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[The Athletic / Blue Jackets steal shootout win from Montreal despite another late collapse](#)

By Aaron Portzline – November 18, 2025

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The cannon boomed. Streamers fell from the rafters of Nationwide Arena. The Columbus Blue Jackets jumped off the bench to celebrate with goaltender Jet Greaves after he secured the final save in a 4-3 shootout win on Monday.

The Blue Jackets have done so little winning through the years that it's hard for them to look at any victory and not be delighted by the two points.

But if you've watched the Blue Jackets play so far this season — and especially if you watched closely on Monday — there are worrying signs that the Blue Jackets are content with being “good enough,” not truly good.

Zach Werenski, Adam Fantilli and Dmitri Voronkov scored goals, while Kirill Marchenko had two assists and the game-deciding goal in the shootout, extending the Blue Jackets' point streak to a season-best five games (3-0-2) with a win over the injury-riddled Montréal Canadiens.

But it marked yet another game already this season — they're only 19 games deep — in which the Blue Jackets frittered away a lead in the third period.

On Monday, the Blue Jackets held a 3-1 lead after an authoritative second period, but then changed into their robes and slippers for an all-too-comfortable third period. The goal Josh Anderson scored to make it 3-2 at 8:28 of the third seemed an inevitability given how long the puck stayed in the Columbus zone to that point in the third.

The Canadiens' tying goal, an extra-attacker goal scored with 1:19 remaining, seemed a long time coming, too.

“Did they outshoot us, and maybe, you know, take over a little bit?” Blue Jackets coach Dean Evason said. “We love how resilient we were. We stayed the course. Again, they catch a couple of breaks. That's what happens in this game, right? I mean, it's like a couple of mistakes, the break (of a stick) here, a bounce, and it ends up in your net. But, you know, we got to where wanted to get to, and yeah, we're never going to be disappointed with two points.”

Fair. But the bigger concern, in this case, is the point they handed to Montreal. Neither Evason nor his players need to be reminded of what happened last spring, when the Canadiens were the last club to qualify for the playoffs in the Eastern Conference at the expense of the Blue Jackets, who finished only two points out of the eighth and final spot.

Evason is correct that the 3-2 goal was scored off a lucky bounce for the Canadiens. Defenseman Lane Hutson fired into a net-front crowd from distance, and the puck fell right in front of former Jackets forward Josh Anderson for the easy bury.

And he's correct that a broken stick put the Blue Jackets in an even tougher spot with a six-on-five disadvantage, leaving Mathieu Olivier to defend only with his feet and torso. Not ideal.

But because the puck was constantly in the Blue Jackets' zone — and constantly around their own net — those little mistakes, bad bounces and weakened twigs lead to goals.

"It's one of those things where it is human nature to kind of get back on your heels a little bit, to protect the lead, and it's all for the right reasons," Werenski said. "But I feel like in order to close out games the right way, we have to be on the attack, staying above guys.

"We can still be physical and create chances and goals down there, and we have to play with confidence with the puck on our sticks. That's myself included. There were times in the third tonight, I was kind of just chucking it away and it's one of those things where each of us, individually, just has to be more aware of it and work on it."

The Blue Jackets tend to let other clubs dictate how a game is going to be played, then try to match it. The same played out on Monday, when the Canadiens' goal at 4:47 of the second period to tie the score at 1 seemed to awaken Columbus.

The Blue Jackets were much more assertive after that goal, building a 3-1 lead on goals by Fantilli and Voronkov. Marchenko, who now has a 12-game point streak — one short of Ryan Johansen's club record — played a big role in both goals.

It was Marchenko, from below the goal line, who fed Fantilli in front of the net to give the Jackets a 2-1 lead at 9:47 of the second. It was Marchenko who threaded a needle from the right circle to set up Voronkov for the 3-1 goal at 13:32 of the second, a power-play goal.

Marchenko's pass sailed through the legs of Montreal's Alexandre Carrier just before Voronkov redirected it into the net. Did he know what he was doing?

"I know (Voronkov's) always on the back post," Marchenko said.

The Blue Jackets actually heard boos from a crowd of 14,811 during the three-on-three overtime. It was a continuation of the third, with Montreal dominating possession, the Blue Jackets chucking the puck all over the ice and Greaves standing on his head.

The Canadiens had a 6-0 advantage in shots on goal in OT.

Kent Johnson and Marchenko scored in to the shootout for the Blue Jackets, while Cole Caufield scored for Montreal. With a chance to keep the game alive in the third round, Greaves, who had 29 saves in regulation and OT, stopped Ivan Demidov to win it for Columbus.

