Pizza

Five Points 5

The Dallas Stars face the Detroit Red Wings Sunday night for the first time this season. Entering Sunday's match, the Stars are 28-15-1 while the Red Wings are 21-19-4. The two teams will face each other once more this season on April 14 in Detroit.

Dallas is 121-112-38 all-time vs. Detroit, including a 69-44-22 mark at home.

The Stars have won 13 of their last 15 games against the Red Wings and enter Sunday's contest with seven consecutive wins against Detroit dating back to April 24, 2021.

Defenseman Miro Heiskanen has 15 points (2-13—15) in 16 career games against the Red Wings. He enters Sunday's game riding a five-game point streak vs. Detroit, earning nine points during that span (2-7—9).

Forward Jason Robertson rides his longest active point streak against a single opponent entering Sunday's contest with 17 points (8-9—17) in his last 10 games against Detroit. Robertson has earned points in 11 of his 12 career games played against the Red Wings. Dallas is 9-2-0 when Robertson has tallied at least one point vs. Detroit.

Players To Watch

Stars forward Evgenii Dadonov has 11 points (4-7—11) in his last 11 games played dating back to Dec. 27 against the Minnesota Wild. During that span, the Stars have outscored their opponents 11-5 when Dadonov has been on the ice during 5-on-5 play according to Natural Stat Trick. Of Dadonov's 23 points (12-11—23) this season, 16 (8-8—16) have come against opponents from other divisions.

Red Wings forward Dylan Larkin has registered 15 points (8-7—15) in his last 10 games dating back to Dec. 27 vs. Toronto. Larkin leads Detroit in goals this season (20) and places second in points (41) and third in assists (21). In his career against Dallas, he has 16 points (8-8—16) in 21 games and rides a six-game point streak against the Stars, earning seven points (5-2—7) during that span.

First Shift

The Stars have leaned on their AHL affiliate a lot this year.

A franchise that has been relatively healthy the previous two seasons has three key forwards out of the lineup in Seguin (hip surgery), Mason Marchment (facial surgery) and Roope Hintz (upper body). As a result, recalls have been made for Matěj Blümel, Arttu Hyry and Justin Hryckowian, and those players have had to take on key minutes at an important time of the year.

“Every organization, you get to this point of the season and your depth gets tested,” said Stars coach Pete DeBoer. “So those guys have to come up and contribute. We have a good American League team and the guys we have called up have done a good job. The list is long and we’ve gotten a lot of contributions from that group of guys.”

Blümel is the most recent call-up and maybe one of the most interesting. A fourth-round draft pick by Edmonton in 2019, he is in his third year in the Stars organization. He played six NHL games in the 2022-23 season and has logged five games this year. The 24-year-old forward said he feels more confident every time he gets called up.

“It feels different because I feel I’m a better player overall,” Blümel said. “I got better at playing a 200-foot game. I’m happy to get this opportunity to show how hard I’ve been working in the AHL.”

Blümel this season has 32 points (18 goals, 14 assists) in 32 games with the Texas Stars. Hyry has 26 points (14 goals, 12 assists) and Hryckowian has 32 points (12 goals, 20 assists). The fact they are older and have “been around,” so to speak, makes it easier for DeBoer to use them.

“The nice thing is it’s the second or third time around for a lot of them,” DeBoer said. “Once you get through that first recall, the nerves disappear. I’m comfortable that we’re past that with these guys now.”

That said, the challenge to play a different style is real. At the AHL level, these forwards play top minutes in all situations. They are expected to score goals and they probably take more risks. In the NHL, the key is to play smart and not make mistakes.

“It’s harder here, for sure,” Blümel said. “Down there, you have extra time for everything. But with every shift I’m feeling more comfortable.”

DeBoer said his only real hope is to get players who can help the team win.

“I don’t think it’s tricky, but it’s a different responsibility than what he does in the American League,” DeBoer said. “He has to be sure that we can trust him out there. I’m not even talking produce. I’m talking, let me play you for 10, 12, 14 minutes and let me feel good about it. That’s where we have to start with those guys.”

But he does need that trust.

“It’s not training camp,” DeBoer said. “We’re in the middle of the season and there are critical points on the line every night. That’s the challenge.”

Mix in the fact that these teammates are battling each other to satisfy their NHL dream, all the while knowing that Seguin, Marchment and Hintz are coming back and that the Stars might trade for more forwards, and the competition can get tough. But Blümel said they actually rely upon one another for support.

“It’s great because we have a really good group of guys down there and we’re all friends, so it’s fun to see those guys get called up,” Blümel said.

