



Columbus Blue Jackets Media Clips November 21st, 2025

Columbus Blue Jackets News

- PAGE 2 Cleveland.com / Bill Simmons got plenty wrong about the Blue Jackets, but he made a good point
- PAGE 5 The Athletic / Back home in Toronto, Adam Fantilli has another banner night in Blue Jackets' win
- PAGE 7 The Athletic / Blue Jackets report card: Marchenko and Werenski get As, but others are struggling
- PAGE 11 The Columbus Dispatch / Columbus Blue Jackets down Toronto Maple Leafs in OT on Fantilli goal
- PAGE 12 The Hockey Writers / Blue Jackets' Fantilli & Greaves Return Home to Help Defeat Maple Leafs in Overtime

Cleveland Monsters / Prospects News

- PAGE 14 FOX43 / Hershey visits Cleveland riding AHL's hottest road run

NHL News

Multimedia

Cleveland.com / Bill Simmons got plenty wrong about the Blue Jackets, but he made a good point

By Tim Bielik - November 21, 2025

COLUMBUS, Ohio — During his latest podcast on Tuesday, Bill Simmons was asked by a listener named Patrick B. who the most irrelevant franchise in professional sports is.

Patrick suggested that it was his Columbus Blue Jackets, and Simmons laid out his case for why they could fit that bill.

Simmons' explanation drew the attention of the franchise's account on X, who took a shot at Simmons and his former site, Grantland.

And in fairness to the Blue Jackets, Simmons got plenty wrong.

"They haven't made Round 2 of the playoffs ever."

Correction: They did in 2019. Ironically enough, they played in the second round in the 2019 Stanley Cup Playoffs against the Boston Bruins, a team that Simmons, a Massachusetts native, is probably very familiar with.

"They've missed the playoffs 20 of 25 times."

That's close, but not quite accurate. They've missed 19 of 25 times.

"Their greatest accomplishment? They swept the 2019 Panthers in Round 1."

That's the right state, but the wrong team. It was the Tampa Bay Lightning they swept in those playoffs, which is still one of the biggest upsets in playoff history because the Lightning had overwhelmingly won the President's Trophy.

It's also worth mentioning that this third point directly contradicts his first point.

Despite the inaccuracies of some of Simmons' comments, there was one general point that stands out.

The Blue Jackets don't have a lot of history to fall back on.

This is a franchise that has yet to get past the second round of the playoffs, and they've only even gone there once.

Columbus has yet to host a Game 1 of a playoff series.

The franchise hasn't even played in a Game 7 in its history.

Meanwhile, the Vegas Golden Knights, who joined the NHL in 2017, 17 years after the Blue Jackets did, reached the Stanley Cup Final in their inaugural season and won the Cup five years later.

The Seattle Kraken, who debuted in 2021-22, went to Game 7 in the second round of the playoffs in only their second season, which is one game deeper than the Blue Jackets have been.

So when you look purely at results, the Blue Jackets are the least accomplished NHL franchise of the 21st century.

Winning breeds relevance. Just ask the Florida Panthers. They had not been very relevant or successful for most of the late 2000s. But now, they are back-to-back Stanley Cup champions and a franchise that has quickly become as popular as any.

The Blue Jackets and their fans have craved a run like that. They haven't had that extended run that goes into late May and not only captivates the home fans, but those around the hockey world.

But throughout sports, there have been plenty of other franchises who have experienced next to no team success since 2000.

In the NFL, the Miami Dolphins haven't won a playoff game since December 30, 2000.

When it comes to MLB, five teams have won fewer than 10 playoff games since 2000. The Cincinnati Reds have won only two playoff games this century, both of which came in 2012 against the Giants. The Pittsburgh Pirates have won just three playoff games since 1992, which was also the last year that they won a playoff series.

The resurrected Charlotte Hornets may be the only franchise that has had less overall success in its history than the Blue Jackets. From the time the Hornets returned to the NBA as the Bobcats in 2004, they have made the playoffs just three times and never reached the second round.

The Sacramento Kings have not won a playoff series since 2004, and the New Orleans Pelicans have won two playoff games since 2018.

In other words, while the Blue Jackets are the least successful NHL franchise since their inception, they are not the least successful in pro sports in that time.

That's obviously not a high bar to clear, however, and they are long past due to have a modicum of success that the rest of the NHL has.

The good news for the Blue Jackets is that the core they have built, led by Kirill Marchenko, Zach Werenski and Adam Fantilli, could help them reach new heights.

