

# NHL BETTING GUIDE

PRO EDITION



## INCLUDES

- REGIONAL TEAM COVERAGE
- BEST BETS
- TEAM POWER RATINGS

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# ADAM BURKE'S

## BEST BETS

The start of a new season is always exciting. It gets even more exciting when you start looking at all of the betting options available. The usual staples are all there - Stanley Cup odds, conference and division futures, Over/Under points, Yes/No to Make The Playoffs, and Awards markets. But there are a ton of player season-long props to examine as well.

With so many options, it can be tricky to narrow down your focus and figure out just how much of your bankroll to allocate to these bet types. Remember, the NHL season is a long one. Opening Night is October 4 and the final day of the regular season is April 17. That is a long year and a long time to tie up money, especially if you have Stanley Cup futures that run deep into June.

### **DIVISION WINNERS**

I have a few suggestions spread across the different betting markets that are out there. I already tackled the Stanley Cup futures separately and I don't do conference winners, so let's look at some division winner markets first.

#### **LOS ANGELES KINGS TO WIN THE PACIFIC DIVISION (+600)**

The Oilers are the only odds-on favorite in the NHL division futures market. Connor McDavid, Leon Draisaitl, and Zach Hyman is quite a Big Three, but the Oilers have goaltending issues. Stuart Skinner was a little above average in the regular season, but he did not play well statistically in the postseason. I'm not sure how good he truly is.

Edmonton also had a long year and a short offseason, which tends to affect teams. The Kings, meanwhile, made the playoffs and actually got bounced by the Oilers, but they have a solid goaltender in David Rittich and a potential bounce back candidate in Darcy Kuemper, who was terrible for the Capitals last season, but was a top-25 netminder the previous year.

The Kings have some young, emerging forwards and the same, productive grizzled vets. They also seemed to respond well to new head coach Jim Hiller as the interim last season. Not as well as the Oilers responded to Kris Knoblauch, but hey, I think the Kings are worth a look at +600.

The regular season points market is the NHL's version of a win total market. You can bet on wins as well, but with the points system in the NHL (2 for a win, 1 for an OT/SO loss, 0 for a regulation loss), it needs to be a little bit different.

I like this market because you can isolate some teams in line for positive or negative regression or some teams where the depth is a bit of a question.

### **POINTS OVER/UNDERS**

Here are a couple regular season points Over/Unders that I like.

#### **ANAHEIM DUCKS UNDER 70.5 POINTS**

The Ducks have some exciting young players, a byproduct of picking high in the draft with high frequency. What they still don't really have is a goalie. John Gibson is an old 31 and Lukas Dostal has not been very impressive to begin his NHL career. Gibson was actually one of the three worst goalies in the NHL last season by goals saved above average (GSAA).

I think the Kraken will improve and the Sharks are at least going to be more dangerous offensively. Add in four pretty clear playoff teams that will be very aware of the importance of beating up on the bottom-feeders and I can't see how Anaheim improves by 12 or more points after being -46 in 5-v-5 goal differential last season.



### **PHILADELPHIA FLYERS UNDER 85.5 POINTS**

Carter Hart's legal problems are a problem for the Flyers. Samuel Ersson looks to be in line to start the majority of games and he was a bottom-five netminder by GSAA last season. Philadelphia was -21 in goal differential at 5-v-5 last season and outshot the opposition by over 300 shots on goal and had 100 more high-danger chances in that game state.

So, they don't have enough finishers and they have bad goaltending. Rookie of the Year co-favorite Matvei Michkov could help in that department, but he's a 19-year-old kid playing in the NHL for the first time and GM Daniel Briere already downplayed expecting too much from him.

Head coach John Tortorella is a curmudgeon, to put it nicely, and I'm not sure he loves the roster or the situation that he's in. I would argue that the Flyers had as good of a season as they could at 5-v-5 and still managed just 87 points last year.

Awards markets are a bit of a crapshoot because they are predicated on opportunity and health. Players aren't wholly interchangeable when you compare their stats, but the stars will put up numbers so long as they stay healthy.

### **VEZINA TROPHY**

Here are a couple Vezina Trophy picks I like.