The Blue Jackets haven't made the playoffs in five seasons, the second-longest drought in franchise history. Last season, they started to emerge and elevate from their lengthy rebuild, and so a win like Monday's would never have been questioned or critiqued.

But they fancy themselves a playoff team now, and so every point matters, especially in the traffic-jam Eastern Conference. It's about the points you accumulate, yes, but it's also about the points you let slip away.

“Yeah, we’re not happy about it, obviously,” Fantilli said. “We don’t even want to be talking about the wild-card now. That’s not what we’re here for. We’re trying to get in the playoffs. We’re not trying to hope for it, so obviously you don’t want to give them a point.

“It sucks. But we got two tonight, and that’s all we can really focus on.”

The Columbus Dispatch / Marchenko's magic lifts Columbus Blue Jackets to victory over Canadiens: takeaways

By Brian Hedger – November 18, 2025

Where would the Blue Jackets be without Kirill Marchenko?

In hockey, a question like that is frowned upon by players and especially coaches. Singling out one player for a whole team's success isn't part of this sport's culture, but it's fair to ask of the Blue Jackets (10-7-2) after 19 games.

Nearing the quarter mark, Marchenko leads them in scoring at 22 points on eight goals and 14 assists, which is six points more than Dmitri Voronkov and seven more than Zach Werenski as the next highest scorers.

Marchenko has also scored deciding goals in two of the Jackets' three shootout wins, including his latest in a 4-3 shootout triumph over the Montreal Canadiens on Nov. 17 at Nationwide Arena to save a victory in another game where a late lead vanished.

Marchenko also has a 12-game points streak going that's the longest active streak in the NHL and is now tied for second-longest in franchise history with Cam Atkinson's heater in 2018-19. Heading into a back-to-back finale Nov. 18 at the Winnipeg Jets, he's one shy of tying Ryan Johansen's 13-game streak in 2014-15 as the longest in Blue Jackets history.

Last season, Marchenko became an up-and-coming young NHL star with a career-high 31-43-74 scoring line in 79 games, scoring at almost a point-per-game pace.

This season, he's showing the chops of an elite scorer, coming up huge again with two primary assists against the Canadiens to set up goals for Adam Fantilli and Dmitri Voronkov. The first of those assists, on Fantilli's goal in the second, extended Marchenko's assist streak to a career-high six straight games to top his previous high of five set earlier this season.

Marchenko's line with Fantilli and Dmitri Voronkov actually struggled with possession, according to Natural Stat Trick, but the Blue Jackets scored two goals without allowing any in their 12:49 of 5-on-5 time. Marchenko was the biggest reason.

"Every single night, he's been awesome," Fantilli said. "I'm having a lot of fun playing with him. I think we can work off each other really well. ... but he's been phenomenal this year. It's really great to see. It's great for our team and it's great for the city."

The Blue Jackets now have 22 points and sit fifth in the Metropolitan Division, two points behind the Pittsburgh Penguins for third in a jam-packed division race. Where would they be without "Marchy's" magic?

It's a fair question to ask. Here are three more takeaways:

Columbus Blue Jackets making habit of coughing up late leads

They don't sound too concerned yet, but the Blue Jackets have shown an early propensity to cough up leads while sitting on their heels too much in third periods.

Allowing another two-goal lead to disappear in the third against Montreal, they were forced to survive an overtime the Canadiens dominated with a 6-0 edge in shots before winning on shootout goals by Kent Johnson and Marchenko.

That's no way to go through life in the NHL, Bluto.

The tying goal scored by Canadiens defenseman Lane Hutson with 1:19 left in regulation was the third 5-on-6 goal the Blue Jackets have allowed, which has them tied with the Anaheim Ducks, Boston Bruins and Islanders for second-most in the league and one behind Montreal's four as the most.

Fortunately for the Jackets, they've won two of those games in shootouts Oct. 25 in Pittsburgh and this game against the Canadiens. Each time, Marchenko scored the deciding goal of a shootout. Their other 5-on-6 collapse was to the Islanders, which robbed the Blue Jackets of getting at least a point in overtime or a shootout.

It's a concerning trend, but it is still early.

"There's no theme," Blue Jackets coach Dean Evason said. "It's different things happening. We lose coverage on (Montreal's second goal) and we break our stick on the 6-on-5, basically 6-on-4 (goal). It's a wrist shot that goes through a screen and hits (goalie Jet Greaves). Are we disappointed, again, that we didn't win in regulation? Of course, but are we beating ourselves up for letting the lead slip away? No."

