



MONTREAL CANADIENS

Atlantic Division

Preseason Power Ranking 27



3556
FRANCHISE WINS

30-36-16
76 Points
2023-24 SEASON

8th
DIVISION

Montreal, Quebec - Bell Centre (21,105)
Head Coach: Martin St. Louis (61-81-22, 3rd Season)

2023-24: Missed Playoffs

Can Once-Proud Franchise Regain Status?

The Montreal Canadiens were the gold standard of the NHL in its early days. Their 24 Stanley Cup wins still stand as a league record by a wide margin. However, Montreal hasn't lifted the cup since 1993 and after a miracle run to the Finals in 2021, the team has fallen on hard times with three straight last place finishes in the Atlantic Division. The rebuilding "Habs" have shown signs of progress each year though, improving their point total in each of the last three seasons. They will look to take another step in '24-25.

Forwards

Montreal has accumulated several superb young players through high draft picks and shrewd trades. **Nick Suzuki** was acquired in a deal from Vegas and he has grown into being Montreal's best player and captain. He set career highs with 33 goals and 44 assists last year. **Cole Caufield** has one of the most lethal shots in the league and he has scored more than 20 goals in each of his three NHL seasons, setting a career high with 28 last year. **Juraj Slafkovsky** was the 1st overall pick in 2022 and took a huge step forward last year with 20 goals and 50 points. The longest tenured Canadian, **Brendan Gallagher**, rebounded from several injury plagued years to put up 16 goals last year. **Kirby Dach** missed nearly the entire season last year with a torn ACL. Dach was the 3rd overall pick in 2019 and has showed promise at times, but he has missed significant time with injury in each of the last four seasons. Montreal is counting on him to be healthy and a key part of their rebuild, but it is uncertain what to expect from him. **Alex Newhook** put up a career high 15 goals last year despite missing 27 games with injury. Montreal acquired the enigmatic **Patrik Laine** in a trade from Columbus. Early in his career, he looked to be on track to be an elite scorer in the NHL, but he's never again come close to the 44 goals he put up in '17-18 and he's missed a lot of time with injuries in the last 4 years. Perhaps a fresh start will help him once again reach his potential.

Josh Anderson is a fast and physical forward, but his 9 goals and 20 points last year were his lowest totals in 4 years. **Joel Armia's** 17 goals last year were a career high, though that may not be a sustainable level of production for him based on the rest of his career. **Christian Dvorak** missed much of last year with injury, but at the time he went down, he was 8th in the league in faceoff win percentage. He is capable of 15-20 goals if healthy. **Michael Pezzetta** is an extremely physical player who finished 10th in the league in hits despite missing 21 games.



Photo via Wikipedia

Defense/Goaltending

Mike Matheson nearly doubled his career high for points last year with 62, in large part due to becoming Montreal's primary defenseman on the power play. With last year being a big outlier compared to the rest of his career, a repeat performance seems a bit unlikely, but he should still bring defensive value regardless of his offensive output (he led Montreal in blocked shots last year). **Kaiden Guhle** blocks a ton of shots as well and the Habs have high hopes for him after he showed a lot of improvement in his defensive game last year. **David Savard** brings veteran leadership to a defense that is relatively young otherwise. **Lane Hutson** will have his first full season in the NHL after two fantastic seasons for Boston University and a 2-game NHL cameo last year. In his freshman year, he became the first D-man in the history of the Hockey East Conference to lead the conference in scoring while leading the Terriers to the national semifinals. **Arber Xhekaj** (nicknamed "Wi-Fi" because of his unique last name) is physical and delivers a lot of hits.

Sam Montebault will start in net for the Habs. Though much of his NHL career has been middling thus far, he has shown brilliance at times, including when he was Canada's starting goaltender for the 2023 World Championships and helped his country to the gold medal with a 1.42 GAA and .939 save percentage. His career NHL statistics aren't close to that level of play, but part of that has to do with Montreal not playing well in front of him. This young team should improve this year and perhaps Montebault's stats will show improvement as a result. **Cayden Primeau** was largely solid as the backup last year and will continue to fill that role this year.

The Bottom Line

Montreal crashed back to Earth hard after their run to the Cup Final in 2021, enduring the storied franchise's lowest point total for an 82-game season in history the following year. The Canadiens cleaned house and brought in former NHL star Martin St. Louis as head coach and Jeff Gorton, who helped to build the current New York Rangers' core, as general manager. It's been slow going since then, but the team has steadily shown improvement as more of their young talent has come to the NHL. It's unlikely that this will be the year for Montreal to return to the postseason, but the team's future looks bright and this should be their best chance to escape the basement of the Atlantic division.

