



TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING

Atlantic Division

Preseason Power Ranking **15**

x3

x4
EASTERN CONF

x1
PRESIDENTS'

1127
FRANCHISE WINS

45-29-8
98 Points
2023-24 SEASON

4th
DIVISION

Tampa, FL - Amalie Arena (19,092)
Head Coach: Jon Cooper (525-279-75, 13th Season)

2023-24: Lost in First Round

Can Tampa Bay Extend Their Dynasty?

The Tampa Bay Lightning have arguably been the most successful franchise in the NHL for the last decade with the most wins in hockey during that timeframe, back-to-back Stanley Cups in 2020 and 2021, and two other appearances in the Final. The last two years have seen them take a bit of a step back though, as the core which led them to so much success has gotten older and some have moved on. The most notable departure came this past offseason, as captain Steven Stamkos left for Nashville after 16 years that saw him set franchise records for goals, points, and games played. There is still plenty of talent in Tampa and the franchise will seek their 10th playoff appearance in the last 11 years.

Forwards

With the loss of Stamkos, the Lightning not only lost their captain but also a perennial 30-40 goal scorer. In light of that, Tampa went out and signed perhaps the best free agent scorer available, **Jake Guentzel**, who scored 30 goals in 67 games for Pittsburgh and Carolina last year. **Nikita Kucherov** is coming off an incredible season, where he led the entire NHL with 144 points and became the fourth player in history with 100 assists in a season. **Brayden Point** has become a lethal scorer in the last two seasons and his 46 goals led the team last year. **Brandon Hagel** and **Anthony Cirelli** are Tampa's top two penalty killing forwards and both had career best seasons last year. Hagel had 75 points and Cirelli hit the 20 goal mark for the first time. More growth is possible from Hagel, in particular, as he enters his age 26 season. Veteran **Cam Atkinson** joins the Bolts from Philadelphia. At one time, Atkinson's speed and skill made him an elite scorer, but a major back injury kept him out for the entirety of the '22-23 season and it seemed to continue to affect him last season as his point production was well below normal. Counting on him to be a second line forward might be a stretch.

Nick Paul has been an effective defensive player for a while now, but he has also found a scoring touch with 41 goals over the last two seasons. The rest of Tampa's depth looks pretty shaky on paper. **Michael Eyssimont** led the team in penalty minutes last year and he brings lots of physicality, but he has spent much of his career bouncing around the minor leagues and likely won't help much on offense. **Conor Sheary** played on two Stanley Cup teams with Pittsburgh, but he is coming off the lowest goal total of his career and his best days may be behind him. **Zemgus Girgensons** should help out the 4th line as an effective defensive forward who is strong on the puck.

Defense/Goaltending

Victor Hedman is getting older, but he remains one of the best defensemen in the NHL at creating offense. His 76 points last season was fifth among D-men. **Erik Cernak** is the only other returning defenseman who played in Tampa's final game last year. He won't add much offensively, but he led the team in hits and his excellent defensive play gives the Bolts a big boost. **Ryan McDonagh** played on both of the Lightning's Cup-winning teams, but was traded to Nashville after the 2022 season. He's back this year and while his play has slipped a bit with age, he should remain effective. **Darren Raddysh** proved to be serviceable last year in his first full season. Tampa received 24-year-old **J.J. Moser** in a trade from Utah and he is an intriguing young player who has shown an ability to produce points at the NHL level. Now with the chance to play with one of the best offensive D-men of this generation in Hedman, he could develop into quite a player.

Andrei Vasilevskiy returns for another season as Tampa's starting goaltender. An injury kept him out early last year and he proceeded to have a down year by his standards, setting career lows in GAA and save percentage. Expect him to have a bounce back year and remind the league that he is one of the best netminders out there. With the other roster questions, Tampa may be relying on him more than ever, especially since backup **Jonas Johansson** struggled while filling in for Vasilevskiy last year.

The Bottom Line

The Lightning have been a standard of excellence for years in the NHL. They nearly became the first team since the 80s-era Islanders to win 3 titles in a row, coming up just short in the 2022 Final. But every dynasty has its end and it looks like Tampa's may be getting there. Just nine players remain from the 2022 team and the loss of Stamkos this offseason shows that the team is heading into a new era. Tampa's offensive depth beyond their stars was a big part of their two Cups, but that looks shaky this year. Add in a revamped defense, and the Bolts have a lot more questions about their roster than they have had in a while. Tampa still has the talent to be a playoff team, but their roster has fallen behind the elite teams of the league and there are young and hungry teams in the Atlantic Division like Detroit and Buffalo who are looking to take the next steps in their rebuilds this year. It wouldn't be shocking to see one of those teams jump the Lightning this year and keep them out of the postseason.