Key Numbers

11

The Stars have won 11 straight home games against the Red Wings, dating back to the 2016-17 season.

209

Since Pete DeBoer became head coach of the Stars, they have never lost three consecutive games in regulation. That’s a span of 209 games.

17

Stars forward Robertson has 17 points (8 goals, 9 assists) in a 10-game point streak against the Red Wings.

He Said It

“I think tomorrow we have an opportunity to respond well in front of a home crowd against a very hot team, so it’s going to be a big response game.”

-Stars forward Robertson on facing Detroit at home Sunday after losing in Colorado on Saturday

Dallas Morning News

Stars icon Mike Modano says growth of hockey in Dallas is ‘more meaningful than anything’

By SportsDay Staff
Jan. 18, 2025

Dallas Stars legend Mike Modano recently made an appearance on popular hockey podcast “Spittin’ Chiclets” where he went into everything from his early days as a kid playing hockey in Michigan to his time in Dallas and plenty more.

The interview, which lasted well over an hour, kicked off with the hosts asking Modano about the statue that was unveiled outside American Airlines Center in 2024 to honor him. He spoke about being involved in the process for designing the statue but still holding his breath before the final unveiling.

“You’re just crossing your fingers, that the eyes aren’t crossed and that things aren’t looking messy,” Modano said. “But we were pretty taken away. It was just spot on. The colors, the way they flew the green and the black in there. It turned out fabulous.”

Modano also talked about the final days of the Minnesota North Stars and the team’s move to Dallas in 1993. He said the team considered various cities, including Anaheim and San Jose in California, before settling on Dallas for the move.

“Dallas was kind of a last-minute thing, they just threw it out there, a couple trips down there and that was it,” Modano said. “We got a letter in the mail in June: ‘Be at training camp in September in Irving, Texas.’ It was kind of crazy.”

In the broad scheme of things, none of us could have imagined how hockey would turn out in Dallas, Texas,” he added. “It’s one of those places that free agents circle as a place to go to. It’s just turned out great. The new arena, the fans, it’s just a loyal fanbase now. It was an amazing time there in Dallas. So much fun with some great teams, great players.”

The hosts then asked Modano about his influence in growing hockey in Dallas, especially as one of the greatest American-born hockey players of all time. Modano spoke about how much it meant to him to grow the sport in Dallas and to get local kids involved.

“That was more meaningful than anything, probably, that we accomplished. We got a [Stanley] Cup and a lot of accolades and personal stuff,” Modano said, “But seeing where the game is now in Dallas and what it was in ‘93 when we got there, it’s mind-blowing.”

Dallas Morning News

Stars give up three goals in second period, buried by Colorado Avalanche

By The Associated Press
Jan. 18, 2025

DENVER — Artturi Lehkonen had two goals and two assists, Cale Makar also scored twice and the Colorado Avalanche beat the Dallas Stars 6-3 on Saturday.

Jonathan Drouin and Casey Mittelstadt each had a goal and two assists, and Josh Manson also had two assists for the Avalanche. Scott Wedgewood stopped 26 shots.

Jason Robertson had two goals and an assist, Matt Duchene also scored, and Wyatt Johnson had three assists for the Stars. Casey DeSmith finished with 30 saves.

Duchene opened the scoring at 3:24 of the first period on Dallas' first shot on goal. It was his 18th of the season.

Mittelstadt tied it with 6:53 remaining in the opening period, and Makar put the Avalanche ahead midway through the second with his 100th career goal. Makar became the fifth-fastest defenseman in the NHL's modern history to reach the mark, doing it in his 362nd game.

Lehkonen got his first of the night less than 90 seconds later and Drouin made it 4-1 with his 100th goal with 1:30 left in the second.

Lehkonen gave the Avalanche a four-goal lead at 8:13 of the third, and Robertson scored twice 39 seconds apart to pull the Stars to 5-3 with 8:13 remaining.

Takeaways

Avalanche: Colorado improved to 10-3-1 in its past 14 games and moved into a tie with the Stars for third place in the Central Division.

Stars: Dallas lost for the third time in four games after winning seven straight.

Key moment

Dallas appeared to pull to 3-2 late in the second period on a goal from Matěj Blümel, but after a challenge from Avalanche coach Jared Bednar, it was overturned when officials determined Blümel was offside. Drouin scored about two minutes later to extend Colorado's lead to 4-1.

Key stat

The Avalanche and Stars combined to score on three of their seven power-play opportunities. Dallas and Colorado entered the day No. 1 and No. 2, respectively, in the penalty kill since Dec. 7.