2024-25 Projection: 36-40-6 (78 points) - 8th in Atlantic



Mike Matheson



Photo via Yardbarker

CANADIENS 5-YEAR POINT TREND

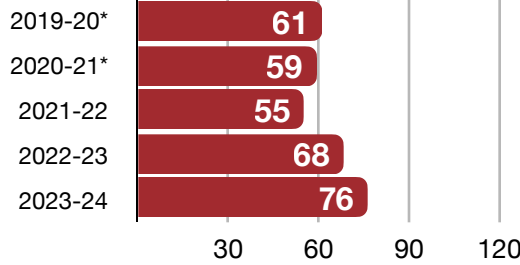


Photo via AV Network

2024-25 Schedule

October 2024

			TOR 9 7:00	BOS 10 7:00		OTT 12 7:00
	PIT 14 7:30			LA 17 7:00		NYI 19 7:00
			NYR 22 7:15			STL 26 7:00
PHI 27 7:00		SEA 29 7:00		WSH 31 7:00		

November 2024

						PIT 2 7:00
		CGY 5 7:00		NJ 7 7:00		TOR 9 7:00
	BUF 11 12:30			MIN 14 8:00		CBJ 16 7:00
	EDM 18 7:30					VGK 23 7:00
		UTA 26 7:00	CBJ 27 7:30			NYR 30 1:00

December 2024

BOS 1 3:00		NYI 3 7:00		NSH 5 7:00		WSH 7 7:00
	ANA 9 7:30			PIT 12 7:00		WPG 14 7:00
		BUF 17 7:00			DET 20 7:00	DET 21 7:00
	CBJ 23 7:00					FLA 28 1:00
TB 29 5:00			VGK 31 3:00			

January 2025

				CHI 3 8:00	COL 4 7:00
	VAN 6 7:30			WSH 10 7:00	DAL 11 7:00
		UTA 14 9:00		DAL 16 8:00	TOR 18 7:00
NYR 19 7:00		TB 21 7:00		DET 23 7:00	NJ 25 7:00
		WPG 28 7:00		MIN 30 7:00	

February 2025

ANA 2 4:00		SJ 4 10:30	LA 5 10:30			NJ 8 1:00
TB 9 1:00				2025 NHL 4 Nations Face-Off		
						OTT 22 7:00
		CAR 25 7:00		SJ 27 7:00		

March 2025

					BUF 1 7:00
	BUF 3 7:00			EDM 6 9:00	CGY 8 7:00
		VAN 11 10:00	SEA 12 10:30		FLA 14 7:00
		OTT 18 7:00		NYI 20 7:30	COL 22 7:00
		STL 25 8:00		PHI 27 7:00	CAR 28 7:00

March/April 2025

FLA 30 1:00		FLA 1 7:00		BOS 3 7:00		PHI 5 7:00
NSH 6 7:00		DET 8 7:00			OTT 11 7:00	TOR 12 7:00
		CHI 14 7:00		CAR 16 7:00		

Projected MTL Lineup

Forwards

	Left Wing	Center	Right Wing
Line 1	20 Juraj Slafkovsky	14 Nick Suzuki	13 Cole Caufield
Line 2	15 Alex Newhook	77 Kirby Dach	92 Patrik Laine
Line 3	89 Joshua Roy	28 Christian Dvorak	17 Josh Anderson
Line 4	11 Brendan Gallagher	71 Jake Evans	40 Joel Armia

Defense

Line 1	8 Mike Matheson	21 Kaiden Guhle
Line 2	48 Lane Hutson	58 David Savard
Line 3	72 Arber Xhekaj	52 Justin Barron

Goaltenders

Starter	35 Sam Montembault
Backup	30 Cayden Primeau

2023-24 NHL Ranks

- POINTS - 76 (28th)
- GF - 232 (26th)
- GA - 281 (26th)
- PP% - 17.46 (27th)
- PK% - 76.53 (25th)
- SV% - .897 (20th)

PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

JURAJ SLAFKOVSKY - LW



2023-24 Statistics

GP	G	A	PTS	+/-
82	20	30	50	-19

Slafkovsky is a hero in his native Slovakia after he helped them to their first Olympic hockey medal ever in 2022. Juraj showed great potential by scoring a goal per game, leading the tournament in scoring, and being named MVP of the Olympic tournament. He did all that as a 17-year-old, a big factor in him being the 1st overall pick in the 2022 draft. After an unimpressive rookie year, he put up 20 goals and 50 points last season and he looks to be a key part of Montreal's team for years to come.

16 < Number to Know

Montreal lost a league high 16 games in overtime last year. If they can turn more of those tight games into wins this year, they could potentially enter the playoff conversation.

HOME

AWAY