2024-25 Projection: 42-31-9 (93 points) - 4th in Atlantic

Andrei Vasilevskiy



Photo via The Hockey News



TAMPA BAY

Nikita Kucherov



Photo via FOX 13

LIGHTNING 5-YEAR POINT TREND

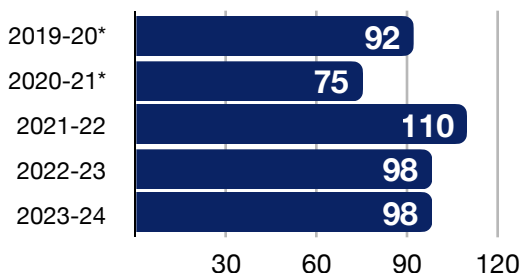


Photo via Patch

2024-25 Schedule

October 2024

				CAR 11 7:00	CAR 12 7:00
		VAN 15 7:00		VGK 17 7:00	OTT 19 1:00
TOR 21 7:30	NJ 22 6:45		MIN 24 7:00		WSH 26 7:00
NSH 28 7:30		COL 30 9:00			

November 2024

				MIN 1 8:00	
WPG 3 3:00	STL 5 8:00		PHI 7 7:30		
			WPG 14 7:00		NJ 16 7:00
	PIT 19 7:00		CBJ 21 7:00		DAL 23 7:00
	COL 25 7:00		WSH 27 7:30	NSH 29 3:00	TOR 30 7:00

December 2024

			SJ 5 7:00		
VAN 8 4:00		EDM 10 9:00	CGY 12 9:00		SEA 14 10:00
		CBJ 17 7:00	STL 19 7:00		FLA 21 5:00
FLA 22 7:00					NYR 28 7:00
MTL 29 5:00					

January 2025

			SJ 2 10:30	LA 4 9:00	
ANA 5 8:00			BOS 9 7:00		NJ 11 7:00
PIT 12 5:00		BOS 14 7:00	ANA 16 7:00		DET 18 7:00
	TOR 20 7:30	MTL 21 7:00		CHI 24 8:00	DET 25 7:00
		CHI 28 8:00	LA 30 7:00		

February 2025

					NYI 1 7:00
		OTT 4 7:00		OTT 6 7:00	DET 8 1:00
MTL 9 1:00			2025 NHL 4 Nations Face-Off		
			2025 NHL 4 Nations Face-Off		
SEA 23 6:00		EDM 25 7:30		CGY 27 7:00	

March 2025

					WSH 1 12:30
	FLA 3 7:00	CBJ 4 7:00		BUF 6 7:00	BOS 8 3:00
		CAR 11 7:00		PHI 13 7:00	BOS 15 7:00
		PHI 17 7:00		DAL 20 8:00	UTA 22 5:00
VGK 23 8:00		PIT 25 7:00		UTA 27 7:00	NYI 29 2:00

April 2025

		NYI 1 7:30		OTT 3 7:00	BUF 5 7:00
	NYR 7 7:00		TOR 9 7:00		DET 11 7:00
BUF 13 6:00		FLA 15 7:00		NYR 17 7:00	

Projected TB Lineup

Forwards

	Left Wing	Center	Right Wing
Line 1	59 Jake Guentzel	21 Brayden Point	86 Nikita Kucherov
Line 2	38 Brandon Hagel	71 Anthony Cirelli	13 Cam Atkinson
Line 3	73 Conor Sheary	20 Nick Paul	23 Michael Eyssimont
Line 4	28 Zemous Girgensons	11 Luke Glendening	41 Mitchell Chaffee

Defense

Line 1	77 Victor Hedman	43 Darren Raddysh
Line 2	27 Ryan McDonagh	81 Erik Cernak
Line 3	90 J.J. Moser	48 Nick Perbix

Goaltenders

Starter	88 Andrei Vasilevskiy
Backup	31 Jonas Johansson

2023-24 NHL Ranks

POINTS - 98 (14th)
 GF - 288 (5th)
 GA - 267 (23rd)
 PP% - 28.63 (1st)
 PK% - 83.33 (5th)
 SV% - .890 (26th)

144 < Number to Know

Nikita Kucherov's '23-24 point total. He became just the 10th player in history to reach a total that high and the 4th to achieve 100 assists in a season.

PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

BRAYDEN POINT - C



2023-24 Statistics

GP	G	A	PTS	+/-
81	46	44	90	-16

Point led the NHL in playoff goals scored in both of the Lightning's Stanley Cup runs, but he has taken his game to another level the past two seasons. He's put up a combined 97 goals and 88 assists while playing on the Bolts' top line. Amazingly, he has made only one All-Star team in his career and he might be one of the most underrated players in the game. He looks poised for another superb season while playing alongside Kucherov and newcomer Guentzel.

HOME

AWAY