Up Next

Avalanche host Minnesota on Monday, and Stars host Detroit on Sunday.

DLLS

How Evgenii Dadonov's shooting approach fits well for Stars

By Sean Shapiro

Jan. 17, 2025

At the time it felt like the trade was more about the departure than the potential return for the Dallas Stars.

Denis Gurianov, for all of his flash and dash, was no longer working within the Stars system. The 2015 first-round pick, who famously scored the goal that sent Dallas to the Stanley Cup Final in 2020, had become an afterthought for the Stars coaching staff and was traded to the Montreal Canadiens on Feb. 26, 2023 for Evgenii Dadonov.

It was a move, at the time, about splitting with Gurianov — addition by subtraction — and giving both sides a fresh start.

In the long run, however, Dadonov turned into a vital piece for the Stars. In parts of three seasons with Dallas, the Russian winger has 61 points in 118 games and has been an effective plug-and-play asset that can be used throughout the lineup.

While Gurianov has since gone back to the KHL, Dadonov was on the Stars' top line on Thursday against the Montreal Canadiens and had an assist in a 3-1 loss to his former team.

In 44 games this season Dadonov has already equaled his point total from last year, and is on pace for a 43-point campaign, potentially his best offensive output since 2021-22 with the Vegas Golden Knights.

"It's nothing special," Dadonov said earlier this week. "I just came in, since I came to Dallas, to just focus on doing my job and making sure I do it well."

For Dadonov this season has had some minor tweaks. There's been more of a shoot-first mentality, which is how he setup Jason Robertson's first period goal on Thursday.

From a visual perspective, here is Dadonov's shot chart this season, courtesy of InStat.

For Dadonov it's a concept of not always shooting to score. Sure, every puck can go into the net, but in reality a lot of his shots are aimed with the ideology to create far-side rebounds for his line mates.

Consider his shot chart for location on the net, there's such a high concentration of low pad shots, typically on the blocker side.

Going back to the Gurianov-for-Dadonov trade, there's a bit of long-term irony that the Stars effectively traded someone who only shot to score for someone who looked at shots as part of the larger offensive picture.

Neither approach is necessarily wrong, but Dadonov's results in the past three seasons — and particular this season — has proven an ideal piece of the Stars offensive puzzle.

DLLS

3 thoughts on Dallas Stars 6-3 loss at Colorado Avalanche

By Sam Nestler

Jan. 18, 2025

The Dallas Stars scored first but were the second-best team for most of the game in a 6-3 loss against the Colorado Avalanche at Ball Arena on Saturday.

Matt's Back

Last spring, Matt Duchene went through a tough time.

The veteran forward was still shaking off an unexpected buyout from Nashville and had not been producing offense in the Stanley Cup Playoffs at anywhere near his normal rate.

But in Game 6 of the second round against Colorado, none of that mattered.

Duchene proved that the puck doesn't lie, as he scored the double-overtime winner after Mason Marchment believed he had sent Dallas to the Western Conference Final. Duchene celebrated with everything he had.

Less than five minutes of Stars at Avs game time later... he did this:

We thought Jason Robertson may try something from a sharp angle on former teammate Scott Wedgewood — the two used to stay after practice working 1-on-1 drills from all sorts of tough angles...

And he did it TWICE in the third period!

But Robertson may have also shared a few tips with Duchene ahead of this one.

So good, so bad

The Stars power play has been a complete tale of two cities... or maybe continents this season.

Coming into the game today, the Stars ranked 10th in the NHL with a 25.4% road power play. Including this game, Dallas has gone 7/15 (46.7%) with the extra man in the past six road games — they were 2/4 in Denver.

At home... crickets.

The Stars home power play ranks dead last with only a 9.9% success rate at American Airlines Center. Over the past six home games, the Stars have gone 1/20 (5.0%). That's bad.

Stars coach Pete DeBoer has repeatedly stated that his staff doesn't really understand the massive difference. He said the same about the road vs home record last season and the home vs road margin to kick off this season.

Whatever the reason is... something has to change. They don't have to be lethal on the power play, but they can't be 32nd at home either.

Colorado had gone 0-16 before Cale Makar made it 2-1 on the power play in the second period.

Matinees are weird. This is suitable for any of the three thoughts today.

Score early, not often

This is only a two-game issue, but Dallas has let a couple of great starts go to waste.

Against Montreal on Thursday, the Stars scored 3:50 into the first period before allowing three-straight goals in a 3-1 loss to the Montreal Canadiens.