It might not be this year because of their youth and relative lack of playoff experience. But for maybe the first time in team history, the team has the ingredients to make a run down the road.

Simmons didn't get much right about the team. But the general point he was trying to make is the Blue Jackets as a brand just don't resonate much outside Central Ohio and their lack of history is a big reason why.

There is a way for the Blue Jackets to fix that: win and win big.

The Athletic / Back home in Toronto, Adam Fantilli has another banner night in Blue Jackets' win

By Aaron Portzline – November 21, 2025

TORONTO — Adam Fantilli and Jet Greaves — two proud sons of Ontario, Canada — chatted Thursday before the morning skate.

They looked forward to Thursday night's game against the Toronto Maple Leafs but also remembered a game last season in Scotiabank Arena. On Jan. 25, 2025, Fantilli had his first career hat trick, and his mom, Julia, was the first fan to get a hat over the glass and onto the ice.

"He said he didn't think he could top the game here last year," Greaves said, laughing. "I think he did a good job of that."

He sure came close.

Fantilli had two goals and an assist, including the overtime game winner, sending the Blue Jackets to a 3-2 win over the Leafs before 18,438, a significant number of whom were there to support their relatives playing for Columbus.

For Fantilli, a native of Nobleton, Ont., it was his fifth career three-point game, his fifth career game-winning goal, and his first overtime game winner.

The game winner was scored on a terrific play by Blue Jackets defenseman Zach Werenski, who hesitated briefly before feeding Fantilli with speed at the top of the zone.

That allowed Fantilli to skate around Leafs forward Max Domi before beating goaltender Joseph Woll over his right pad with only 39 seconds left before a shootout.

"Yeah, that was a blast," Fantilli said. "I seem to have a lot of good luck in this building, so maybe it's just all the friends and family wishing me well here."

"It was a great play by Z. He just kind of let me get my speed going there, make that D man hesitate for a half second, and I was able to get a step on him. It's a perfect play by him. It was great."

When did Blue Jackets coach Dean Evason know that Fantilli was hyped to play this game?

"As soon as we landed in Toronto (on Tuesday)," he said. "If we could play all of our games here, he'd probably have 50."

Werenski finished with three assists, giving him 403 career points, moving him ahead of Cam Atkinson (402) for second on the franchise's all-time points list. Only Rick Nash (547) has more.

Dmitri Voronkov had one goal and one assist, while Greaves finished with 27 saves, 12 coming in the first period.

"We're not in the same spot tonight if (Jet) doesn't play the way he did," Fantilli said. "He's a special player, a special human."

After the game, Blue Jackets family and friends filled almost an entire section in the lower bowl of Scotiabank. Fantilli said he had over 150 friends and family. Center Luca Del Bel Belluz had over 100, too. Greaves and center Sean Monahan had large crews as well.

They were treated to a back-and-forth game.

The Blue Jackets weren't very sharp in the first period, but Greaves got them to intermission with no score. But they played much better in the second.

At 3:17 of the second, Fantilli fired a puck through a screen from the left circle, and he appeared to beat Woll on his own. But replays showed that the puck brushed off a leg of Voronkov, who set a towering screen in front.

Fantilli even thought it was his goal, he said, until they returned to the bench.

"Ronnie showed me the puck mark on his pants," he said.

The lead grew to 2-0 when Fantilli scored at 12:01 of the second, a laser-beam wrister from just inside the left circle.

The Leafs scored later in the second period and early in the third to tie it, but the Blue Jackets didn't panic down the stretch as they have in recent games. They played composed, mostly, and Evason noted that they only iced the puck once in the third period.

It set the stage for overtime, the fifth time in seven games that the Blue Jackets have played beyond regulation.

Fantilli's goal gives him eight this season, but he has six in eight games since he was elevated by Evason to play on the top line between Voronkov and Kirill Marchenko. He also has a plus-4 rating in that span.

"We have a lot of chemistry," Fantilli said of his work with the two Russian wingers. "I like communicating with them. It's kind of fun, just listening to them banter, and then them filling me in afterward (on what was said).

"It's a good time. They're great people. They're fun to be around. We built a lot of chemistry last year, and we're building off of it now."

The Athletic / Blue Jackets report card: Marchenko and Werenski get As, but others are struggling

By Aaron Portzline – November 20, 2025

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The blistering finish to last season gave the Columbus Blue Jackets hope that 2025-26 might start in the same fashion: a relentless forecheck, a surprisingly lethal offensive attack and a jet-setting goaltender.

