

NHL WEEKEND PREVIEW 2026

17 GAMES TO WATCH

OCTOBER 2-4

2 FRIDAY • 13 SATURDAY • 2 SUNDAY

Match Analysis • Editorial Picks • Projected Scores



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17 selected games • All 13 Saturday matchups included



CAPITALS AT HURRICANES

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2026 • 7:00 PM ET

Lenovo Center • Raleigh, North Carolina

MATCH ANALYSIS

Carolina is the home selection in Washington's season opener. The key is whether the hosts can sustain pressure below the faceoff circles and force hurried exits. Washington can change the outlook by protecting the middle and turning clean breakouts into controlled attacking entries.

EDITORIAL PICK: HURRICANES

PROJECTED SCORE

CAPITALS 2 - HURRICANES 4

Score estimate, not a result.



BLUES AT STARS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2026 • 9:00 PM ET

American Airlines Center • Dallas, Texas

MATCH ANALYSIS

Dallas gets a narrow edge as both clubs begin their regular seasons. This projection favors patient possession and traffic around the crease over a wide-open exchange. St. Louis can reverse the call by clearing rebounds and keeping Dallas away from second-chance opportunities.

EDITORIAL PICK: STARS

PROJECTED SCORE

BLUES 2 - STARS 3

Score estimate, not a result.



BLACKHAWKS AT SABRES

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026 • 7:00 PM ET

KeyBank Center • Buffalo, New York

MATCH ANALYSIS

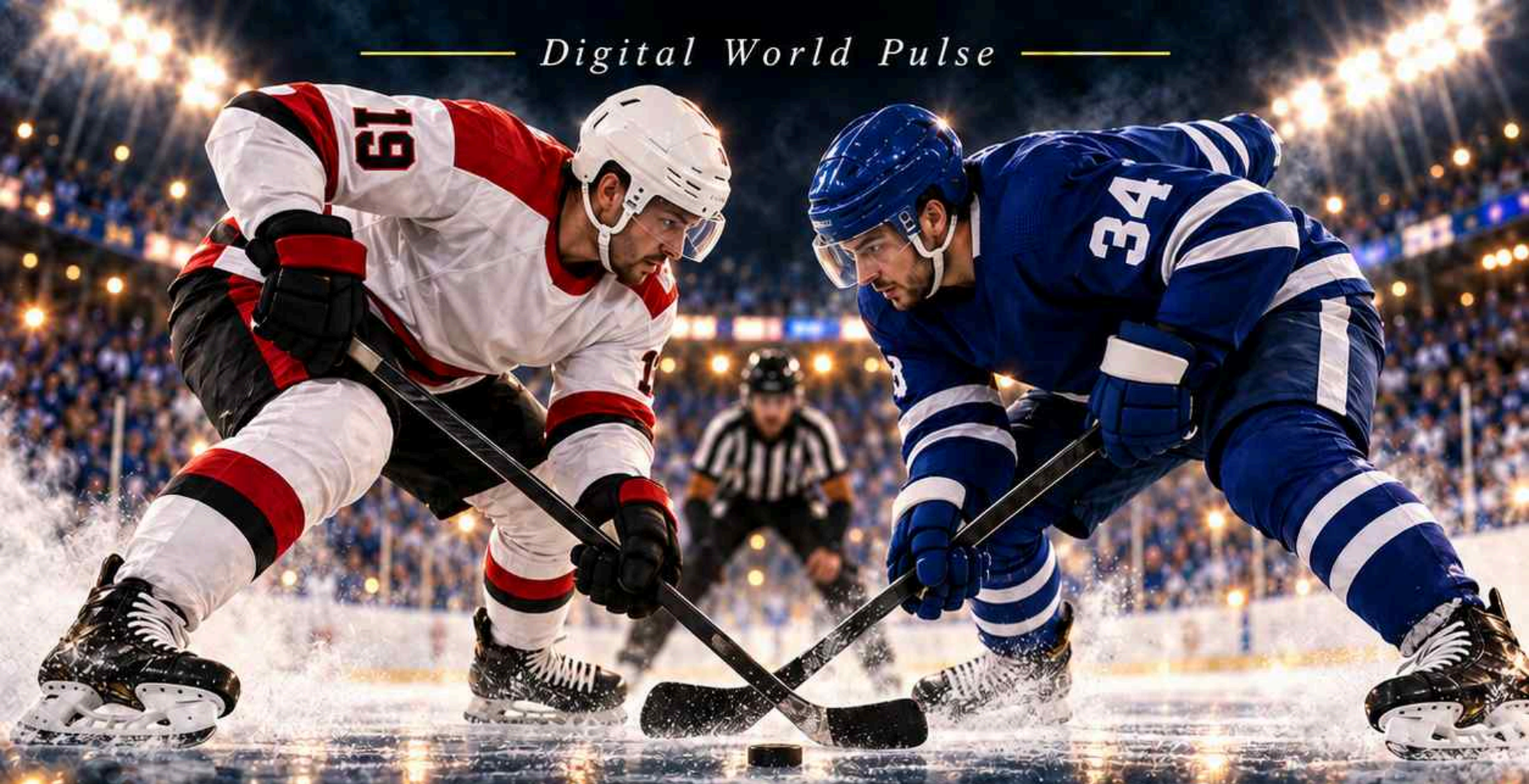
Buffalo is the home choice, with the forecast built around sustained offensive-zone time. Chicago's route to an upset is a cleaner transition game: quick support passes, fewer turnovers at either blue line and enough traffic to make routine shots difficult for the goaltender.