This afternoon in Denver, Dallas took the 1-0 lead 3:24 into the game, but watched the Avs roll back with five straight.

Scoring early is very important. But if that is all you are going to produce through 60 minutes or you are going to let the opponent pop five in a row... you are probably going to lose... doesn't matter how early you get the first goal.

D Magazine

A Look Inside the Dallas Stars' New Youth Sports Facility in Farmers Branch

By Audrey Henvey

Jan. 17, 2025

When Brad Alberts walked through the physical manifestation of a Dallas Stars dream for the first time, he noticed the open air, the sunlight coming in, and the number of courts that lay before him. "I really said to somebody, 'I'm jealous—I wish I would have had this when I was 12 years old,'" the Stars CEO said. "It's really, really awesome."

The facility, located in Farmers Branch, comprises 81,780 square feet and \$20 million of investments all dedicated to youth sports. Dubbed the Ryse Energy StarCenter Multisport Farmers Branch, plans were first officially shared in late 2023, and the ribbon was cut this week. But the Stars' dream for such a facility has been over five years in the making.

The team isn't new to the youth sports industry—the brand has eight youth hockey centers across the region. But the Stars' first official foray into youth sports beyond hockey began in 2022, with the purchase of the 38,000-square-foot RYSE Energy StarCenter Multisport at The MAC in Lewisville. And an even bigger project is on the way—construction kicked off last year on a 225,000-square-foot youth sports facility in Northlake.

"We're positioned really well—because of our relationships with the cities and with already having facilities in a lot of these areas—to just expand into other sports and continue to use that as a growth engine for what we already had, which was a youth sports business," Alberts told D CEO. "It just happened to be youth hockey. But youth hockey is growing too, so we feel like it's just good business."

As Alberts puts it, Farmers Branch's central location at the intersection of I-35 and I-635, made it a prime location to plant the flag. "It's totally positioned for the ever-growing youth sports business of volleyball and basketball in the city," Alberts told D CEO. "It's what we've talked about for years. We had this infrastructure in place already with hockey—and Farmers Branch is a perfect example. We've got two ice sheets right across the parking lot from it, and now we've got a gym to compliment that. We've really got all the facilities necessary to take care of that ever growing area, which is volleyball, basketball, and hockey."

The facility, built by Dallas-based Lee Lewis Construction, is expected to host 50,000 unique youth athletes per year. That includes hosting the 300 members of the Texas Advantage Volleyball club—the largest youth volleyball organization in DFW—which the Stars purchased in 2022.

The expansive space includes capacity for up to 16 volleyball courts or eight basketball courts at one time, with the ability to flex based on programming for the day. "I don't know of a facility outside of the convention center that's bigger in DFW, from a court perspective," Alberts said.

The building itself sports the team logo, and walls are accented with the iconic Stars shade of green. For Alberts, backing the facility with a team brand brings a sense of credibility and professionalism to youth sports. “I think having those kids see our brand is also really good for our business,” he adds “If you’re a volleyball player for TAV, we want you to watch the Dallas Stars play. We want you to go to a game at the American Airlines Center. It all kind of intersects, from a brand marketing perspective, from a participation in youth sports perspective, and then being a facility company that provides these high quality facilities for all of these great athletes and their families.”

Stars Thoughts

Game 45 AfterThoughts: Sound and Fury

By Robert Tiffin

Jan. 18, 2025

If you watched the playoff series against Colorado last year, you know how this matchup goes. The Avalanche have a major push in them at any given time, and you simply have to weather it, then take advantage of the inevitable chances they'll give up when their best guys are off the ice.

Last year, the Stars did so, winning the series 4-2 with a heartbreaking Matt Duchene overtime goal that will live long in Stars fans' memories almost as long as it'll stick in Colorado's craw. (And it's a goal that the NHL should be particularly grateful for, given that the game should've been over long before it happened, if not for the reluctance of the Situation Room and the on-ice officials to reverse a call to award a series-winning goal.)

Anyway, the point is, we've been through this before, bunches of times. The way to beat Colorado is to trust your depth, bending but not breaking under intense pressure from a couple of the best players in the NHL.

Well, Dallas did weather that storm, holding Nathan MacKinnon to just one assist and an even plus/minus on the day. But if I'd ever seen Twister, I'm sure I would know if there's a scene where people think they are avoiding one tornado only to get caught by another, and that's what happened today in Colorado.