Yet, every year we're reminded that each season is its own beast.

As the Blue Jackets cross the 20-game mark — No. 21 is Thursday in Toronto — we felt the need to issue first-quarter grades. Though we should make it clear that the club is being held to a new standard this season.

Kirill Marchenko and Zach Werenski have picked up where they left off. That jet-setting goaltender, Jet Greaves, may have grabbed the Blue Jackets' No. 1 job with his early play. And the two main newcomers — Charlie Coyle and Miles Wood — have made an impact.

However, other players have dipped. Sean Monahan, Kent Johnson and whoever else fills out that No. 2 line have been a struggle, which is surprising, because Monahan and Johnson were among the Blue Jackets' offensive impact players one season ago.

The good news: The Blue Jackets (10-8-2) are slightly ahead of last year's pace (9-9-2), and they enter Thursday in a virtual tie with Tampa Bay for the final wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference. Their goal of returning to the playoffs is well within reach.

The bad news: Every other team in the East is right there, too. There are eight teams — eight! — with 20, 21 or 22 points.

You may notice that the grading is a little more difficult this year. That's by design. The Blue Jackets, a season after being everybody's favorite NHL story, are being held to a higher standard. Only players with 10 or more games played were graded.

We gave 4 As, 9 Bs, 6 Cs and 2 Ds. That's a 2.7 grade-point average, or a solid B. That sounds about right.

-A-

A

Kirill Marchenko, RW: 20 games, 8-14-22, plus-8

Not only has Marchenko elevated his game in all facets this season — he's even harder on pucks, and more dangerous than ever offensively — but he's been remarkably consistent. After breaking out with 31 goals and 74 points last season, both career highs, he's playing at a point-a-game pace and has become the Blue Jackets' offensive driver at forward.

Zach Werenski, D: 20 games, 6-10-16, plus-7

It would have been difficult for Werenski to match his start to last season, but, after a bumpy start, he's come pretty close. He's second in the NHL in playing 26:40 per game, and it's worth noting that his performance hasn't waned even as the player beside him keeps changing. Dante Fabbro, Damon

Severson, Denton Mateychuk and now Ivan Provorov have shared the top pair, but Werenski keeps humming along.

A-minus

Dmitri Voronkov, LW: 20 games, 8-8-16, plus-8

The Blue Jackets have recognized that Voronkov — much like Sean Monahan and Marchenko — elevates any line he plays on. He continues to impress with his deft hands and sharp hand-eye coordination, which, along with his massive size, makes him a dominating force at the net-front. The only ding on his grade? We'd like to see him use that size more menacingly.

Jet Greaves, G: 6-4-2, .904 save percentage, 2.79 goals-against

In recent weeks, it appears Greaves has emerged as the Blue Jackets' ... how should we say this? ... leading goaltender? Not sure he could be crowned a true No. 1 just yet, because it's hard to predict Dean Evason's usage going forward. Greaves hasn't had a stinker yet, and he's proven to be very good in shootouts, too. He might play 50 games, eh?

B-plus

Charlie Coyle, C: 20 games, 3-11-14, plus-1

The Blue Jackets can finally point to center ice as one of their strengths, and Coyle's arrival is a big reason. He's a third-line center, yes, but he's so much more than that. He's drawing as much ice time as second-line pivot Adam Fantilli, but also playing on the power play and penalty kill. His faceoff skills have been a boon, too, and he's on pace to challenge his career-high of 60 points.

Ivan Provorov, D: 20 games, 3-3-6, plus-4

There was much consternation about Provorov's contract extension this summer, and we get it. That's a big bill. But imagine this Blue Jackets team without him. Provorov anchored the second pair for the first 15 games, and is now playing on the top pair with Werenski, albeit on his off side. Never misses a game. Never makes a peep. You know what you're getting. There is value in consistency.

B

Adam Fantilli, C: 20 games, 6-7-13, minus-4

Well, he didn't pick up where he left off last season — he was on a serious goal-scoring burner, and finished with 31 goals — but Fantilli has been on a scoring streak lately. He's just turned 21 years old, so there's massive room for growth. But the Blue Jackets need him to be their driving force at forward, the sun around which all other planets orbit. It's coming, but it's not there yet.

