



**AMALIE Arena Media Clips
Saturday, November 4, 2023**

1. Lightning fans left buffering due to glitch with Bally Sports app – Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)
2. Difficult decision put Lightning's Mikhail Sergachev on path to NHL – Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)
3. Road woes continue for Lightning, who fall to slumping Blue Jackets – Associated Press
4. Tampa Bay area high school hockey league mandating neck guards – Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)
5. Nuts & Bolts: Aiming for a bounce back against the Sens – Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)
6. #AskKrenner: Rookies, road trips and more – Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)
7. The Backcheck: Costly third period leads to loss in Columbus – Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)
8. Tampa Bay Lightning road woes becoming an alarming trend – Erik Erlendsson (Lightning Insider)
9. Tampa Bay Lightning spoil away a great goaltending story – Erik Erlendsson (Lightning Insider)

Lightning fans left buffering due to glitch with Bally Sports app **Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)**

TAMPA — Subscribers to the Bally Sports streaming service were unable to watch most of Bally Sports Sun's broadcast of the Lightning's 4-2 loss to the Blue Jackets on Thursday night in Columbus due to a glitch with the network's app, the latest issue with the team's TV rights holder.

There were no issues with the broadcast on cable (Spectrum), satellite (DirecTV) or other streaming services (Fubo) with the Bally Sports networks.

The app glitch affected subscribers to Bally Sports' regional direct-to-consumer streaming service in other markets as well, including Detroit, Dallas/Fort Worth, Minneapolis/St. Paul and Milwaukee, interfering with their ability to view local NHL and NBA games.

Bally Sports Sun streaming subscribers reported encountering a similar problem with the app Monday while trying to watch the Lightning's game against the Kraken.

Subscribers were unable to log in before Thursday's 7 p.m. Lightning game, instead getting a long lag followed by a pop-up window saying, "Out of Bounds: We are having trouble loading your page." Multiple attempts netted the same result. At 7:32, Bally said it had been notified of the issue and was working to resolve it. At 10:44, well after the game had ended, Bally announced the problem had been fixed.

There was a widespread issue with the app's third-party identity service, Okta, that caused sign-in problems with some of its clients, the Detroit Free Press reported.

On Friday, Bally Sports continued to work through issues that were causing intermittent outages on its app and website.

Bally Sports will offer credits to affected customers. Those affected can reach the network's customer service team at help.ballysports.com.

When Sinclair Sports purchased the former Fox Sports regional sports networks four years ago and rebranded them under the Bally Sports umbrella, it promised to revolutionize live-event sports streaming with a high-tech, comprehensive app that would include interactive stats and an in-app sports wagering feature.

That hasn't happened. Diamond Sports, the company that operates the 19 Bally Sports regional networks that broadcast games for about 70 NHL, Major League Baseball and NBA teams, was saddled with \$8.6 billion in debt and in March filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy restructuring to consolidate its debt and remain operational.

Shortly before then, as Bally's rights-holder deal with the Lightning was about to expire, the network made an agreement with the team to renew its contract. The length and details of the agreement have not been revealed.

Lightning viewership on Bally Sports Sun in 2022-23 was up 60% over the previous year. Rays viewership was up 27% this season compared with 2022, according to Nielsen data.

Over the years, disputes over fees that cable companies pay to networks to be able to carry them — called carriage fees — have made the Bally Sports networks less readily available to viewers, as cable providers (Frontier) and streaming services (YouTube TV, Hulu) have dropped the Bally Sports networks from their subscription packages.

Bally Sports then focused its efforts on its direct-to-consumer subscription service, which costs \$19.99 per month and \$189.99 for a year. This year the company introduced cheaper seasonal plans for viewers who want to watch only during a specific sports season.

Difficult decision put Lightning's Mikhail Sergachev on path to NHL **Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)**

WINDSOR, Ontario — Mikhail Sergachev had just turned 17 when he made the biggest decision of his life — to leave his native Russia to play major junior hockey in Canada.

Sergachev was intent on paving a path to the NHL, even if it meant leaving his tight-knit family and starting over in a foreign land. Though he had built a promising reputation in his homeland through the junior ranks, he knew the exposure he would gain in North America while tailoring his game to the smaller rink and faster pace provided his best opportunity.

Now at 25, Sergachev is one of the NHL's elite defensemen. He's the present and future of the Lightning blue line, locked into an eight-year extension through 2030-31. He already has won two Stanley Cups, and a Norris Trophy could be in the offing.

But before attaining such status, he was determinedly chasing greatness in Windsor, Ontario.

"I don't think I would be here right now if I had stayed in Russia," Sergachev said Wednesday. "It's woulda, coulda, shoulda, but I feel like that gave me so much confidence in my ability."

Warm welcome

Sergachev moved to Canada in 2015 to play for the Windsor Spitfires of the Ontario Hockey League. He knew no one and spoke no English. Michelle and Brian Reid opened their home to him as his billet family. The Spitfires set Sergachev up with an English teacher who worked with him for two hours a week.

He quickly found a routine rare for a teenager, but it revealed his resolve to those around him early on. He'd get to the rink early in the morning for one-on-one instruction, then study film with coaches, who pulled clips of top defensemen like Erik Karlsson and Drew Doughty for him.

