2026 27

ECHL 2026 27 Season Preview

Florida defends its crown. New Mexico begins. Trenton welcomes the league back. Thirty teams prepare for a new season.

30 teams • 90 player spotlights • Season opens October 16

SEASON PREVIEW — OPENING EDITION

Prepared October 16, 2026

Checked against the official season-opening rosters.

INSIDE THE PREVIEW

Eastern Conference

The opening edition covers all 30 clubs, with a team preview and three player spotlights for each. Checked October 16 against the official season-opening rosters and transactions through October 15. The season begins Friday, October 16.

Team	Division	Preview page
Adirondack Thunder	North	6
Greensboro Gargoyles	North	8
Maine Mariners	North	10
Norfolk Admirals	North	12
Reading Royals	North	14
Trenton Ironhawks	North	16
Trois-Rivières Lions	North	18
Worcester Railers	North	20
Atlanta Gladiators	South	22
Florida Everblades	South	24
Greenville Swamp Rabbits	South	26
Jacksonville Icemen	South	28
Orlando Solar Bears	South	30
Savannah Ghost Pirates	South	32
South Carolina Stingrays	South	34

Each preview is followed by three player spotlights. Season forecast and playoff picks: pages 4–5. Editorial notes: page 66.

INSIDE THE PREVIEW

Western Conference

The opening edition covers all 30 clubs, with a team preview and three player spotlights for each. Checked October 16 against the official season-opening rosters and transactions through October 15. The season begins Friday, October 16.

Team	Division	Preview page
Bloomington Bison	Central	36
Cincinnati Cyclones	Central	38
Fort Wayne Komets	Central	40
Indy Fuel	Central	42
Kalamazoo Wings	Central	44
Toledo Walleye	Central	46
Wheeling Nailers	Central	48
Allen Americans	Mountain	50
Idaho Steelheads	Mountain	52
Kansas City Mavericks	Mountain	54
New Mexico Goatheads	Mountain	56
Rapid City Rush	Mountain	58
Tahoe Knight Monsters	Mountain	60
Tulsa Oilers	Mountain	62
Wichita Thunder	Mountain	64

Each preview is followed by three player spotlights. Season forecast and playoff picks: pages 4–5. Editorial notes: page 66.

SEASON FORECAST

Eastern Conference

SeeSports predictions, October 15. The first four in each division are our playoff picks. Order reflects last season's performance, opening personnel, continuity and availability; it is not a points model.

North Division — projected finish

Rank	Team	Outlook
1	Maine Mariners	Playoff pick
2	Adirondack Thunder	Playoff pick
3	Reading Royals	Playoff pick
4	Trenton Ironhawks	Playoff pick
5	Trois-Rivières Lions	Outside top four
6	Worcester Railers	Outside top four
7	Norfolk Admirals	Outside top four
8	Greensboro Gargoyles	Outside top four

Maine gets the edge after a 93-point season, with Connor Doherty strengthening its familiar core. Adirondack and Reading offer established foundations. Trenton is the upside pick for fourth: experienced forwards and the Fanti–Tikkanen goalie pair outweigh some uncertainty about a newly assembled team. Trois-Rivières and Worcester are the closest challengers.

South Division — projected finish

Rank	Team	Outlook
1	Florida Everblades	Playoff pick
2	South Carolina Stingrays	Playoff pick
3	Atlanta Gladiators	Playoff pick
4	Savannah Ghost Pirates	Playoff pick
5	Orlando Solar Bears	Outside top four
6	Jacksonville Icemen	Outside top four
7	Greenville Swamp Rabbits	Outside top four

Florida's title defense and Cam Johnson's return make it the choice. South Carolina's Wilkins–Andrusiak attack and Hershey support give it a serious chance to overturn that order. Atlanta's 44-win foundation earns third, although goalie depth needs attention. Savannah narrowly holds fourth; Orlando is the main threat to that pick.

Eastern playoff outlook

Division playoff winners: Maine and Florida. Conference champion: Florida over Maine. South Carolina is the strongest alternative to Florida; Trenton is the dark horse to outperform its projected seed.