I haven't seen Titanic either, but I read about it once, so if you'd like a more confident metaphor, how's this: Dallas ended up avoiding the iceberg only to crash upon a coral burgundy reef, as the Avalanche's second line created five goals on an absurd afternoon. Jonathan Drouin, Artturi Lehkonen, and Casey Mittelstadt (whose name has been in the rumor mill lately) all scored a goal, with Lehkonen adding a second along with a pair of assists. For once, it was Colorado's depth who brought delight to the home faithful a mile above sea level:

By the way, "Mittelstadt" in German translates to "middle town," and the Avs also have Keaton Middleton on their team, whose last name translates to, well, what it is. Who are these citizens, proudly naming their towns on account of its middle-est-ness? Have some pride, fellas!

We'll talk about the individual goals down below, but today was one of those matchups where a line was feeling it, and where Dallas continued to suffer from their inability to beat goaltenders on great looks far more often than in years past. So when Colorado grabbed the lead halfway through the game, all the best-laid plans went out the window for Dallas, as even a two-goal night from Jason Robertson wouldn't be enough to offer anything more than tepid hope for a comeback. Colorado created chances and rebounds that more than negated a few great saves from Casey DeSmith, while the only Dallas goal that didn't require a protractor and surveying equipment to explain was called back for offside.

The story was fated to be a happy one for Colorado, as even Cale Makar not only avoided a serious injury after blocking a shot off his ankle that took him down in pain, but he also grabbed two goals after going cold for the last five or six games. Obviously the Stars didn't deserve to win this one, but it's also fair to say that the Avalanche got some gravy, too.

Sam Girard was poised to step up in a big way for Colorado when it looked like Makar might miss the third period. He's always fascinated me, as a player who the Avalanche are willing to deploy in defensively crucial situations despite his size. Girard has shown he can fill that role despite playing against type, and that's kind of the exact sort of player the Stars are still looking for, aren't they? No disrespect to Ilya Lyubushkin, who has played better than almost anyone hoped this year, but he's not an ideal top-four defenseman in terms of 5-on-5 ice time in the playoffs, and neither is Nils Lundkvist, at least not yet. At best, they're both second-pairing defensemen, and the Stars have no Devon Toews to play with their top defender like Colorado does.

Moreover, with no Chris Tanev on the trade block this year, it remains to be seen how the Stars are going to solve this particular conundrum. But I always find myself impressed at how Girard has earned trust and respect despite being basically my height in the NHL. He really is a dependable defenseman, and Jared Bednar deserves a lot of credit for how he's grown his defense corps into a thoroughly functional unit, whether Makar plays 30 minutes or not on any given night.

On the other end of the Colorado Love Spectrum, Duchene is far from beloved in Denver. After being traded following the disastrous 2016-17 Colorado season that would end up mirroring Dallas's season (in both fan misery and subsequent draft gold), Duchene left town without a farewell parade, to put it lightly. And so when he scored a goal early in this one from what turned out to be the only spot the Stars were allowed to score from all night, you began to hope for a game in which Duchene once again terrorized his former club, celebrating as the boos rained down. Alas, the schadenfreude shower wouldn't last.

Jason Robertson didn't end up turning the game around, and obviously most coaches aren't going to get elated about turning a 5-1 game into a 6-3 loss. But I think the confidence of Robertson to meticulously disassemble Scott Wedgewood today is a very positive sign, particularly given the other good things Robertson has been doing lately. But even mildly celebrating a three-point game (which Wyatt Johnston also had, surprisingly) in the midst of a bad loss would cause Patrick Roy to fly to my house and yell at me in person, so we'll skip it.

Update: I saw just after publishing this that Wyatt Johnston wore an "A" today as an alternate captain in Roope Hintz's absence. It's a pretty big statement about how the Stars see Johnston, who also happens to be the youngest player on the roster. But it's also a big statement about what Johnston has done. He's the team's top center when Hintz isn't healthy, and Pete DeBoer has had no hesitation in asking him to step up for three years now, with Johnston consistently showing that confidence to be well-founded. I've been really high on Johnston for a while now, but for him to earn this level of trust this early in his career is just the latest indication of Johnston's massive potential with this team. (Not to mention the potential ceiling of his next contract this summer.)

I have no idea if Colorado has it in them to make another serious playoff run this year. They've suffered injuries, sure. But they've also Addressed (you'll note I didn't say "fixed") their goaltending, and that's not nothing. Still, they've got their work cut out for them in a severe Central Division, as they still trail Dallas in points percentage despite drawing level at 47, with Dallas having two games in hand. It is a long season, though. So very, very long.