"I had the whole ice to myself at 17 years old," Sergachev said. "I mean, that's better than staying at home and playing video games."

Afterward, it was usually off to Tim Horton's for coffee and a sandwich, sometimes a half-hour nap at the arena before teammates who were attending school arrived, then back to practice.

"From the day he got here, you can tell how dedicated he was, how dedicated to his craft in terms of wanting to do this for a career," said Jerrod Smith, a Spitfires assistant at the time who is now the team's head coach.

"There's certain guys that come in and just have that knack to want to be on the ice all the time, who want to work on specific skills related to their position on their own, along with the coaching staff, after practice, before practice. You can really tell his dedication to wanting to be a player."

Initially, Sergachev shied away from conversation because he was worried he'd say the wrong thing in English. When he and another Russian player living at the Reid house spoke Russian together, Michelle insisted they speak English in the house.

“Make your mistakes at home, because we’ll fix it here,” she would tell him. “That’s how you’re going to learn.” Sergachev picked up the names of certain vegetables from grocery trips and eventually learned to order for himself at restaurants.

“It was very hands-on,” Michelle said. “And those kind of things took precedence over thinking anything about him being a superstar. But I know Brian did go to one of the first practices that he had, and I remember he came in and he said, ‘This kid can skate.’”

Singular focus

Sergachev also had a rocket shot that immediately impressed his Windsor coaches. Once he gained confidence in his new language — he was doing media interviews in English three months into his arrival — he became engaged with his teammates, who did their part to help bridge the language barrier. Pretty soon, players were gathering in the Reids’ basement to watch hockey games and for poker nights.

“To have his English go from nothing to that, then all of a sudden the guys just really started to click with him,” Michelle said. “They would be able to laugh together, and it helped him on the ice and off the ice, too. And then the whole team just kind of took to him. So then he started making friends and just things started to come a little easier.”

The Reids would toss a candy bar on Sergachev’s bed when he got home from games in which he scored a point. Around the team, there was a running joke about Sergachev’s sudden affinity for Blue Raspberry Kool-Aid Jammers.

All fun aside, Sergachev remained focused on the reason he moved to Canada — getting to the NHL.

“He told us that basically from Day 1,” Brian Reid said. “Me and him were outside (by the firepit), and he said, ‘I’ll be gone next year.’ I looked down and said, ‘This is your first year here.’ He said, ‘I’m going to be in the NHL next year.’ He was honest, and he planned to do that.”

Still, Sergachev did get homesick — he was nearly 5,000 miles from home — and it showed on the ice early on. The Spitfires made it possible for his family to visit him in Windsor. Success followed, and Sergachev soon cemented himself as a top draft prospect.

“You could just tell right away the first time playing against him that he was going to be something special,” said Lightning center Anthony Cirelli, who played against Sergachev for two seasons in the OHL. “Just how big and strong he was, the way he skated, the way he made plays, the full 200-foot game that he had. He was really good offensively early on, but he was really hard to play against as well. He just kept on getting better.”

Fulfilling his promise

Playing in Russia on bigger rinks, Sergachev said he was a good player but found himself watching a lot, a habit he says he still sinks into. But in Canada, players shot the puck more often and skated with more pace, so he learned to play faster and use his stick. With that, his game developed more bite, coaches saw.

Sergachev won the OHL Defenseman of the Year award with a 17-goal, 57-point season. When he gave his acceptance speech at the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto, he did it in English and thanked his billet family.

That summer, the Montreal Canadiens drafted Sergachev ninth overall. Fulfilling his promise to Brian Reid, he made the team's opening-night roster before being returned to the Spitfires. As he worked to improve, Sergachev's motivation was back home in Russia: his parents Alexander and Ludmilla.

"In the back of my head I was always thinking about them, what they gave for me," Sergachev said. "They gave half of their salary to bring me up as a kid. Hockey's expensive and they were making decent money, but still to give up half of their salary, imagine that, that's crazy. It's insane. So I felt like I needed to get better."

Sergachev was one of three first-round picks on that Windsor team — Logan Stanley and Logan Brown also were among the top 18 players taken in 2016 — and the Spitfires had 12 players with double-digit goals, including Sergachev (10) and current Lightning defense prospect Sean Day (12).

"When we got to play together it was fun, because we're both offensive-minded guys," said Day, who currently plays in AHL Syracuse. "So, it was like having five forwards out there."

Windsor was eliminated in the first round of the OHL playoffs but received an automatic berth to the Memorial Cup as host team. The Spitfires' early exit meant six weeks off, but they ended up winning the tournament, beating an Erie team that included future Lightning teammates Cirelli, Erik Cernak and Darren Raddysh.

Sergachev was the first player to take home the Memorial Cup trophy, and he slept with it in his bed that night. It wound up being his last game in Windsor. Eighteen days later, he was traded to the Lightning in a deal that sent Jonathan Drouin to the Canadiens.

Home away from home

It's been more than six years since Sergachev left Windsor for good, but it is still special to him. He said it's one of three places he considers home, along with his hometown of Nizhnekamsk and the Russian countryside he visited during summers with his family as a kid. He remains close with the Reids, who attend road games within driving distance and visit him in Tampa at least twice a year.

