



AMALIE Arena Media Clips
Friday, January 12, 2024

1. Tampa Bay Lightning find a way in a game they needed to find a way – Erik Erlendsson (Lightning Insider)
2. With 'zero wiggle room,' Lightning pull out overtime win vs. Devils – Kristie Ackert (Tampa Bay Times)
3. Lightning prospect Gage Goncalves to make NHL debut tonight vs. Devils – Eduardo A. Encina (Tampa Bay Times)

Tampa Bay Lightning find a way in a game they needed to find a way **Erik Erlendsson (Lightning Insider)**

TAMPA – Two valuable points were up for grabs for the Tampa Bay Lightning on Thursday.

For the Tampa Bay Lightning, they were two crucial points Tampa Bay absolutely had to put in the bank because deposits were light in the first half of their schedule.

In facing the New Jersey Devils, the Tampa Bay Lightning were up against a team one point behind them in the standings, but with four fewer games played. In order to stay above the playoff line, the Lightning not only need to start stringing wins and points together on a more consistent basis, they need to pick up wins against the teams stuck in the middle of the playoff pack.

On Thursday, the Lightning fell behind, built a multi-goal lead, lost that lead, needed a review to keep the game tied then had to gut out a third period before another new hero emerged.

Here's what we're talking about after another overtime victory.

ANOTHER ROOKIE RATES IN THEIR DEBUT

Over the past month the Tampa Bay Lightning have brought up players from the minor leagues to make their NHL debuts. At the start of the season it was Waltteri Merela. In Vancouver last month, it was forward Mitchell Chaffee. Last week in Minnesota, defenseman Declan Carlile made his debut against the Wild. On Saturday in Boston, defensemen Jack Thompson and Emil Martinsen-Lilleberg. Of those five, only Merela and Lilleberg stuck around for more than one game.

On Thursday, former second-round pick Gage Goncalves became the sixth player to make their NHL debut with Tampa Bay this season.

Goncalves, the 62nd overall pick in 2020, is in his third pro seasons after finishing his junior career with Everett. In his first two seasons with Syracuse, Goncalves improved from 32 to 54 points. This year, he was named to the AHL All Star game for the first time, which he learned on Tuesday, with seven goals and 30 points through 33 games.

On Wednesday Goncalves was told by Syracuse head coach Joel Bouchard he was being called up to the NHL. By Thursday, he was on the ice for the morning skate at Amalie Arena, took his customary rookie lap before making his NHL debut.

It's been quite a ride this week for the 22-year-old from Mission, British Columbia.

"It's been a whirlwind 48 hours," Goncalves said. "My parents are saying congrats on the AHL (All Star Game) and then a day later they congratulate me on the NHL. So yeah, I've been pretty lucky these past couple days."

Goncalves logged nine minutes of ice time with a missed shot, one hit and takeaway. With Goncalves playing 5:08 of his ice time with Tyler Motte and Conor Sheary, the trio did not allow a shot attempt against.

But it was his play late in the first period that caught everyone's attention.

When Erik Cernak was hit by Nathain Bastian into the boards, Goncalves didn't hesitate to step in on his new teammate's behalf.

“Gage won a lot of points in the locker room when (Cernak) got hit there and he jumped in to defend a teammate,” head coach Jon Cooper said. “That’s always going to get you point.”

It was noticed on the bench as soon as it happened.

“He stuck up for a teammate there right away. That’s huge,” center Luke Glendening said. “It means a ton to the room. I don’t know if you saw our bench after that, but we were pretty fired up. I thought that really said a lot about him as a player and as a teammate.”

Defenseman Darren Raddysh played with Goncalves for a good portion of the past two seasons and he was happy to see how the rookie forward performed in his NHL debut.

“I think it was great,” Raddysh said of Goncalves debut. “He stepped up for (Cernak) there, and that’s not really his game, but it just shows he’ll do anything to try and stick in the NHL. So I’m happy for him and happy for all the guys that have come up in the last couple weeks.”

THAT PLAY LED TO A FIRST

The play by Goncalves resulted in a double minor for roughing that put New Jersey on the power play late in the first. With the score tied 1-1, it could have turned out to be a detriment to the team, even while scoring points with the rest of the team.

New Jersey opened the scoring on a goal from Dawson Mercer 7:42 into the game. Glendening tied things up five minutes later with a tremendous redirect as he twisted his body to get his stick around and with the heel of his blade redirected the Nick Perbix shot.

Then, on the penalty kill, Tampa Bay secured its first lead. After the Lightning cleared the puck down the ice, Devils’ goaltender Vitek Vanecek stopped the puck behind the net and left it for Luke Hughes. As Hughes emerged from behind the net looking to go up ice, he lost control of the puck and stumbled forward as he tried to recover. But the puck went right to Glendening, who wired a shot past Vanecek with 1:38 left in the period.