Dallas started the same lineup as they did Thursday, other than Casey DeSmith coming in for Jake Oettinger. Initially, I wondered if that decision was because DeSmith has a decent record in a few games against Colorado in his past, but as the game went on, I also began to wonder if the Stars employed conventional wisdom ("play your starter in the most winnable game of a back-to-back set") in unconventional fashion, saving Oettinger for Detroit at home. Certainly as this game progressed and Colorado continued getting great chances while Dallas failed to really turn the tide on offense, it looked more and more like a "Burn the Tape" game. Certainly, you'd have taken a split in this two-game set going in, but it's a bit of bummer that the Stars can only do that now by winning tomorrow.

Matt Dumba did not have his best game in this one, though to be honest, not a lot of Stars did. Still, that makes me wonder if they will play Brendan Smith tomorrow against his old club when the Stars face Detroit, given the back-to-back situation. They'll also be at home, which would make it slightly easier to shelter a third pairing, as DeBoer and Nasredinne have generally done with Smith this year. But Dumba's loose pass to Hryckowian that didn't result in a goal (thanks to his own heroism, it must be said) along with his questionable positioning on the Drouin goal make him as likely as anyone to sit out, should the Stars want to bring their one fresh body back into the lineup tomorrow.

As for the other player not on the ice today, Roope Hintz is "making progress," per Pete DeBoer before the game, but obviously Hintz won't be back until he is back. At least, I think that is obvious, but your mileage may vary. Probably it would be good for him not to start playing hockey games again until he is able to play hockey games again without it hurting him. Just call me Mr. Doctor.

All right, onto the game beats.

Dallas drew their first power play when Matěj Blümel got enough position along the wall to draw a hooking call on Josh Manson. And from there, the crowd got to start booing Matt Duchene, and he decided to give them something to be sad about, victimizing Wedgewood short side high.

To my eyes, it doesn't look like Wedgewood was really expecting Duchene to shoot there, and you can see Duchene fake a pass just beforehand. If anything, Wedgewood is leaning into the post, preparing to push off in case of a pass through the crease. Good read by Duchene to just take the available space and rip the puck in.

The Avalanche pushed back after the goal, and Casey DeSmith had to look sharp on a few decent looks. Colin Blackwell gave Colorado some additional means of re-entering the game

when he took down Calvin de Haan behind the net in spectacular fashion by sending him head over heels with what was accurately deemed Tripping:

So the penalty kill had work to do, but a Nathan MacKinnon tip-in at the top of the crease was saved by DeSmith on a glorious pad save:

Colorado kept coming after the penalty expired, but DeSmith continued to show he was up to the task, as Colorado jumped out to a 11-1 lead in shots on goal, with many of them being rather less than harmless. (or, more than harmless?) But the Stars, for once, were the team to get a goal on their first shot while the other guys racked up chances without success, at first.

Justin Hryckowian took a heavy hit along the wall from de Haan midway through the first that looked for all the world like a check to the head. You know, they should come up with a penalty for those.

A couple minutes later, a rough exchange between DeSmith and Miro Heiskanen led to a Jonathan Drouin takeaway against Heiskanen. Drouin then had Casey Mittelstadt alone in front, and Ilya Lyubushkin, suddenly in no-man's land, wasn't able to block the pass. Even still, Wyatt Johnston nearly got back, even getting his stick on Mittelstadt to foil the initial chance. But that ended up helping Colorado, as DeSmith slid further out of position after anticipating a quicker shot in the slot and pushing out, and that meant Mittelstadt had an empty net when he made his second attempt.

Shots got to 13-1 before Dallas got another shot on goal, and the Stars would draw another penalty right afterwards, as Logan Stankoven got hooked by Parker Kelly out of necessity when a Jamie Benn saucer pass nearly sent Stankoven into the slot all alone.

The Stars' second power play came with three minutes left in the first period, and it was a lovely little chance to send Colorado to the intermission frustrated, after outplaying Dallas for the vast majority of the period. But the Stars were only able to force one good save out of Scott Wedgewood, and so they settled for a 1-1 score that was still far more than they deserved.

Both teams nearly grabbed the lead to open the second. First, Wedgewood made a couple of outstanding saves on the Stars' top line, including an almost accidental skate save that Wyatt Johnston probably should have just tucked in more cleanly after stealing the puck from Makar. The Norris Trophy haver may have slammed his stick down in time to disrupt Johnston's attempt as well, but it was a great save by Wedgewood, who somehow didn't tear his entire groin in half doing it:

Then DeSmith had to be sharp on a couple of great chances in tight from Jonathan Drouin and de Haan after a dump-in pinballed around nicely for Colorado, but not nicely enough, and the second period's stop-and-start continued, which usually fits what Dallas wants out of this matchup.