"There's not a lot of people in the world that care about things — not just about me, but actually care, and they do," Sergachev said. "They're caring people for everyone around them, so it's beautiful."

"At first, they were so strict ... but now looking back at it, it kind of kept me in place and disciplined me. Mainly because of them, I didn't take any wrong turns, because they were so passionate and gave me everything I needed. They're caring and loving people. And I love them."

The Reids' next trip will be this month, when they'll see Sergachev's 7-month-old son, Fyodor, the first child for Sergachev and his wife, Liza.

"He's pretty remarkable," Brian said of Sergachev. "He's a man now, a wife and a kid. It's just amazing what he's doing. And he's so genuine."

In August, Sergachev returned to Windsor to play in a charity event that raised \$200,000 for ALS research. He stayed in his old room at the Reids' home. After the game, he was the last player off the ice, making sure every kid who wanted his autograph got one.

"I've been having a good career so far," Sergachev said. "I've gotten places and won trophies, and it's all been great. And a huge part of it is Windsor. I spent two years there growing up. I've been really fortunate to be there. And any chance I get, I always go back."

Road woes continue for Lightning, who fall to slumping Blue Jackets

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Boone Jenner and Eric Gudbranson scored 2:17 apart in the third period, and the Blue Jackets snapped a four-game skid with a 4-2, come-from-behind win over the Lightning on Thursday night.

Kirill Marchenko scored in the first period, Johnny Gaudreau added a goal, and Elvis Merzlikins stopped 27 shots for his first win since Oct. 21.

Steven Stamkos and Conor Sheary scored in the second period for the Lightning, who have lost two straight and all four of their road games. Former Ohio State University goaltender Matt Tomkins returned to the Buckeye State and stopped 24 shots.

“To come back the way we did in the third, that response, facing the adversity and how we dealt with it, that’s what we’re looking for,” Blue Jackets coach Pascale Vincent said. “That’s the type of win that builds character and builds confidence that says, ‘OK, we did it once we can do it over and over and over.’”

The Blue Jackets peppered Tomkins with 12 shots early in the first period before Marchenko found the back of the net at 6:29 for his first goal of the season off the passing of Dmitri Voronkov and Cole Sillinger.

Marchenko, who was a healthy scratch in the Blue Jackets’ two previous games, has scored in all three games he has played against the Lightning. Voronkov notched points in three of his first four NHL games.

The Lightning pulled ahead with a pair of goals in the first 4:42 of the second period. Stamkos scored with 2:53 elapsed, after a puck ricocheted off the skate of Columbus’ Damon Severson in front of the crease. A shot by Stamkos ricocheted off a skate and onto the stick of Sheary, who scored less than two minutes later. It was Sheary’s first goal with the Lightning.

Columbus roared back in the third. Jenner scored at 6:41, followed by Gudbranson, whose shot from the right circle at 9:24 snapped a 58-game scoring drought.

“We tried to talk about when we have leads in the third, let’s continue to press, keep playing the same way, so I was disappointed that we didn’t do that,” Stamkos said.

He added: “Sometimes I feel like we lose the identity of our team, and we’ve got to figure that out. We’ve been put in those positions a lot over the years of having the lead in the third and knowing what to do, and we just gave up too many looks.”

Gaudreau’s empty-netter with 2:11 remaining, his first score of the season, sealed the win.

“We didn’t have any push,” Lightning coach Jon Cooper said. “We haven’t taken penalties all year, and we found a way to take three in the third. If you want to give yourself a chance to lose, those are some of the things we’re doing which is why we’re losing games.”

“We’re playing 55 minutes of good hockey and five not so good, and it’s burning us.”

Tampa Bay area high school hockey league mandating neck guards **Eduardo Encina (Tampa Bay Times)**

TAMPA — The Lightning High School Hockey League is mandating neck guards for all players beginning Jan. 1, 2024, following the death of former NHL player Adam Johnson after his throat was cut by a skate blade.

The league — which consists of a 20-team varsity division representing area high schools, as well as junior varsity and development divisions, and is governed by Statewide Amateur Hockey of Florida — approved a mandatory neck guard rule Wednesday.

The Jan. 1 date allows time to purchase neck protection, since the equipment is expected to be in high demand, but the recommendation is for all players to wear neck guards immediately for games as well as practices. Local hockey rink equipment retailer Rinkside Sports — which has locations at the TGH Ice Plex in Brandon, AdventHealth Center Ice in Wesley Chapel and Lakeland Ice Arena — has guards in stock and is ordering more.

“We are asking that everyone take the necessary precautions to prevent this freak accident from happening to one of our players,” Statewide Amateur Hockey of Florida executive director Steve Lynch wrote in a memo to players, parents and officials.

“... Supply for this protection is in high demand. We ask that all players do their best to acquire this protection as soon as possible. If you have extra, please share with teammates that haven’t been able to acquire the neck protection.”

The mandate will be in effect for all USA Hockey-sanctioned events, including state high school games.

Johnson was playing in a Champions Cup game Saturday in England’s Elite Ice Hockey League when his neck was cut by the skate of Matt Petgrave. Petgrave’s skates went high in the air after he made contact with another player just inside the blue line.