Denton Mateychuk, D: 19 games, 4-3-7, plus-3

For half of the schedule so far, Mateychuk played on the right side (his offside) on the top pair with Werenski. That's quite a role for a 21-year-old defenseman with less than one NHL season on his resume. Mateychuk's skill set — never panics, more agile as a skater than speedy, smart and quick with his passes — reminds one of former Blue Jackets defenseman Ryan Murray. That's a compliment.

Mathieu Olivier, RW: 20 games, 3-6-9, plus-2

It's going to be hard to match last season's 18 goals, and that's not the measure here. Olivier has carved out a large role with the Blue Jackets. Evason loves him, even using him — say what? — during 3-on-3 overtime. Olivier and the third line have had two big nights offensively this season, but he's also picked up two major (non-fighting) penalties and two game misconducts, one of which was rescinded by the NHL.

Miles Wood, LW: 14 games, 5-0-5, minus-3

If you've watched Wood play in the first six weeks of the season, you understand why he's endured more than his share of injuries. He knows one speed, and it's above the limit. Even though he's missed six games, his five goals are fifth-most on the club and more than he scored last season in Colorado. They've been big goals, too.

B-minus

Elvis Merzlikins, G: 4-4-0, .900 save percentage, 3.37 goals-against

It sure seems as if Merzlikins has benefited from the arrival of Greaves. Not only does Greaves challenge him for ice time, but he also gives Merzlikins a much lighter workload. In theory, that should allow Merzlikins to avoid the sickness and injury that have saddled him in recent years, but he's already missed time with a sickness this season.

Damon Severson, D: 20 games, 1-5-6, plus-5

Whatever was said in the Evason-Severson heart-to-heart this past summer must have worked. Severson looks as if he's rediscovered his decision-making with and without the puck, and he's carrying it with more confidence. We're not even considering Severson's meager offensive output in this grade. That'll pick up over the course of the season if he keeps playing like this.

Cole Sillinger, LW: 19 games, 2-6-8, plus-4

The acquisition of Coyle this summer forced Sillinger to left wing, and he moved without complaint. Sillinger and Coyle, along with Olivier, have formed an impressive checking line. It might be a modest offensive role, but Sillinger has embraced it, and his efforts and energy pursuing pucks and defending have not gone unnoticed.

C

Yegor Chinakhov, LW/RW: 14 games, 2-2-4, minus-2

This was a tough grade because Chinakhov has been in an awkward spot all season. He wants more playing time; the coaches want him to do more with the playing time he's given. You'd think that Jenner's injury would create a spot in the top six. Chinakhov had a one-game trial on the second line before he was a healthy scratch again. Where/how does this end?

Boone Jenner, C: 16 games, 3-7-10, minus-7

It hasn't been an easy start for Jenner. A high-paced game is always a challenge, but he seemed to have more trouble than usual keeping up at the beginning of the season. It's not entirely his fault, obviously, but that second line with Monahan in the middle hasn't really gotten going this season. Now Jenner is out "week to week" with an upper-body injury. Tough sleddin.'

Sean Monahan, C: 20 games, 2-7-9, plus-1

This is one of the early-season surprises for Columbus. Monahan has not been the player he was last season, so much so that he lost his spot on the No. 1 line between Voronkov and Marchenko. There's still so much to like here, and Monahan can impact a game in a lot of ways, but he has not been the offensive igniter he was only a season ago. He's on pace for eight goals.

Isac Lundeström, C: 19 games, 0-2-2, even

The best you can say for Lundeström is that he doesn't make defensive mistakes, and he's been strong on draws (53.5 percent), especially in the defensive zone (54.6 percent). The Blue Jackets didn't sign him in the hopes that he'd boost them offensively, which is a good thing.

C-minus

Dante Fabbro, D: 20 games, 1-3-4, minus-5

Fabbro was a revelation last season after he was claimed off waivers from Nashville, but Evason didn't take long to pull him off the No. 1 pair next to Werenski, where he had so much success a year ago. Fabbro has mostly played on the third pair, and he's barely made an impact offensively. There's a lot of season left, but this isn't what the Jackets had in mind when they signed Fabbro to a long-term deal last summer.

Zach Aston-Reese, LW/RW: 13 games, 0-3-3, even

It's pretty impressive that Aston-Reese — despite being a healthy scratch seven times in 20 games — is still third on the club (behind only Olivier and Voronkov) with 34 hits. That's his primary role on that fourth line: be hard to play against and forecheck like the puck is yours. However, the fact that coaches have made him the odd man out so many times ...

