

GAME IN FIVE™

MONTREAL
HOCKEY

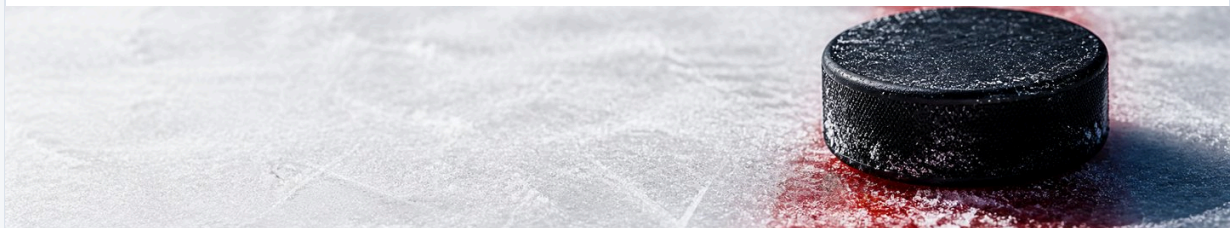
Your team. Five minutes. You're caught up.

FREE EDITION / NO. 001

4 MIN READ

GAME DAY FIVE.

New season. Familiar rival. Let's get you ready.



SEASON OPENER · BELL CENTRE

MTL

Montréal Canadiens

VS

TOR

Toronto Maple Leafs

Wed, October 9, 2024 · 7:00 PM ET

Both teams enter 0–0–0 · Montréal, Québec

THE 30-SECOND VERSION

Montreal opens at home against a Toronto team with a new coach and a new captain. The Canadiens' challenge: create their own chances without giving the Leafs room to attack. Samuel Montembeault and Anthony Stolarz are confirmed in net.

Watch for this: can Montreal make Toronto defend?

[Toronto context](#) · [Goalie confirmations](#)

01 Why tonight matters

Opening night offers a clean slate—and a demanding first opponent. Toronto brings back its star forwards, with Craig Berube now behind the bench and Auston Matthews taking over as captain.

Our read: for Montreal, progress looks like controlled exits, sustained pressure and fewer possessions handed straight back. The result matters; so does how competitive the Canadiens look shift to shift.

Source: CityNews pregame report

02 Three things to know

THE RETURN

Dach is back in the mix.

Kirby Dach returns after a knee injury cost him almost all of 2023–24. [\[1\]](#)

THE FAMILIAR FACE

Pacioretty is on the other side.

Max Pacioretty joins Toronto after earning a contract out of camp. He is projected beside Pontus Holmberg and Nick Robertson. [\[2\]](#)

THE CREASE

Toronto turns to Stolarz.

Joseph Woll is dealing with lower-body tightness. Stolarz gets the start after posting a .925 save percentage with Florida last season. [\[3\]](#)

03

Who's hot / who's out

Opening night: last season's form, today's availability.

ONE TO WATCH

Juraj Slafkovský

20 goals · 30 assists
in 2023–24.

Our watch: his work around the net and
ability to keep possessions alive.

UNAVAILABLE

Patrik Laine

Out for the opener.

Jayden Struble

Out; day-to-day.

Key absences, not a full injury list. [Source: Inside The Rink pregame preview](#)

04

By the numbers

2023–24 regular season · context, not a forecast.

A snapshot of last season's offensive gap

MTL	2023–24	TOR
2.83	Goals per game	3.63
17.5%	Power-play success	24.0%

Why it matters: Montreal's margin gets thinner if this becomes a run-and-gun game. Make Toronto earn its chances, especially with the extra skater.

[Source: prior-season statistics in Inside The Rink](#)

05 Fan Buzz

What fans are talking about.

THE OPTIMISM

“We have to remember to be cautiously optimistic for this season.”

Community member

THE CONCERN

“If special teams are a joke again I think many will lose hope early”

Community member

THE DEMAND

“A net front presence would be nice.”

Community member

KEY TO WINNING · MONTREAL

**Montreal’s best defence tonight might be making
Toronto spend more time in its own end.**

Look for clean passes out of the zone and a second wave joining the attack. Possession buys the defence—and Montembeault—a breather.

OUR WATCH

Slafkovský around the net

UP NEXT

Montreal at Boston

Thursday, October 10, 2024 [4]

YOU’RE CAUGHT UP.

Now enjoy the game. We’ll handle the catch-up.

GAME IN FIVE™

Independent Montreal hockey briefings.

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Archival design sample, created September 2026 using pregame reporting from October 9, 2024. Analysis is original Game In Five commentary. Fan Buzz contains selected archival fan comments, not a ranked or representative survey. No game result is used. Not affiliated with or endorsed by the NHL or its teams.

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