The NHL has no neck guard requirements but has moved to push the conversation of neck protection to the forefront with the players association. Minor hockey in Canada requires neck guards, as do the major junior hockey leagues in Ontario and Quebec.

Nuts & Bolts: Aiming for a bounce back against the Sens **Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)**

Everything you need to know ahead of Tampa Bay's matchup against the Ottawa Senators on Saturday.

When: Saturday, November 4 - 7 p.m. ET

Where: Canadian Tire Centre - Ottawa, ON

TV coverage: Bally Sports (check local listings)

Radio coverage: [102.5 MHz-FM](#), [Lightning Radio 24/7](#)

Where to stream it: [BallySports.com](#)

Projected Lineup (subject to change)

Forwards

Brandon Hagel - Braydent Point - Mikey Eyssimont

Steven Stamkos - Nick Paul - Conor Sheary

Alex Barre-Boulet - Anthony Cirelli - Nikita Kucherov

Tanner Jeannot - Luke Glendening - Austin Watson

Defensemen

Victor Hedman - Erik Cernak

Mikhail Sergachev - Darren Raddysh

Calvin de Haan - Nick Perbix

Goaltenders

Jonas Johansson

Matt Tomkins

Saturday's Matchup

The Lightning and Senators are playing the second of four matchups this season and the second of two meetings at Canadian Tire Centre...Tampa Bay fell to OTT 5-2 in the first meeting Oct. 15 at Canadian Tire Centre...After Vladimir Tarasenko gave OTT a 1-0 lead 7:02 into the opening frame, Anthony Cirelli answered for the Bolts and tied the game with his first goal of the season 60 seconds into the second period with Darren Raddysh and Tanner Jeannot picking up the helpers...Brady Tkachuk put OTT up 2-1 at the 8:48 mark of the second before Jeannot tied the game 4:12 later with his first goal of the year as Mikey Eyssimont and Victor Hedman recorded the assists...Following a goal by Mathieu Joseph with less than a minute to play in the second period, OTT added two more goals in the third from Tkachuk and Tim Stutzle to seal the 5-2 victory... Matt Tomkins made his first career NHL start in the defeat, stopping 33 of 37 shots against...Jon Cooper coached his 800th career NHL game...Nikita Kucherov has posted a multi-point effort in four of his last five games vs. OTT (2-8—10) and has found the scoresheet in eight of the last 10 meetings (4-13—17)...Brayden Point has collected points in eight of his last 10 contests vs. OTT (7-9—16) with goals in seven of those 10 meetings...Steven Stamkos is riding a five-game point streak vs. OTT (2-7—9) with three consecutive multi-point efforts (1-6—7)...Jeannot has picked up points in five of his six career contests vs. OTT (3-3—6)...Hedman has points in 12 of his last 17 games at OTT (7-11—18)...Mikhail Sergachev has picked up points in five of his last seven games at OTT (3-3—6)...The Bolts are 5-5-0 in their last 10 games at OTT and 6-4-0 in the last 10 meetings overall...Tampa Bay is 49-

54-8 with two ties all-time vs. OTT, including a road record of 21-31-5... Stamkos (19-26—45) holds the Lightning franchise record for career points vs. OTT.

Injuries

Tyler Motte - Upper-body, Day-to-Day

Andrei Vasilevskiy - Back, out

Tampa Bay Sports Item of the Game

Line Change Launch

Tonight the Tampa Bay Lightning launches its collaboration with the women owned brand, Line Change. Shop the collection now, available in store at Amalie Arena and online at TampaBaySports.com, while supplies last.

The Road Ahead

Monday, November 6 at Toronto Maple Leafs

Tuesday, November 7 at Montreal Canadiens

Thursday, November 9 vs. Chicago Blackhawks

**#AskKrenner: Rookies, road trips and more
Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)**

While Merela may have no points, how do you think he has done at the NHL level?

#AskKrenner (From: Finn Taylor @finn_taylor91)

Personally, I think Waltteri Merela has performed well through the first 10 games of his NHL career. After playing hockey in Finland for the first 25 years of his life, Merela is working through the different style of play in North America.

Obviously, the ice surface is smaller in the NHL. With that, there's less time and space. Merela has shared that while playing in Finland, he could collect the puck on the boards, turn around and still have time to think about where he wants to go with the puck before making that decision.

In the NHL, everything is that much faster, especially while playing on a smaller rink. Now, in that same scenario, Merela essentially has to know what he's going to do with the puck before he even gets to it along the boards. That's a major adjustment at any professional level. Playing against the best players in the world makes it even harder.

With all that being said, he hasn't looked out of place. He has the strength to win puck battles. He doesn't look overwhelmed when he's on the ice. He's come close to scoring that first goal. He's shown a willingness to play the body.

I've really liked his game thus far. We saw Conor Sheary get his first goal against Columbus Thursday night. Hopefully Merela can get that first one out of the way soon. I think that will help his confidence and take some weight off his shoulders.

For a player that is just starting his NHL career, I think he's shown a pretty strong understanding of what he needs to do in all three zones. He understands the importance of being a 200-foot player, which is huge.