Opening rosters | North division background | South division background | Central division background | Mountain division background

SEASON FORECAST

Western Conference

SeeSports predictions, October 15. The first four in each division are our playoff picks. Order reflects last season's performance, opening personnel, continuity and availability; it is not a points model.

Central Division — projected finish

Rank	Team	Outlook
1	Toledo Walleye	Playoff pick
2	Fort Wayne Komets	Playoff pick
3	Wheeling Nailers	Playoff pick
4	Bloomington Bison	Playoff pick
5	Indy Fuel	Outside top four
6	Cincinnati Cyclones	Outside top four
7	Kalamazoo Wings	Outside top four

Toledo's returning scorers and Chris Terry's arrival earn a narrow edge over Fort Wayne, whose opening absences temper an otherwise strong outlook. Wheeling's recent success supports third despite a new coach and affiliation. Bloomington's Sedov–Kamenev combination gets the fourth berth; Indy is the closest challenger, with Cincinnati an upside threat.

Mountain Division — projected finish

Rank	Team	Outlook
1	Kansas City Mavericks	Playoff pick
2	Allen Americans	Playoff pick
3	Idaho Steelheads	Playoff pick
4	Tahoe Knight Monsters	Playoff pick
5	Tulsa Oilers	Outside top four
6	New Mexico Goatheads	Outside top four
7	Rapid City Rush	Outside top four
8	Wichita Thunder	Outside top four

Kansas City remains the benchmark after 115 points and a Finals appearance. Allen's scoring options and Idaho's returning forwards lead the pursuit. Tahoe narrowly retains fourth, but must defend better. Tulsa is the leading challenger; New Mexico has intriguing pieces, with the widest uncertainty as an expansion team.

Kelly Cup prediction

Division playoff winners: Toledo and Kansas City. Western champion: Toledo over Kansas City. Kelly Cup champion: Florida over Toledo. Johnson's return and Florida's championship continuity give it the final edge; South Carolina and Kansas City are the leading alternatives.

Opening rosters | North division background | South division background | Central division background | Mountain division background

NORTH DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Adirondack Thunder

Division	NHL affiliate
North	New Jersey Devils

Forecast

Adirondack has a familiar name to rally around in Shane Harper, but the size of his contribution remains a question after a three-game season. A healthier veteran presence would help. The Thunder also need other players to take ownership of the offense, especially with Dylan Wendt moving to Kalamazoo.

How the team is taking shape

Conner Hutchison supplies continuity on defense after playing 45 regular-season games and all seven of Adirondack's playoff games. Harper's return gives the forward group experience, although his previous scoring seasons should not be treated as a promise of what comes next. This is a roster that still needs its leading combinations to emerge.

In goal

Jeremy Brodeur and Seth Eisele are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. Henry Welsch begins on reserve. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Shane Harper — Forward	Opening roster — active
Conner Hutchison — Defense	Opening roster — active
Henry Welsch — Goaltender	Opening roster — reserve

Roster changes

Chase McLane's signing adds another forward as the camp group narrows. Steven MacLean is on team suspension, and five tryout players were released October 12. Shane Harper and Conner Hutchison remain the featured returning pieces; finding support around them is important after Dylan Wendt's departure.

Harper returns | Hutchison returns | Welsch signing | Wendt joins Kalamazoo | Adirondack camp roster | ECHL transactions October 5 | ECHL transactions October 12 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

ADIRONDACK THUNDER PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Shane Harper

Forward | Opening roster — active

A familiar leader with something to re-establish

Harper's career in Adirondack makes him an obvious player to follow, but his most recent season consisted of only three games. His 56-point campaign in 2023–24 shows what he has supplied in the past. The immediate question is simpler: can he stay in the lineup and become a dependable source of offense again? His availability matters as much as his place on the scoring sheet.

Harper returns | Adirondack camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

2 Conner Hutchison

Defense | Opening roster — active

Continuity on a changing roster

Hutchison produced 16 points in 45 games last season and stayed in the lineup throughout Adirondack's seven playoff games. That gives him a more substantial recent foundation than several of the team's early roster stories. Watch how much responsibility he receives as the pairings come together. A consistent season from a returning defenseman would make it easier to introduce new players around him.