The Stars' fourth line didn't play all that much early, as you might expect given how often Colorado throws out their top guys. But they did play six minutes into the second period, along with the third defense pairing, and a Matt Dumba pass to Hryckowian out front was a bit too

loose, and Ross Colton grabbed it, with DeSmith desperately diving back on the chance that never should have happened. Only a massive Dumba effort to make the ensuing save prevented the mistake from turning into a 2-1 lead.

It was the sort of unforced error that drives coaches nuts, and for good reason. Colorado is a team that generates plenty of chances as it is; giving them extra looks is basically what the Yankees did in their World Series-losing inning against the Dodgers this year. Which is to say, it is bad to make mistakes.

The Stars' penalty kill is not known for making mistakes, as they would kill another Colorado power play after Colin Blackwell got tagged for holding Manson. Blackwell has been good for large stretches this year, but taking two penalties as a fourth-liner is never a great way to secure your lineup spot as you stare down the second half of the season. That said, Blackwell also draws a fair amount of penalties, too. It's one game out of 82, you know.

Speaking of which, the Avalanche top line got humming again, and Stankoven got nailed for interference on Mikko Rantanen in a penalty DeBoer would allude to after the game as one that wasn't necessary. But the scarier moment came five seconds into the penalty, when Ilya Lyubushkin sent a puck out of play that the officials initially deemed to have clipped the glass, though it was close enough to warrant a conference and some miffed-ness from Jared Bednar.

Anyway, a 5-on-4 situation against Colorado is scary enough. Artturi Lehkonen whiffed on a glorious rebound in front, and you started to think that Dallas might just escape, but it wasn't to be. A Cale Makar point shot whistled through a lot of bodies and just over DeSmith's left shoulder, and the Stars, at last, had some catching up to do.

Makar hadn't been scoring lately, so you just knew a run-of-the-mill shot from the point was going to pick today to go in, right?

Anyway, that goal was quickly forgotten, on account of the next one. Artturi Lehkonen (more like Lurk-onen) was picked out by Drouin at the far blue line, and he had a clean look on his off-wing against DeSmith, putting the puck perfectly past the Stars' goalie on a chance that you really would have preferred him not to have faced.

It was a tough break for Dallas on a failed zone entry, when Evgenii Dadonov had his pass/dump-in blocked along the boards, wrong-footing the Stars. The Avalanche were changing, and Lehkonen simply hopped on during the Dadonov entry attempt, traversed the far blue line, and got behind a pretty tired Harley and Heiskanen, who couldn't recover after the puck got turned over and fed ahead:

Dallas lost a bit of oomph after that, and Sam Girard nailed the post on what looked like a fourth goal. But from there, Dallas seemed to get angry, and a couple of non-calls only further infuriated them. That led to a flurry where Cale Makar went down with an apparent injury after a Blümel shot went off his ankle (though he would return for the third period), then Wedgewood lost his stick, another Avalanche player's stick got broken, and Sam Steel created a scramble at the netmouth that Blümel put in for what looked like his second NHL goal.

Except, it didn't count, because the play was offside by a few inches. Isn't it fun when we pause a great game to arbitrarily legislate certain offside calls? Nothing more fun than that, no sir.

Anyway, Manson hit a post right afterward, and it really did feel like Dallas was all set to have one of those infuriating afternoon games where you can point to a couple of grievances while also ignoring the bad mistakes and self-inflicted wounds.

Speaking of inflicting wounds, Benn nearly did so on MacKinnon, who turned his numbers out along the boards to avoid a hit, only for Benn to solve the puzzle and get a solid hip on him anyway.

Any good vibes from there would disappear shorter afterwards, however, as Jonathan Drouin continued to look like the player everyone thought he was going to be like ten years ago, beating DeSmith from distance.

The puck may have ticked off Dumba on its way past DeSmith's glove, but either way, that's a goal none of the six Stars on the ice will be proud of, as Colorado rapidly countered in transition and got a wicked shot off that you'd probably prefer to snuff out altogether.

With ten seconds to go at the end of second, the Stars did draw a penalty when Manson joined Blackwell in the Two Minor Penalties Club, and they have a dangerous-looking scramble on the doorstep that could've given them some life going into the final frame. Alas, it did not.