As of Friday, he's played 13:28 on the penalty kill this season. That's the fourth-most among all Lightning forwards, trailing only Anthony Cirelli, Brandon Hagel and Luke Glendening. Having the ability to play special teams is a huge asset for any player in the NHL and Merela has been strong on the Bolts PK. I think he's doing all the right things. Hopefully the offense can start clicking for him soon.

**The previous 2 games I felt like they were making progress with the new defensive scheme. However last night the Kraken really showed us that they still have a lot to learn before they can do it well night in night out. When do you think they will be at that point?
#AskKrenner (From: Antonio R Nicolini @ARNicolini)**

The two home games against Carolina and San Jose were probably the Lightning's best two games of the season. And you're right, it really looked like the team was starting to find their groove in the defensive zone.

The first period against the Kraken was a step back. Beyond some of the confusion in their own end, the Bolts were outshot 20-9 in the opening 20 minutes, surrendering two goals against at even strength and giving up just their second power-play goal against of the season.

Going back and watching Seattle's first two goals, there were missed assignments on both plays. The same goes for the first goal given up in Columbus.

There are obviously going to be some growing pains, but the Lightning have shown the ability to play well within the system for most of their last five games or so. To me, that is a good sign.

Now, as you said, it's about doing it consistently. It's tough to say when it's going to happen on a night in, night out basis, because breakdowns are always going to happen. That's just the nature of the game.

But you can see as the group gets more game reps, they're becoming more comfortable. A lot of that appears to be tied to chemistry and each guy on the ice knowing where they need to be while also communicating with their teammates. Hopefully the group will really have everything nailed down once Andrei Vasilevskiy is able to return around Thanksgiving. With all the new faces this year, I think the chemistry is still growing, but it's trending in the right direction overall.

One thing I've said since the start of the season is that even though it has looked rough at times, the D-zone system would not have been changed if Jon Cooper and his staff didn't think it would make the team better. How often do we see NHL coaches get stuck in their ways and lose the locker room before eventually losing their job?

As the game evolves, your style of play has to evolve with it. I comment Cooper and his coaching staff for making the changes and firmly believe that, in the long run, that decision will pay dividends.

Will ABB stick to the lineup when Motte is back? What about when Vasi returns? Who is the best looking new player this season (including Jeannot)? Is it me or does Stammer feel like he is off to a slow start? #AskKrenner (From: Yanni Forever @YanniForev36040)

It's tough to say who will be the odd man out once Tyler Motte returns to the lineup, but we'll know sooner rather than later. His speed and experience will be welcomed additions to the team. He's shed his red, no-contact jersey, so he'll be back at some point on the current road trip.

The Lightning have a few options in terms of the roster spot. Waltteri Merela is the only player on the roster that wouldn't have to go through waivers, but I really think Tampa Bay likes what he brings to the team. Alex Barre-Boulet has been playing the best hockey of his NHL career on the top line alongside Brayden Point and Nikita Kucherov. It wouldn't surprise me if the Bolts went with a bit of a rotation in terms of which forwards are scratched once Motte returns. We'll just have to wait and see what they decide to do to open up that roster spot.

As for the return of Andrei Vasilevskiy, the Bolts will have to get cap compliant, but it's just too early to predict what will happen at that time. There's the potential for injuries and other things, so we'll have to revisit this once we get a little closer to Vasilevskiy being activated.

The best looking new player, for me, has to be Jonas Johansson. He has been everything you could have hoped for and more between the pipes for the Lightning. I've really liked how calm he is in his crease. You rarely see him swimming around or out of position. He's structured and has made big saves when Tampa Bay has needed them.

I also like the mention of Tanner Jeannot. I think coming in from the start of the season, having a full training camp, and really knowing his role with the team have all been major factors in his success. He's playing to his strengths. He's physical. He's really tough to move in front of the net. I think he's looked much better with the puck and cycling down low in the offensive zone. I've really liked what he's brought.

The last guy I'll mention that's similar to Jeannot is Mikey Eyssimont. He worked his tail off all summer and I think it's shown. He looks confident with the puck. He's always flying around and giving maximum effort. He wants to be a difference maker and I've liked what I've seen from him. The Bolts probably needed to get a little faster and he brings that.

Finally, as for Stamkos, I think he looks just fine. Despite missing two games, he's still tied with Brandon Hagel for the second-most points on the team with 10. As the captain, I thought he led his team back into the fight in the second period in Columbus. Right now, he has the highest point-per-game average on the team at 1.25. Hopefully we start to see Tampa Bay really nail down some line combinations as players continue to build chemistry. But I think Stamkos is pretty low on the list of things to worry about.

**What does a typical day look like for the guys when on a road trip? #AskKrenner
(From: Karen Clemente @Karen_Clem07)**

Great question!

I'll use the start of a road trip as an example. The team will typically have a practice and proceed to fly out to their first road city the day before the game.

The following day, the players will have breakfast in the morning at the team hotel before bussing over to the arena for morning skate.

Following morning skate, the team will head back to the hotel for lunch around noon, followed by a couple hours of free time (pregame nap) before some lighter snack options are made available for those who want it.