The goal marked the first shorthanded goal of the season for Tampa Bay, leaving Columbus as the only team this season not to score shorthanded. The two goals marked his first multi-goal game since April 19, 2021. The goal was the seventh career shorthanded goal for Glendening and his seventh overall goal on the season. Glendening finished last season in Dallas with three goals and six points.

“It was a long time coming especially when we had like two or three in the preseason,” Cooper said of the first shorthanded goal of the season. “So it’s tough that we haven’t had one, and it’s not because we haven’t had looks, they just haven’t gotten in for us. And good for Glenny. Great face off win and tips one home and then gets a shorty for us, which obviously is a big difference for us.”

REVIEW, FOR THE WIN

After Brayden Point gave the Lightning a two-goal lead at 10:34 with his 20th of the season, the Devils kept pushing. New Jersey cut the lead to 3-2 late in the second while tying the game when Nathan Bastian picked off an errant pass by Perbix and broke in alone to beat Andrei Vasilevskiy through the 5-hole to tie the game.

The Devils appeared to take the lead after Sheary lost the puck at the Tampa Bay blue line. Moments later during a goal-mouth scramble, Mike McLeod poked a loose puck past Vasilevskiy.

But the Lightning challenged the play for a missed offside call as Tyler Toffoli was still in the zone when Sheary was stripped of the puck. The play was reviewed at it was determined that it was not

Sheary who brought the puck in the zone, therefore the play was offside and the goal was taken off the board.

Video coaches Nigel Kirwan and Brian Garlock called to the bench to call for the challenge.

“It takes everybody and they’re a big part of what goes on,” Cooper said. “We saw it live, we weren’t sure. But those guys, they’re on it and it was great that they caught that one.”

SURVIVING THE THIRD

The goal that was wiped off the board was sort of a precursor for the remainder of the period. New Jersey was all over the Lightning. Even with injuries to Jack Hughes, Timo Meier, Ondrej Palat and Dougie Hamilton, the Devils showed they still have overall team speed.

New Jersey outshot the Lightning 8-4 in the third and held Tampa Bay without a shot on goal until there was 5:08 left in the third. Two of the Lightning’s shots in the third came on a power play in the final four minutes.

“It wasn’t pretty at times, but we stuck with it and Vasy kept us in there,” Glendening said.

One of those saves from Vasilevskiy was a breakaway chance by Bratt at the 9:14 mark. That was one of three breakaways the Devils had on the night.

“They stretch the ice really well,” Glendening said. “They’re a fast, young team. We just have to do a better job with that, but I’m sure we’ll figure that out tomorrow.”

ANOTHER DEFENSIVE HERO

Tampa Bay managed to hold off the Devils through the rest of the third period to secure a point getting to overtime.

It wasn’t ideal that the Lightning failed to secure a regulation win after building a two-goal lead in the second period. But that was not longer relevant, all that mattered was securing the second point.

And for the second consecutive game, the Lightning took care of that second point. And it was an important second point for Tampa Bay to pick up.

The win came courtesy of Darren Raddysh, who was in the right position as Nikita Kucherov danced with the puck in the offensive zone. As Kucherov moved back up ice, Raddysh slid over to some open ice, opened himself up to receive the pass and slinged the puck past Vanecek for his first career overtime goal.

“Just get open,” Raddysh said of watching Kucherov with the puck. “He’s going to find you eventually and just be ready to shoot the puck.”

Raddysh did, and he was.

It’s the second consecutive overtime winner from a Lightning defenseman. And the second consecutive game a Tampa Bay forward protected the puck and made a play .

The goal was the third for Raddysh in the past four games after starting without a goal for the opening 38 games of the season.

“I knew I was getting some chances, they just weren’t going in,” Raddysh said. “It was just bound to go in at some point. So you just have to stick to what you’ve been doing and hope they start to go in.”

After dropping five of the first six games that went to overtime, the Lightning have won the past four games past regulation.

“A big part of overtime is having the puck and we’ve had it for a lot of the last two overtimes,” Cooper said. “It’s gone our way.”

NOTES

Tampa Bay scratched LW Alex Barre-Boulet, D Phil Myers and RW Tanner Jeannot. ... Nikita Kucherov collected his 40th assist of the season and tied Victor Hedman (7) for the second most 40-assist seasons in Lightning history. Marty St. Louis tops the list with eight. ... Brayden Point recorded his seventh consecutive 20-goal season, passing Nikita Kucherov for fourth most in franchise history, behind only Vinny Lecavalier (12), Marty St. Louis (9) and Steven Stamkos (8). ... Cernak did not return to the game after the first period, and Cooper did not have an update on his status after the game.

MY THREE STARS

1. Lightning D Darren Raddysh – Overtime winning goal, six shot attempts, three hits
2. Lightning C Luke Glendening – Two goals, plus-2, 4-for-4 on faceoffs
3. Devils RW Jesper Bratt – Goal, seven shots on goal, 10 shot attempts

With 'zero wiggle room,' Lightning pull out overtime win vs. Devils **Kristie Ackert (Tampa Bay Times)**

TAMPA — For the second straight game, the Lightning needed more time to pull out a win. After blowing a two-goal lead, Darren Raddysh scored at 1:52 in overtime as Tampa Bay beat the Devils 4-3 Thursday night at Amalie Arena.