#### **PYOTR KOCHETKOV (CAR) TO WIN THE VEZINA TROPHY (+5000)**

Carolina is a team I'm extremely high on for this season and Kochetkov is a big reason why. He's played well at every stop in his career and I think he's ready to take the next step. He already has eight shutouts in 65 NHL starts with a 2.37 GAA and a .910 SV%. The Hurricanes are a terrific puck possession team, so the concern here is that he won't stand out as much as a Connor Hellebuyck type, who steals games on the regular.

But, this is more of an Andrei Vasilevskiy type situation where he has a really good team, but is also a really good goalie. It does take some really special numbers to win this award, but it can be done, as Kochetkov plays for a good team and is only 25, so he's still learning on the job.

I think the 50/1 price is a little bit extreme. I guess we'll have to see how much he shares the net with Frederik Andersen, because, like I said, awards are about opportunity, but I think Andersen's health limits how much he plays. He only played 16 games last season and 34 the year before.

#### **JOEY DACCORD (SEA) TO WIN THE VEZINA TROPHY (+10000)**

The Kraken would need to exceed expectations for this to have a chance at happening, but I think Seattle upgraded with head coach Dan Bylsma, who led the AHL Coachella Valley Firebirds to back-to-back Calder Cup Finals. Bylsma, of course, won the Stanley Cup with the Penguins in 2009 when he took over on an interim basis and took the Penguins to the playoffs in six straight seasons.

Daccord was masterful last season for the Kraken. He finished fourth in goals saved above average behind Sergei Bobrovsky, Thatcher Demko, and winner Connor Hellebuyck. Daccord was sixth in GAA and tied for fifth in SV%. And he did that with just 15 previous starts under his belt.

You can question the sustainability of that performance from Daccord, but if the Kraken are a playoff contender or even make it, it will likely be because he was able to maintain or even surpass last season's play.

### **SEASON-LONG PLAYER PROPS**

Lastly, let's look at a few season-long player props. These can be found at DraftKings Sportsbook at time of print.

#### **TYLER TOFFOLI (SJ) OVER 30.5 GOALS**

Toffoli is going to get more ice time than ever for a bad Sharks bunch. Obviously he won't be surrounded by as much talent, but he should get some good power play time with guys like William Eklund, Mikael Granlund, and Macklin Celebrini.

Toffoli has three 30-goal seasons to his name, scoring 33 last season across stops with New Jersey and Winnipeg and 34 two years ago with Calgary. He's played at least 74 games the last three seasons, so he should be able to stay healthy and has even played all 82 games four times in his career.

Rookie head coach Ryan Warsofsky should tighten the Sharks up a bit on defense, creating a few more turnovers and a bit of a transition game. That should benefit all of the forwards, including Toffoli.

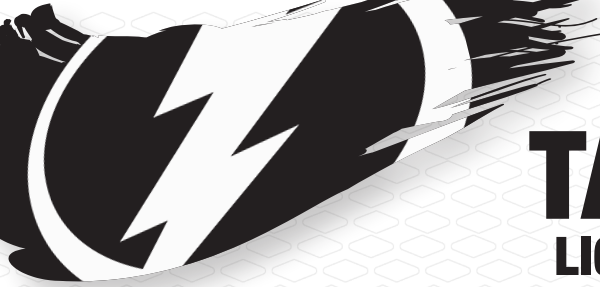
#### **WILLIAM KARLSSON (VGK) OVER 23.5 GOALS**

Again, opportunity is the most important factor in any player prop and Karlsson's opportunities should go up for the Golden Knights this season. Vegas let Jonathan Marchessault walk and also William Carrier. As it is, Karlsson had seven power play goals last season, but I would expect Wild Bill to get more ice time on the man advantage now.

Karlsson also had the second-most shots of his career last season and only played 70 games. His 30 goals were second and he missed 12 games. He's also a really good faceoff guy, so he's able to help his line establish possession while he's on the ice. I think there are a lot of positives for him and a good season is in store.

# STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATINGS

TEAM	POWER RATING
EDMONTON	3.90
DALLAS	3.87
FLORIDA	3.76
NY RANGERS	3.75
COLORADO	3.68
NEW JERSEY	3.64
VANCOUVER	3.63
TORONTO	3.45
BOSTON	3.33
VEGAS	3.18
TAMPA BAY	3.03
CAROLINA	3.02
NASHVILLE	3.01
WINNIPEG	2.92
LOS ANGELES	2.87
DETROIT	2.83
WASHINGTON	2.83
NY ISLANDERS	2.79
OTTAWA	2.78
MINNESOTA	2.75
UTAH	2.68
PITTSBURGH	2.56
BUFFALO	2.51
ST LOUIS	2.42
PHILADELPHIA	2.29
MONTREAL	2.19
SEATTLE	2.18
ANAHEIM	2.01
CALGARY	1.81
CHICAGO	1.77
COLUMBUS	1.70
SAN JOSE	1.63



STEVE MAKINEN'S  
POWER RATING

3.03

# TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING

Since Tampa Bay's Eastern Conference reign of terror ended with a loss to the Avalanche in the 2022 Stanley Cup Finals, they've had two first-round exits. This is one of the best-run organizations in the NHL (and also one of the best at manipulating the salary cap), but the financial constraints of the league make it hard to keep everybody together and some roster turnover has taken a toll on the Lightning over the last two seasons.

Nikita Kucherov had 144 points to lead the league and finished 54 points clear of any of his teammates. He assisted on 100 of Tampa's 291 goals and scored 44 of them. The Bolts had three 40-goal scorers, with Kucherov, Brayden Point, and Steven Stamkos, who is now with Nashville.

Tampa has something of a new look up front with Jake Guentzel as the headliner. But, this team needs more than that to get back to where they were just a few short years ago. The Lightning allowed 190 goals at 5-v-5 and finished -19 in that department. The silver lining is that they had more scoring chances and more high-danger chances than their opponents in that game state.

So what happened? Andrei Vasilevskiy happened. Vasy was bad by league standards and positively awful by his own standards. He finished 69th with a -5.21 GSAA last season in all situations. His 2.90 GAA and .900 SV% were easily career-worst. Here's what bettors need to remember - Vasilevskiy was hurt in the preseason and didn't make his debut until November 24. He wasn't able to prepare for the season as he usually does and maybe rushed a bit to get back.

As bad as Vasy was, Jonas Johansson was decidedly worse, so that didn't help matters. A bounce back season from the 30-year-old and continued contributions from the secondary scorers should help the Bolts make the postseason again. What they do when they get there is up for debate, but three players - Brandon Hagel, Nicholas Paul, and Anthony Cirelli - had 20-goal seasons, so replacing Stamkos's offense won't be an issue.

STANLEY CUP  
25-1

DIVISION  
+550

POINTS  
98.5

PLAYOFFS  
YES -230; NO +185



STEVE MAKINEN'S  
POWER RATING

3.76

# FLORIDA PANTHERS

The Panthers are a 10/1 shot to run it back after the first Stanley Cup championship in franchise history. This was an excellent team in every facet, as they were among the league's best at 5-v-5, were the league's best defensive team at 5-v-5, and have a deep roster with an outstanding head coach with Paul Maurice. Maurice finally got over the hump and his graciousness and impressive comments in postgame interviews and press conferences really endeared him to hockey fans everywhere.

The elephant in the room is the championship hangover, which impacts each team differently. The Panthers played 82 regular season games and 24 more playoff games, including a decisive Game 7 in the Finals after blowing a 3-0 lead. That is a lot of hockey to play and the offseason really only goes from mid-to-late June to September, so there isn't a lot of time to rest ailments and get the body back in shape.

As is often the case after winning a title, players get paid in the free agent markets for what they were able to accomplish. Brandon Montour and Oliver Ekman-Larsson are among the departures on the blue line and Vladimir Tarasenko, Nick Cousins, and Kyle Okposo are among the losses at forward.

But, the core remains intact, with Aleksandr Barkov, Sam Reinhart, and Matthew Tkachuk all still calling Sunrise home. Aaron Ekblad is an impending free agent, so the Panthers' brass will have to make a decision there, but Sergei Bobrovsky was third in GSAA in all situations and he's back for another run at it. Anthony Stolarz is gone, but Chris Driedger and Spencer Knight are capable backups.

Florida's suffocating defensive system that limits high-danger chances and scoring opportunities at 5-v-5 leaves this team a very high floor and an elite core creates a high ceiling. They should be very, very good again this season.

STANLEY CUP  
10-1

DIVISION  
+235

POINTS  
102.5

PLAYOFFS  
YES -500; NO +370

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