From that point, it's back to the arena with the first bus typically arriving at the rink roughly 2.5-3 hours before puck drop.

Then, the game is played. After that, the team will typically head straight to the airport and fly directly to their next stop on the road trip that night.

The Backcheck: Costly third period leads to loss in Columbus **Chris Krenn (TampaBayLightning.com)**

Going into the third period with a one-goal lead, the Tampa Bay Lightning surrendered three consecutive goals in a disappointing 4-2 loss to the Columbus Blue Jackets Thursday night at Nationwide Arena.

The Bolts fell behind early in the contest when Kirill Marchenko opened the scoring at the 6:29 mark of the first period with his first goal of the season. But after a slow start, the Lightning began to push back and ended the opening frame in a 1-0 hole, but with the shot totals even at 11 apiece.

In the middle frame, Tampa Bay played their best period of the night, outshooting Columbus 12-5 and scoring two goals to take a 2-1 lead to the locker room for the second intermission.

Steven Stamkos got the Bolts on the board and tied the game 1-1 with his fourth goal of the season at the 2:53 mark of the second period. Collecting the puck in his own zone, Stamkos darted down the ice through all three zones, outskating Emil Bemstrom before sending a pass across the crease intended for Nick Paul that deflected off the skate of Jake Bean and past Elvis Merzlikins to even the score.

Just 1:49 later, Stamkos was right in the middle of the play again when the Lightning took a 2-1 lead off the stick of Conor Sheary. Looking confident with the puck, Stamkos sent a pass from the left circle that deflected off the skate of a Columbus defender and went right to Sheary, who had slid out to the back door to redirect the puck pass Merzlikins for his first goal in a Tampa Bay sweater. Erik Cernak picked up the secondary helper for his first point of the season.

Going into the third period with a one-goal lead, the Lightning have typically had a lot of success over the years. But on Thursday night, Tampa Bay got outshot 12-6 in the final frame, surrendering goals to Boone Jenner at the 6:41 mark and Erik Gudbranson just 2:43 later.

Back in a one-goal hole with 10 minutes left in regulation, the Lightning were whistled for two penalties in the second half of the final period and were unable to find a game-tying goal before Johnny Gaudreau ended the game when he scored an empty-net goal with 2:11 left in regulation.

With the loss, Tampa Bay remains winless on the road, carrying a record of 0-3-1 in road games this season. The Lightning have three games remaining on the current road trip, all against opponents within the Atlantic Division.

Bolts Quotes

Jon Cooper: "You play 55 minutes of hockey and you play five minutes of not so good and it's burning us. I said it earlier. You've got to play a complete game and we are not doing that. If you're not going to do that on the road, you're going to have no chance of winning."

Steven Stamkos: "Sometimes I feel like we lose the identity of our team. We've got to figure that out. We've been put in those positions a lot over the years of having the lead in the third & knowing what to do...Ultimately, we didn't play the game that we needed to to close that out."

Jon Cooper: "I know we gave up the first goal, but we pushed pretty well there in the second period and there's no reason we couldn't push like that again. One team came out and wanted to win the

game and one team came out in the third and found a way to lose it. That's why there's three periods. You've got to play them all and we clearly didn't play the third one tonight.”

Bolts by the Numbers

- Steven Stamkos scored the 519th goal of his career and passed Dale Hawerchuk (518) for sole possession of 39th place on the NHL's all-time list.
- Steven Stamkos is now up to 289 career multi-point games, the 60th-most in NHL history. He'll tie Daniel Alfredsson and Darryl Sittler with his next multi-point effort.
- Conor Sheary scored his first goal as a member of the Lightning. He's recorded three points this season with a goal and two helpers.
- Erik Cernak picked up his first point of the season with an assist on the Sheary goal.
- Matt Tomkins made 24 saves on 27 shots against in his second career NHL game.

Krenner's Three Stars

1. Erik Gudbranson
2. Steven Stamkos
3. Elvis Merzlikins

Lightning Look Ahead

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

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

Tuesday, November 7 at Montreal Canadiens, 7 p.m. ET, Bell Centre

Tampa Bay Lightning road woes becoming an alarming trend **Erik Erlendsson (Lightning Insider)**

TAMPA – Winning consistently in the NHL is hard.

Winning on the road is even harder.

For the past decade, the Tampa Bay Lightning have spoiled their fans as a consistent winner in every aspect.

But a chink in Tampa Bay's armor has started to show recently on the road. Picking up points on the road has been a struggle. So far this season, the struggle is real.

While the season is only 10 games deep – just 12-percent of the season – and the sample size is still small. But the fact that the Lightning are 0-3-1 in the first four road games of the season does have some red flags being raised. The only point came courtesy of a Brandon Hagel goal in the dying seconds to force overtime in Buffalo.

“Winning on the road is tough,” Lightning head coach Jon Cooper said. “You have to simplify your game and you have to play it for the full 60. If you do that, you can take your chances on winning the game.”

The Lightning have yet to do that in any of the four road games played to date. The closest was Thursday in Columbus where Tampa Bay controlled most of the first two periods. The third, did not go well and the Lightning lost the lead and the game in regulation to keep them winless away from Amalie Arena on the season.