D

Kent Johnson, LW/RW: 19 games, 2-3-5, minus-11

Johnson played at a point-a-game pace well into last season, enjoying a breakout year with 24-33-57 in only 68 games. He lost his way early this season, which led to a healthy scratch by Evason on the Blue Jackets' recent road trip. Johnson, who just turned 23, is the Blue Jackets' most talented playmaker, but coaches always want to make him a north-south driver of play. He's the best they've got at establishing the zone on the power play. Being honest, his shootout skills almost moved him higher.

Jake Christiansen, D: 16 games, 0-0-0, minus-7

Life isn't easy on the third pair, especially on the road, when opponents can target certain lines and pairs. Christiansen has played with Erik Gudbranson and Fabbro back there, requiring him to play on his offside. You wonder what his playing time might look like when Gudbranson returns later this month from an injury.

The Columbus Dispatch / Columbus Blue Jackets down Toronto Maple Leafs in OT on Fantilli goal

By Brian Hedger – November 21, 2025

Adam Fantilli did it again for the Blue Jackets in Toronto.

Paced by his three points on two goals and one assist, the Blue Jackets downed the Toronto Maple Leafs 3-2 in overtime on Nov. 20 at Scotiabank Arena on Fantilli's jaw-dropping winner that ended it 4:21 into OT.

Fantilli, who's from the Toronto suburb of Nobleton, Ontario, scored a hat trick of goals in that building last season and nearly did it again. His assist was a shot in the second period that deflected off Dmitri Voronkov into the Maple Leafs' net for a 1-0 lead. He also made it 2-0 in the second with a goal that beat Toronto goalie Joseph Woll (27 saves).

Jet Greaves, who's from Cambridge, Ontario, made 28 saves for the Blue Jackets (11-8-2) while somehow not being named as one of the game's three stars on a fantastic night in net. Dakota Mermis and John Tavares scored goals for the Maple Leafs (9-9-3).

After being outplayed and outshot 12-4 in the first period, the Blue Jackets took a 2-0 lead in the second on goals by Voronkov and Fantilli, who assisted on Voronkov's goal by shooting it off the towering Russian power forward into the net.

Zach Werenski assisted on all three goals to reach 403 career points to pass Cam Atkinson for second-all time in scoring for the Blue Jackets. Rick Nash is first with 547 points.

Mermis cut it to 2-1 late in the second with a shot from the blue line that Greaves didn't see after it found its way through heavy traffic. Tavares tied it 2-2 for the Maple Leafs at 3:33 of the third off a pass from Easton Cowan off a rush to set up an exciting finish.

The Hockey Writers / Blue Jackets' Fantilli & Greaves Return Home to Help Defeat Maple Leafs in Overtime

By Mark Scheig - November 20, 2025

The Columbus Blue Jackets got some much-needed rest on Wednesday after their game in Winnipeg. They were looking for a better performance Thursday night against the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Thanks to a couple of local players, the Blue Jackets found an important two points.

Maple Leafs Have Missed Chris Tanev on the Blue Line

Adam Fantilli scored twice including the game-winning goal in overtime. The Blue Jackets defeated the Maple Leafs 3-2.

The story of this game was the Blue Jackets' local connection playing big in front of their friends and family.

Game Recap

Fantilli said there were over 100 friends and family at Scotiabank Arena for the game. Both Jet Greaves and Luca Del Bel Belluz each had a bunch of friends and family at the game also. They wanted to give everyone a night to remember.

It didn't start out that way in the first period. Even despite the Maple Leafs missing seven regulars from their lineup, they came ready to play.

While neither team scored, the Maple Leafs carried the play. They dominated the faceoff circle. They had two power-play chances. Greaves was the reason it was 0-0 after one.

The Blue Jackets picked things up in the second. Dmitri Voronkov opened the scoring just three minutes into the second. Fantilli's shot got a piece of Voronkov's pants and beat Joseph Woll.

The Blue Jackets later doubled their lead thanks to Fantilli. His shot rang off the bar and went in. This time, Voronkov set him up. Along with Zach Werenski, they each contributed to the first two goals of the game.

Adam Fantilli returned home to Toronto and put on a show in front of 150 family and friends Thursday night. (Jess Starr/The Hockey Writers)

The Maple Leafs quickly answered the Fantilli goal. Dakota Mermis scored his first goal as a member of the Maple Leafs from distance. Greaves was completely screened and had no chance. It was a 2-1 game after two periods.