Columbus Blue Jackets showcase Yegor Chinakhov with line bump

The scouting section of Nationwide Arena's press box has been a crowded space for most of the Blue Jackets' first nine home games for one primary reason.

There's at least dabbling interest around the NHL in Yegor Chinakhov, a forward with top six skills who'd skated exclusively with the Jackets' fourth line until this game. Chinakhov hasn't been happy with his ice time under Evason going back to last season, has requested a trade for a change of scenery and for now that situation is just simmering on the back burner.

The scouting section was busy again, though.

Ten scouts from nine different teams were assigned credentials to attend, including two from the Anaheim Ducks. It was a rough night for Chinakhov and his entire line in terms of goals scored vs allowed. Their possession numbers weren't bad, but Chinakhov and Johnson finished with -2 plus/minus ratings and Monahan was -3.

Columbus Blue Jackets face another grueling back-to-back finale

Every NHL team can look at its schedule this season, all compressed by the league's February break for the Winter Olympics, and find some crazy turnarounds and weird travel itineraries.

The Blue Jackets, however, might have a claim as the most aggrieved team in the league. Yes, they fly first class with charter flights but tell that to a human body after playing an exhausting hockey game before a long, late night flight to Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Now, throw in a 7:30 p.m. start against Montreal, 30 minutes later than usual, plus a border crossing in Winnipeg and little rest before facing the Jets, a playoff contender that's had two days between games.

If the Blue Jackets look like they're skating through quicksand in Winnipeg, that's why.

They faced a similar situation in back-to-back games against the St. Louis Blues and New York Islanders on Nov. 1-2, barely fending off the Blues at Nationwide Arena before playing the Isles on roughly 20 hours rest in a game they lost on two late goals in the last 67 seconds of the third.

The Jackets also split a daunting back-to-back Nov. 10-11 at the Edmonton Oilers and Seattle Kraken, coughing up a three-goal lead in the third in Edmonton before flying West to Seattle for a 2-1 shootout win over the Kraken.

"Not the most ideal schedule, in terms of back-to-back, but other teams go through it," defenseman Zach Werenski said. "Get on the plane, get to Winnipeg and just get ready (to play again)."

The Columbus Dispatch / Columbus Blue Jackets vs Montreal Canadiens skate report: Chinakhov gets a new line

By Brian Hedger – October 17, 2025

Yegor Chinakhov is about to get his first opportunity to play in a top-six role this season when the Blue Jackets host the Montreal Canadiens on Nov. 17 at Nationwide Arena.

Chinakhov, who's spent 13 games with the fourth line, will move to a line with Sean Monahan at center and Kent Johnson at right wing against the Canadiens (10-6-2), who edged the Jackets out of a playoff spot by two points last season.

Jet Greaves will start his fifth straight game for the Blue Jackets (9-7-2), who will skate Zach Aston-Reese on the fourth line and scratch rookie forward Luca Del Bel Belluz.

"We just tweaked the lines a little bit," Blue Jackets coach Dean Evason said. "We want to get (Aston-Reese) back in there, so (Chinakhov's) speed's been real good. Montreal's a quick team. That's part of it."

Chinakhov, 24, requested a trade this July 17 due to frustration with his usage after returning from a lengthy absence with a back injury. Blue Jackets president/GM Don Waddell didn't trade him, so Chinakhov arrived for training camp intent on earning a regular lineup role.

Instead, he started the season as a healthy scratch. Chinakhov has since earned a somewhat regular role on the fourth line, adding four points on two goals and two assists, but playing more of a defensive role doesn't mesh well with his offensive style and skills.

Monahan and Johnson are searching for more offensive production, so adding Chinakhov could spark all three.

"(Monahan) is always in the right place, doing the right things," Evason said. "He's a great leader on our team, so whoever he plays with will be a good line."

Greaves, meanwhile, gets another start after helping the Blue Jackets earn a point with 31 saves on 32 shots Nov. 15 in a 2-1 shootout loss to the New York Rangers. Evason indicated that Elvis Merzlikins will likely start Nov. 18 at the Winnipeg Jets to conclude the Jackets' fifth of 15 back-to-back games.

"We debated (as a staff)," Evason said. "We've got a back-to-back, so both are going to play. It was just a matter of who was going to play this first one. ... Jet played really well the other night."

Former Ohio State goalie Jakub Dobes, who's 6-1-1 with a 2.70 goals against average and .901 save percentage, will start for the Canadiens and try to end a three-game losing streak.