EDITORIAL PICK: SABRES

PROJECTED SCORE

BLACKHAWKS 2 - SABRES 4

Score estimate, not a result.



SENATORS AT MAPLE LEAFS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026 • 7:00 PM ET

Scotiabank Arena • Toronto, Ontario

MATCH ANALYSIS

Toronto receives a small home edge in this rivalry matchup. Ottawa can counter by contesting the slot and drawing penalties through active forechecking. The forecast stays close throughout, with overtime providing a plausible route to the projected one-goal finish.

EDITORIAL PICK: MAPLE LEAFS

PROJECTED SCORE

SENATORS 3 - MAPLE LEAFS 4 (OT)

OT = overtime. Score estimate, not a result.



CAPITALS AT LIGHTNING

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026 • 7:00 PM ET

Benchmark International Arena • Tampa, Florida

MATCH ANALYSIS

Washington travels from Carolina for the second night of a back-to-back. That schedule tilts the editorial choice toward Tampa Bay. The Capitals need short, efficient shifts and disciplined puck management; repeated defensive-zone restarts could give the hosts the extra scoring chances behind this forecast.

EDITORIAL PICK: LIGHTNING

PROJECTED SCORE

CAPITALS 2 - LIGHTNING 4

Score estimate, not a result.



HURRICANES AT FLYERS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026 • 7:00 PM ET

Xfinity Mobile Arena • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

MATCH ANALYSIS

Carolina gets a cautious road selection despite playing the previous night. The forecast depends on maintaining pressure without allowing odd-man rushes. Philadelphia can exploit tired legs by moving the puck quickly through neutral ice and making the visitors defend long shifts away from their bench.

EDITORIAL PICK: HURRICANES

PROJECTED SCORE

HURRICANES 3 - FLYERS 2

Score estimate, not a result.



CANADIENS AT PENGUINS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026 • 7:00 PM ET

PPG Paints Arena • Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

MATCH ANALYSIS

Montreal is the narrow road choice in a matchup worth watching for its changes of pace. Pittsburgh can take control by slowing entries and winning possession along the boards. The projected finish favors Montreal converting one more rush opportunity, while leaving substantial room for a close reversal.

EDITORIAL PICK: CANADIENS

PROJECTED SCORE

CANADIENS 4 - PENGUINS 3

Score estimate, not a result.



MAMMOTH AT BLUE JACKETS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026 • 7:00 PM ET

Nationwide Arena • Columbus, Ohio

MATCH ANALYSIS

Utah receives a slight road edge in a low-margin forecast. Columbus can overturn it by keeping attacking shifts alive and forcing the visitors to defend the crease. The key watchpoint is possession after blocked shots; the projection allows for overtime rather than a clear regulation separation.

EDITORIAL PICK: MAMMOTH

PROJECTED SCORE

MAMMOTH 3 - BLUE JACKETS 2 (OT)

OT = overtime. Score estimate, not a result.



KRAKEN AT OILERS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026 • 7:00 PM ET

Rogers Place • Edmonton, Alberta

MATCH ANALYSIS

Edmonton is the home selection, with the projection favoring more decisive chances through the middle. Seattle needs controlled exits and strong support above the puck to avoid trading rushes. A disciplined penalty count and clean rebound clearances offer the visitors their best route to a tighter result.

EDITORIAL PICK: OILERS

PROJECTED SCORE

KRAKEN 2 - OILERS 4

Score estimate, not a result.



DEVILS AT ISLANDERS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026 • 7:30 PM ET

UBS Arena • Elmont, New York

MATCH ANALYSIS

New Jersey gets a narrow road edge. This forecast hinges on quick puck movement creating space before the Islanders can settle into their defensive shape. The hosts can reverse the call by reducing the pace, protecting the slot and turning board battles into extended attacking shifts.