The Lightning (21-17-5) picked up the desperately needed two points (47 for the season) against a New Jersey team (21-15-3, 45 points) that is struggling with injuries. Tampa Bay, which has played more games than every team in the NHL to this point, needs to squeeze out as many points as possible from here on out to withstand the late push of others.

"We don't have a ton of wiggle room when we have a chance to get points like we did tonight," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said. "This is probably a game maybe earlier in the year we don't win or something doesn't go our way or we lose the game in overtime.

"Now we're finding ways (to win). ... Down a couple to (Los Angeles on Tuesday) and we come back and find a way to win that one. Up a couple today, we lose it but find a way to win it anyway. And so that's big for our group. We have a couple more home games to go and we just kind of have to keep just building on this."

Luke Glendening had two first-period goals and Brayden Point one in the second before Raddysh scored his third of the season to give the Lightning their two points. Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 27 of 30 shots he faced.

Here's what stood out from Thursday's victory:

Over the overtime struggles

After losing their first four games that went into overtime, the Lightning improved to 5-5 when going into the extra period this season. While different guys have stepped up to score the game-winner, there has been a commonality to the wins.

"Winning faceoffs," Cooper said. "The last two nights, (Steven Stamkos) has won them both and we've had the puck for most of (the overtime) and so you take a little bit of momentum away, make some other good players have to play defense."

Glendening comes up big with a shortie

Coincidentally, the Lightning brought in Glendening in the offseason to improve their faceoff game. He got the Tampa Bay offense going Thursday night at 12:35 in the first period to tie the score at 1, then he had an unassisted goal on a breakaway that was notable because it was the first short-handed goal the Lightning have netted this season.

"So that was a long time coming, especially when we had like two or three in the preseason. So it's tough that we haven't had one," Cooper said. "It's not because we haven't had looks. They just haven't gotten in for us. But every goal was big tonight. We needed them all and we'll take them anyway we can get them. Good for Glenny ... great faceoff win and then he scored."

Gage Goncalves was the fourth Lightning rookie to make his NHL debut this season and while he didn't score points on the ice, he did in the dressing room. The 21-year-old saw Lightning defenseman Erik Cernak get knocked into the boards by Nathan Bastian in the first period and jumped right in.

He took a double-minor penalty, but scored huge brownie points with his coaches and teammates.

"I think it was great. He stepped up for (Cernak) there and that's not really his game, but it just shows he'll do anything to try and stick in the NHL," Raddysh said. "So I'm happy for him and happy for all the guys that have come up in the last couple weeks."

Cernak played a shift after that, but did not return for the second period. The Lightning announced in the third he was out with an upper-body injury.

Cooper said he did not have an update on Cernak after the game.

Lightning prospect Gage Goncalves to make NHL debut tonight vs. Devils **Eduardo A. Encina (Tampa Bay Times)**

TAMPA — It's been quite a week for Gage Goncalves.

The Lightning prospect, midway through his third full season with AHL Syracuse, learned Tuesday that he had been selected for his first AHL All-Star Game.

Then on Wednesday, he was called into Crunch coach Joel Bouchard's office after practice and given a sheet with a plane ticket to Tampa. Bouchard told him he was receiving his first NHL callup.

And tonight, Goncalves is expected to make his NHL debut for the Lightning against the New Jersey Devils at Amalie Arena.

"It's been a whirlwind 48 hours," Goncalves said after Thursday's morning skate. "My parents are saying congrats on the AHL and then a day later, congrats on the NHL. So I've been pretty lucky these past couple days."

Goncalves, a second-round pick of the Lightning in 2020, is off to his best pro season. He leads the Crunch in assists (23), power-play assists (10) and points (30) through 33 games.

"My consistency has been huge, and my skating," Goncalves said when asked about his success in Syracuse. "I think (Lightning skating coaches) Barb (Underhill) and Tracy (Tutton), I've worked with them for the past couple of years and they have been huge in my development. You just see how fast these guys are in this league, and if you can't skate you're not really going to keep up."

His opportunity comes as forward Tanner Jeannot is week-to-week with an injury. In Thursday's morning skate, Goncalves skated on the third line with veterans Tyler Motte and Conor Sheary. Forward Alex Barre-Boulet is expected to be scratched in favor of Goncalves.

"I've watched him play for three years," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said of Goncalves. "And he's got really good hockey sense. He sees the game. I think he's had, at times, a bit of risk in his game, but I know he's done a ton to curtail that. But he can drive lines and he knows the game and he's got super stick skills. So we'll see."

Goncalves is the fourth Lightning prospect to make his NHL debut in the past two weeks, following defenseman Declan Carlile, Emil Lilleberg and Jack Thompson.