The other speck of hope going into the third period was the fact that Colorado had just blown a three-goal lead to Edmonton two days prior. Of course, the Stars haven't come back when trailing going into the third period once this year. Something special was either going to happen, or it wasn't.

There were a few rough calls (or lack of them) by the officials in this game, but there was no question that Colorado had been the better team, and they deserved the lead they had. That didn't prevent the Stars from screaming in fury when a quick whistle blew a puck dead on a scramble in front...despite the fact that the puck had already popped ten feet away, with the Stars looking to pounce on it.

Benn expressed his displeasure per Captain's Prerogative, but it was only so much noise. The Stars found themselves where they always seem to be against Colorado, which is in the position of having to overcome some kind of adversity.

Instead, the Stars decided to the opposite of overcoming (undergoing?), and they surrendered a fourth goal to Colorado's second line, when Artturi Lehkonen found the right side of the Dallas zone completely deserted, and he received a pass perfectly in stride en route to getting in alone on DeSmith and beating him in full flight:

I'm not gonna be too hard on anyone here, but I do think you have to acknowledge that both defensemen can't get sucked this far away from the middle of the ice on the entry.

Anyway, that made it 5-1, and the game seemed to be all wrapped up. The sharp-eyed reader will have notice the word “seemed” in the preceding sentence, though.

Jason Robertson loves to find weaknesses in goaltenders. He watched the video, as everyone knows, and he practices banking pucks in the moment goalies fail to hold their posts, as Stuart Skinner found out in the playoffs last year.

But Robertson has one goalie he needs no video of, because he’s practiced against him for countless hours in years past. That goalie would be Scott Wedgewood, whom Robertson embarrassed twice in less than a minute.

The first goal came from Gretzky’s office, though I don’t remember seeing Gretzky ever do this:

The puck bounced off Wedgewood’s body and back into the net, and you could see Wedgewood giving his old buddy a little nod of “all right, you got me, nice shot” right after the goal:

Wedgewood was a little less affable 39 seconds later, when Robertson did it to him again on a power play:

Unfortunately for Dallas, even a spectacular save from DeSmith on Drouin (again, with that second line) would not be enough to inspire a comeback. Look at what DeSmith does here, diving across like a soccer goalie after Harley got nutmegged on the pass across:

But then look at what Makar finds on the subsequent rebound:

That was that, really. The Stars made a push thanks to Jason Robertson’s surgical dismantling of Scott Wedgewood, and goodness knows the Avalanche could feel the weight of a blown lead on their shoulders, but their second line bore up under the strain with its fifth goal created in the game.

There were some Moments in garbage time when Matt Dumba rang the dinner bell with a shot off the post with a couple minutes left, and when he nearly rang Ross Colton’s bell right after that. Colton pulled out just in time to avoid being sent back to 2024, but despite the efforts at Sending Messages, the Stars would be the ones bearing bad news as they left Colorado with a 6-3 loss.

But the good thing about back-to-backs is that you can wipe away bad memories within 24 hours. The bad thing, of course, is that you can also make more of them. But DeBoer hasn’t lost three in a row in regulation (in the regular season, cough) since coming to Dallas, so even the Suddenly Great Red Wings have their work cut out for them. The Stars will send their number one goalie and a host of Very Annoyed skaters out to win a game tomorrow night, and they’ve typically been able to do that after going into a funk for a couple of games.

Typical, of course, has nothing to do with hockey much of the time. But then, we wouldn’t watch sports if they were always true to type, would we?

The Hockey News

Stars Backup Struggles In 6-3 Loss To Avalanche

By Adam Denker

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The Dallas Stars have not had to face much adversity through the first few weeks of the new year, only dropping two of their last eight games. Dallas had a tough task ahead of them on Saturday as they took on their Central Division rivals, the Colorado Avalanche. In their road game matchup, Dallas would lean on their backup goaltender Casey DeSmith to hold back Colorado's potent offensive attack.

Casey DeSmith has faced his fair share of formidable opponents thus far this season, but very few can hold a candle to how impressive the Avalanche's attack has been. Colorado came into Saturday's game ranking in the top five of the most goals scored, and very much had intentions of improving on that mark. Dallas and Colorado would exchange goals in the first period, with the Stars' goal coming from Matt Duchene. Casey DeSmith would be unable to keep the game close in the second period as the Avalanche received support Cale Makar, Artturi Lehkonen, and Jonathan Drouin to push the score 4-1.

The Stars would ultimately fall 6-3, with Casey DeSmith making 30 saves. Dallas will get a chance right away on Sunday to reset with the Detroit Red Wings coming to town.