EDITORIAL PICK: DEVILS

PROJECTED SCORE

DEVILS 3 - ISLANDERS 2

Score estimate, not a result.



STARS AT PREDATORS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026 • 8:00 PM ET

Bridgestone Arena • Nashville, Tennessee

MATCH ANALYSIS

Dallas arrives after hosting St. Louis the previous night. That turnaround gives Nashville a modest situational edge, although the projection remains close. The Predators need to sustain pressure rather than chase risky plays; Dallas can neutralize the schedule disadvantage with clean exits and efficient line changes.

EDITORIAL PICK: PREDATORS

PROJECTED SCORE

STARS 3 - PREDATORS 4 (OT)

OT = overtime. Score estimate, not a result.



BRUINS AT WILD

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026 • 8:00 PM ET

Grand Casino Arena • Saint Paul, Minnesota

MATCH ANALYSIS

Boston travels from Winnipeg on consecutive nights, giving Minnesota a useful scheduling advantage. The home selection depends on attacking with support and forcing the Bruins to defend through multiple puck recoveries. Boston can keep the margin tight by limiting penalties and denying passes across the slot.

EDITORIAL PICK: WILD

PROJECTED SCORE

BRUINS 2 - WILD 3

Score estimate, not a result.



BLUES AT AVALANCHE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026 • 9:00 PM ET

Ball Arena • Denver, Colorado

MATCH ANALYSIS

St. Louis moves from Dallas to Denver for the second night of a back-to-back. Colorado is the selection, with pace and repeated attacking entries central to the forecast. The Blues need smart changes and secure outlet passes to stop the game becoming a sequence of recovery shifts.

EDITORIAL PICK: AVALANCHE

PROJECTED SCORE

BLUES 2 - AVALANCHE 4

Score estimate, not a result.



FLAMES AT CANUCKS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026 • 10:00 PM ET

Rogers Arena • Vancouver, British Columbia

MATCH ANALYSIS

Vancouver gets a small home edge in this divisional contest. The forecast expects a tight game shaped by net-front positioning and rebound control. Calgary can turn it by getting pucks behind the defense and winning the next possession, especially if the hosts struggle to clear their own zone.

EDITORIAL PICK: CANUCKS

PROJECTED SCORE

FLAMES 2 - CANUCKS 3

Score estimate, not a result.



KINGS AT SHARKS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026 • 10:00 PM ET

SAP Center • San Jose, California

MATCH ANALYSIS

San Jose is the narrow home choice in this California matchup. The projection favors an open game in which quick support and second efforts matter more than raw shot totals. Los Angeles can change the script by controlling the neutral zone and keeping attacking possessions away from the boards.

EDITORIAL PICK: SHARKS

PROJECTED SCORE

KINGS 3 - SHARKS 4

Score estimate, not a result.



PANTHERS AT DUCKS

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2026 • 8:00 PM ET

Honda Center • Anaheim, California

MATCH ANALYSIS

Florida gets a cautious road edge in Anaheim's home opener. The Ducks can use that setting to generate an energetic start, so the visitors need composed exits and good spacing. The forecast favors Florida finding one extra finish, with goaltending and special teams capable of reversing the margin.

EDITORIAL PICK: PANTHERS

PROJECTED SCORE

PANTHERS 4 - DUCKS 3

Score estimate, not a result.



GOLDEN KNIGHTS AT CANUCKS

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2026 • 9:00 PM ET

Rogers Arena • Vancouver, British Columbia

MATCH ANALYSIS

Vancouver plays again after hosting Calgary on Saturday, while Vegas has a day between games. That rest difference supports the road selection. The Canucks need efficient shifts and strong puck support; the forecast favors Vegas creating separation if repeated recoveries stretch the home defense.

EDITORIAL PICK: GOLDEN KNIGHTS

PROJECTED SCORE

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 4 - CANUCKS 2

Score estimate, not a result.

DISCLAIMER

Independent sports analysis

This guide covers 17 selected NHL regular-season games on October 2-4, 2026: two on Friday, all thirteen on Saturday and two on Sunday. It is not the complete weekend schedule.

Editorial picks and projected scores are estimates, not results or guarantees. They reflect a qualitative reading of matchups, venue and scheduling context, not a calibrated statistical model.

Information checked September 28, 2026, before the regular season begins. Earlier games, lineup changes, injuries and starting-goalie decisions may change the outlook.

Dates and times follow the North American schedule. All listed times are Eastern Time (ET). OT means overtime; projected scores refer to the final game score.

Schedule and context: NHL.com and official club announcements. Recheck official game pages before faceoff.

nhl.com/schedule

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