“One team came out to win the game, one game one team came out in the third and found a way to lose it,” Cooper said. “That's why there's three periods. You have to play them all and we clearly didn't play the third one (Thursday) night.”

If this was any other year, perhaps there would not be quite a high level of concern through four road games. But after the Lightning went 18-22-1 on the road last season, it's become too much of a trend to feel comfortable about.

Last season marked the first full year under Cooper that the Lightning finished under .500 on the road. The .451 points percentage was by far the worst, as the previous low points percentage came in 2014-15 when Tampa Bay finished at .524 with a 18-16-7 record.

FINDING A REASON

One theory for the recent lack of success is the team has less depth than in previous years. And on the road, the home team controls most of the matchups, which means whatever holes the Lightning may have in their lineup have more of a chance of being exposed.

The days of being able to have one of Victor Hedman, Ryan McDonagh or Mikhail Sergachev on the ice for every minute of the game on the left side are gone. The days of having Yanni Gourde centering Barclay Goodrow and Blake Coleman as a hybrid line that could matchup against anybody feels like a distant memory.

While the defensive depth this season feels like a work in progress, the forward lines have the makeup of getting some of that lost depth back when it comes to dealing with matchups. With

Brayden Point, Anthony Cirelli, Nick Paul and Luke Glendening down the middle, that's good center depth that should translate.

"We have guys that can play against anybody, which is a luxury to have," Point said. "I think that's definitely gonna help us. But on the road there is so much less you control. It's just about going out there and competing and playing. And I think if our compete is up then we'll have better success."

WORKING HARDER, AND SMARTER

Against Columbus, that was the issue in the third period. The compete level which was so high in the second period dropped off the cliff in the third. And even when Columbus tied the game, it didn't raise back up to the required level.

"We've got guys that have been positioned like this before, the fact we just didn't push back was really disappointing," Cooper said. "I know we gave up the first goal, but we push pretty well there in the second period, and there's no reason we couldn't push again."

That just might be the root of the problem. You can discuss matchups and depth all you want, but if the compete level isn't going to be consistent, the wins are going to be inconsistent. Because what many might have considered to be an issue heading into the season – goaltending – has been solid.

Both Jonas Johansson and Matt Tomkins have done their job to put the team in position to pick up points. The team has not done their part.

"For us to go on a road trip early in the year, still trying to find ourselves," Cooper said. "I can pick from every game when 10% of the game, we didn't play the way we should have and it cost us. There are times you can get away with that. But usually when you're on the road, you can't and so we just got to make sure we play a complete game and we'll be okay."

That will now be put to the test for the final three games of this trip, all against divisional opponents – Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal. Come home empty handed on that segment and the Lightning could very well return home in the basement of the Atlantic Division.

Tampa Bay Lightning spoil away a great goaltending story Erik Erlendsson (Lightning Insider)

COLUMBUS – Two stories sat front and center for the Tampa Bay Lightning on Thursday.

Both endings were spoiled in the final chapter.

What should have been a key two points to start a four-game road trip, wasn't

What should have been a feel-good goaltending story, didn't get the finish it deserved.

All of that, because of what the Tampa Bay Lightning ultimately earned at the end.

Lightning head coach Jon Cooper set it all up before the game when he tabbed Matt Tomkins to make the start in net for Tampa Bay. Tomkins, the 29-year old from Western Canada, made his NHL debut on October 15 in Ottawa 11 years after he was drafted by Chicago in the seventh round. After toiling in the minors for three years, Tomkins spent the past two seasons playing in Sweden.

Before that, the 6-foot-4, 190-pound goaltender played a four-year career at Ohio State University, going 12-5-3 his senior season to lead the Buckeyes to the NCAA tournament.

On Thursday, Tomkins made his second career NHL start at Nationwide Arena, five miles from Schottenstein Center where Tomkins played his college hockey.

"The games are a little condensed right now and Tommer is going to play, this one just kind of fit on the calendar for him," Cooper said. "Out of the corner of our eye we did notice this, and he's had some success here."

In writing circles, that's supposed to be an opening chapter offering up foreboding.

That's precisely how Thursday's game was setting up.

Just 80 seconds into the game, Tomkins started down sniper Johnny Gaudreau on a breakaway. But Tomkins stayed with Gaudreau, didn't flinch and tracked the play as Gaudreau tried to sneak a backhand shot through the five-hole before Tomkins slammed it shut.

With that sort of a start, the Lightning needed – needed – to reward their goaltender for erasing that early mistake. Through two periods, that's precisely how it was all playing out.

THE FIRST 40

Tampa Bay did look a little sluggish to start the game, as the breakaway from Gaudreau showed. And Columbus did grab the early lead when Victor Hedman had his outlet play stopped at the blue line by Erik Gudbranson that had the Lightning scrambling defensively to regain their structure. Three quick passes later, from Gudbranson down to Cole Sillinger over to Dmitri Voronkov for a backhand touch pass to Kirill Marchenko for a quick snapshot.

But the Lightning started to push, and push and build up their game into the game. They were spending extended times in the Columbus zone as the first period went on, including shifts where they were able to make a line change in the zone while not losing puck possession.