The Columbus Dispatch / Columbus Blue Jackets survive Montreal Canadiens' comeback with shootout win

By Brian Hedger – November 17, 2025

The Blue Jackets needed this one badly, but their habit of blowing leads late in regulation nearly bit them again.

This time, leading 3-2 with less than two minutes left Nov. 17 at Nationwide Arena, the Montreal Canadiens tied it 3-3 on a goal by defenseman Lane Hutson with his own net empty for an extra attacker, 1:19 on the clock and Blue Jackets forward Mathieu Olivier defending without a stick.

Olivier gave his stick to center Charlie Coyle, whose stick snapped, before Hutson fired a shot through traffic that slid under Blue Jackets goalie Jet Greaves. It forced overtime for the Blue Jackets in a second straight game after losing to the New York Rangers by shootout on Nov. 15 in Columbus.

Also for the second straight game, the Blue Jackets didn't get a single shot in OT. They were outshot 6-0 by the Canadiens before getting it to a shootout decided by Kirill Marchenko's goal and Greaves' save against Ivan Demidov in the third round.

Knowing a postgame flight to Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada awaited for a challenging back-to-back finale Nov. 18 against the Winnipeg Jets, the Jackets couldn't afford to leave Columbus without two points. They made it harder than it needed to be by backpedaling in the third and OT but got the job done in front of 14,811 at Nationwide Arena.

Zach Werenski, Adam Fantilli and Dmitri Voronkov scored goals for the Blue Jackets in the first two periods to build a 3-1 lead starting the third, but former Blue Jackets forward Josh Anderson and Hutson scored tied it with goal to force OT.

Greaves, starting his fifth straight game, and made 29 saves for his third win in that stretch (3-0-2). Former Ohio State goalie Jakub Dobes made 20 saves in his first game against the Blue Jackets. Now, it's off to Winnipeg for the Jackets, who are expected to start Elvis Merzlikins in a tough turnaround.

The Hockey Writers / Blue Jackets' Marchenko Extends Points Streak to 12 in Shootout Win over Canadiens

By Mark Scheig – November 17, 2025

The Columbus Blue Jackets got their first crack at the Montreal Canadiens since being eliminated by them at the end of last season. Despite blowing a third period two-goal lead, they were able to prevail after regulation.

Kirill Marchenko recorded two assists and extended his points streak to 12 games while scoring the shootout winner. Jet Greaves made 29 saves to help the Blue Jackets to a 4-3 shootout win over the Canadiens.

The story of this game was finding a way to win despite another late blown lead.

Game Recap

The game started in the Blue Jackets favor. They held an early 7-1 shot advantage. Then Zach Werenski found himself in an unusual situation. He was alone in the slot.

Werenski took his time and beat Jakub Dobes with his patented wrist shot to open the scoring. From that point on, the Canadiens found their legs and evened things out. Shots in the first were 10-8 for the Blue Jackets.

The Canadiens carried that momentum into the second period and tied the game. Oliver Kapanen found himself in front of Greaves' net. Mike Matheson found him with his pass. It was 1-1.

The Blue Jackets then got a great shift from Charlie Coyle's line with Cole Sillinger and Mathieu Olivier. They got momentum back and the rest of the team fed off of it. It ultimately allowed the Blue Jackets to grab the lead.

Adam Fantilli scored his fourth goal in five games off a great play by Marchenko to make it 2-1. Then Marchenko was at it again on a power play. He saw Dmitri Voronkov in front of Dobes. His pass got right to Voronkov who deflected it in for a 3-1 lead.

Kirill Marchenko Columbus Blue Jackets

Kirill Marchenko was the game's first star on Monday night. (Amy Irvin / The Hockey Writers)

The Canadiens then pushed in the third and were able to tie the game. First, Josh Anderson was in the right place. He was able to get the puck out of the air and put it down near the Blue Jackets' net. He deposited it into the open side.

Then for the third time this season, the Blue Jackets allowed a 5-on-6 goal. With Dobes pulled, Lane Hutson made it 3-3.

Overtime was required. Although the Canadiens dominated the OT with a 6-0 shot advantage, Greaves shut them down.

The Blue Jackets got goals from Kent Johnson and Marchenko to earn the extra point. Cole Caufield scored the only goal of the shootout for the Canadiens. Dobes finished the night with 20 saves.

The Blue Jackets will now head west and play a tough back-to-back game against the Winnipeg Jets on Tuesday night. As for the Canadiens, they head home and will get a couple days off before hosting the Washington Capitals on Thursday night.