It seemed like the Blue Jackets had things under control. But then John Tavares continued his great start to the 2025-26 season. He scored his 12th goal of the season off a great give and go from Easton Cowan.

Both teams had chances late but overtime was needed to settle this one. This time, the Blue Jackets didn't need a shootout to get the second point.

Fantilli scored his second of the night. He outlasted Woll and put one upstairs to seal the win.

Woll finished the night with 27 saves in just his third start of the season since returning to the roster. Tavares finished with 1-1-2 on the night.

But the trio of Fantilli, Werenski and Greaves couldn't be contained. Fantilli finished with 2-1-3. Werenski assisted on all three goals. Greaves stopped 27 of 29 to earn the win.

The Blue Jackets will now head to Detroit. They practice on Friday there in advance of their game Saturday afternoon against the Red Wings. The Maple Leafs will head to Montreal for a Hockey Night in Canada showdown with the Canadiens on Saturday night.

FOX43 / Hershey visits Cleveland riding AHL's hottest road run

By Ed Albert – November 20, 2025

Hershey looks to extend its road dominance behind stellar goaltending and a possible lineup boost as the Bears visit a Cleveland team still searching for a home win.

CLEVELAND — The Hershey Bears will put their impressive five-game road winning streak on the line tonight when they visit the Cleveland Monsters at Rocket Arena for the first of two meetings this week. Puck drops at 7 p.m. (FOX43.2 Antenna TV) as the Bears (9-4-1-0) look to continue their dominance over Cleveland, carrying an eight-game winning streak into the matchup against the struggling Monsters (4-3-3-1).

Hershey enters the contest riding high after completing a perfect three-in-three weekend sweep with a dramatic 2-1 overtime victory over the Lehigh Valley Phantoms last Sunday. The win featured a historic moment for the franchise, as call-up D.J. King—son of Bears head coach Derek King—assisted on a goal in his debut, marking the first father-son/head coach-player duo in Bears history and the first such pairing in the American Hockey League since 2016-17.

"The guys that came up, they played well for us. They filled in when we needed it," Derek King said following Sunday's win. "I think the biggest thing going with seven 'D' was just because our 'D' took a pounding the last couple of games. So, we tried to rest them as much as we could and keep them fresh."

The Bears' road success has been nothing short of spectacular, with their five-game winning streak tied for the longest active road streak in the AHL alongside the Providence Bruins. During this impressive run, Hershey has surrendered just seven goals while goaltenders Garin Bjorklund and Clay Stevenson have combined for a sparkling .950 save percentage. The power play has also been clicking, converting in four of the five victories at a 25% clip.

Stevenson has been particularly hot, winning his last four starts and recording his 50th career victory as a Bear in Sunday's win, moving him past Don Edwards and Darren Jensen for sole possession of 19th place in franchise history. The netminder stopped 36 shots in the overtime thriller.

"It wasn't always pretty, but they just stayed with it," King said of his team's weekend sweep. "The talking on the bench, the guys backing each other up and pushing each other, to get to that next level. It was really fun to watch, and I'm probably more tired than those guys."

The Bears will receive a significant boost tonight with the expected return of forward Ivan Miroshnichenko, pending full clearance. The winger has missed the previous 12 games with an upper-body injury suffered during a pre-game skate on Oct. 18. Miroshnichenko led Hershey in scoring against Cleveland last season with six points in four games and was the team's leading goal scorer in the 2024-25 campaign with 23 tallies.

Cleveland presents an inviting target for Hershey's road warriors, as the Monsters have been winless on home ice this season, posting an 0-2-2-1 record through five games at Rocket Arena. The Bears haven't lost a regular-season game in Cleveland since March 24, 2019, and went 3-1-0-0 against the Monsters in last season's head-to-head series.

Both rosters have experienced significant turnover since their memorable seven-game Eastern Conference Finals matchup in 2024. Only six Bears players from that series remain on the current roster, while the Monsters have eight holdovers. Both teams' top netminders from that series have moved on, with Cleveland's Jet Greaves earning an NHL promotion and Hershey's Hunter Shepard signing with Ottawa as a free agent.

As part of the AHL's 90th anniversary season, the Monsters will wear Cleveland Barons throwback jerseys tonight, a nod to Hershey's first meeting with the Barons, which took place more than 87 years ago.

Special Teams

HER PP: 16.3% (22nd in AHL) | **HER PK:** 82.4% (13th in AHL)

CLE PP: 9.3% (31st in AHL) | **CLE PK:** 82.6% (12th in AHL)