There wasn't an immediate pay off, but the momentum was there.

It carried over into the second period and Tampa Bay took the game over. They were rewarded with two fortunate bounces.

The first came when Steven Stamkos in a deep defensive position picked up a puck in his own zone to lead an odd-man rush up ice. Stamkos looked to make the pass across to Nick Paul, who would have had a tap-in, but the puck hit the skate of Jake Bean and deflected into the net to tie the game at 2:53. The goal was the fourth of the season for Stamkos and the 519th of his career to pass Dale Hawerchuk for 39th on the all-time list.

Less than two minutes later, Stamkos again was rewarded as his pass attempt hit the skate of Emil Bremstrom and caromed over to Connor Sheary coming around the side of the net for the quick redirect at 4:42 for his first goal of the season and first with the Lightning.

Tampa Bay was in good defensive position, they would push up the ice and forecheck to create zone time. The Lightning were on their game after cleaning up the mistakes from first 6-plus minutes of the game.

Tampa Bay held the Blue Jackets to six shot attempts at even strength play in the second period, two shots on goal and an expected goals rate of 0.06. The only thing Tampa Bay didn't have going for it was the two power play opportunities that didn't convert despite the five scoring chances created that could have tilted the outcome in their favor.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO HOME, BUT YOU CAN'T STAY HERE

The script was playing out as forebode because the Lightning they built their game up, grabbed the lead and Tomkins was playing well in goal. And given the Lightning's ability to close out games in recent seasons, this one had all the feel of just needing the concluding pages to be written. That's because Tampa Bay's combined record the past four seasons when leading after two periods is 118-3-10, that's 94-percent of the possible points Tampa Bay secured in the regular season between 2019-20 and 2022-23 when leading after 40 minutes.

But perhaps that's why you need to read until the final chapter, even if you think you already know the ending. Sometimes it doesn't finish the way you thought it would, or should.

"Sometimes I feel like we lose the identity of our team, we have to figure that out," Stamkos said. "We've been put in those positions a lot over the years of having the lead in the third and knowing what to do. We gave up too many looks, took some penalties and they get some power plays, they get some momentum, some shots and ultimately, we just didn't play the game that we need to do to close that out."

For the second time in less than two weeks, Tampa Bay failed to hold on to a third period lead. Two weeks again, it was a [multi-goal lead in the third period against Toronto](#) that ended in an overtime defeat. On Thursday, Tampa Bay again gave up a pair of goals that not only cost them the lead, but ultimately the game.

Columbus scored two goals in the span of 2 minutes, 43 seconds.

DETAILS MATTER

The tying goal came off a lost faceoff in the defensive zone, which again emphasizes the small details in the game as Cooper sent Brayden Point out for the draw against Boone Jenner. Point was 4-for-4 against Jenner in neutral zone faceoffs, but was 0-for-2 in the Tampa Bay defensive zone.

But Point lost the draw, the puck was pulled back sent over to Zach Werenski at the center point. Jenner made his way to the net and Point was unable to tie up the stick that allowed Jenner to get perfect deflection down to tie the game.

The winning goal came on a broken play as the puck came around the boards to Gudbranson who fired a slap shot low to the blocker side as Tomkins tried to clear space above his crease with a quick push on Bemstrom.

“We’re just finding ways to lose games, that’s it,” Cooper said. “That was a nothing game. That should have been easy and over. You lose face off and don’t tie the guy up in front of the net. Then it’s anybody’s game. But the fact that we’re just giving those chances was not what we’d done for the first two periods. We just didn’t have any push. And we really haven’t taken penalties all year and we found a way to take three in the third. So you want to give yourself a chance to lose, those are some of the things that we’re doing and that’s why we’re losing games.”

“Been saying it all year, it happens when you play 55 minutes of hockey and then play five minutes of not so good, and it’s burning us. We have to play a complete game and we’re not doing that and if you’re not going to do that on the road, then you’re going to have no chance of winning.”

And it all spoiled what could have been – should have been – a feel good story of a long-traveled player coming back to his college roots to get his first NHL victory. Instead, it was just another spoiler.

“I feel terrible for Matty,” Stamkos said. “He’s played two awesome games and he doesn’t have anything to show for it. That’s on us as a team to reward him for the effort that he’s given and the performances that he’s had. So hopefully he gets another crack.”

But that would have to be a new script yet to be written, because Thursday, the ending didn’t go as planned.

NOTES

Tampa Bay assigned D Haydn Fleury to Syracuse for a conditioning stint on Thursday that can last up to two weeks. Fleury will still count against the Lightning roster and the salary cap while on the assignment. ... The Lightning scratched D Zach Bogosian, RW Austin Watson and Fleury. ... LW Alex Barre-Boulet had his four-game point streak snapped. ... Stamkos has 16 goals and 35 points in 31 career games against Columbus. ... Tampa Bay missed 18 shots and had another 25 blocked.

MY THREE STARS

1. Blue Jackets C Boone Jenner – Goal, Assist, plus-2, won 13 faceoffs
2. Blue Jackets RW Kirill Marchenko – Goal, plus-1, six shots on goal
3. Lightning G Matt Tomkins – Stopped 25 shots in his second career start