Hutchison returns | Adirondack camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

3 Henry Welsch

Goaltender | Opening roster — reserve

The next step is a larger workload

Welsch appeared in only two Thunder games in 2025–26, following seven the previous season. That is too little ECHL work to establish a clear expectation for a full campaign. His return nevertheless gives Adirondack someone familiar with the organization. The opening weeks should show whether he can earn a larger role and turn that familiarity into regular starts. He begins on reserve, so activation is needed before he can enter the lineup.

Welsch signing | Adirondack camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

NORTH DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Greensboro Gargoyles

Division	NHL affiliate
North	Carolina Hurricanes

Forecast

Greensboro's additions bring a useful mix of overseas scoring and players still building their professional careers. The opportunity is to turn those different backgrounds into a more dependable attack. Markus Oden and Ryan Hughes arrive with recent production, while Casey Severo has a chance to grow beyond his brief first look with the club.

How the team is taking shape

Oden scored 20 goals in Denmark last season, and Hughes also arrives from the Danish league. Tristan De Jong adds ECHL experience on defense after playing for Greenville. The group offers several possible contributors without yet identifying one forward who should be expected to carry the scoring.

In goal

Yegor Velmakin and Ruslan Khazheyev are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. Tyler Brennan begins on reserve. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Markus Oden — Forward	Opening roster — active
Casey Severo — Forward	Opening roster — reserve
Tristan De Jong — Defense	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Gleb Trikozov and Ethan Leyh have been assigned, while Jack Seymour adds another signed forward. Daniel Panetta and defenseman Bryan Huggins were released October 9. Those cuts narrow the competition as Greensboro looks for support beyond its first wave of summer signings.

Greensboro adds three | Severo and Murray sign | De Jong and Martin join | Propp joins Maine | Price and Paquette | Faremouth joins Orlando | Greensboro October 1 signings | Greensboro affiliate assignments | ECHL transactions October 8 | ECHL transactions October 9 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

GREENSBORO GARGOYLES PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Markus Oden

Forward | Opening roster — active

A scoring addition from Denmark

Oden’s 31 points in 51 games for Odense included 20 goals. Greensboro is adding a player with a recent record of finishing chances, though a new league brings different opponents and a different role. The first thing to watch is where he fits on the scoring lines. Regular opportunities beside a reliable passer could make him an important addition.

Greensboro adds three | Official season-opening rosters

2 Casey Severo

Forward | Opening roster — reserve

A longer chance to make an impression

Severo played five professional games for Greensboro after completing his Harvard career. His senior college season produced 18 points, split evenly between goals and assists. A full the opening weeks should tell the Gargoyles considerably more than that short introduction. His progress is worth following as the club decides which younger forwards can contribute regularly rather than merely fill a place in the lineup. He begins on reserve, so activation is needed before he can enter the lineup.

Severo and Murray sign | Official season-opening rosters

3 Tristan De Jong

Defense | Opening roster — active

Experience for the new pairings

De Jong joins after an eight-point, 42-game season with Greenville. His appeal is an established ECHL background on a roster welcoming players from several different routes. Greensboro needs its defense to give the incoming forwards a workable platform. How De Jong fits into those pairings, and whether he earns steady minutes as the group settles, will be more revealing than an early scoring total.

De Jong and Martin join | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

NORTH DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Maine Mariners

Division	NHL affiliate
North	Boston Bruins

Forecast

Maine's returning and incoming experience makes for a sensible starting point. Antonio Venuto already knows the forward group, while Connor Doherty brings both familiarity with the club and recent championship experience from Florida. The Mariners' upside depends on turning that experience into a settled lineup rather than asking a handful of veterans to solve every problem.

How the team is taking shape

Doherty's return adds a former Maine captain to the defense. Venuto finished last season with 20 points in 44 Mariners games and contributed during the playoffs. Those are useful pieces around which to build, as affiliate arrivals increase the competition for places.

In goal

Max Lundgren and Luke Cavallin are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. Christian Propp begins on reserve. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Antonio Venuto — Forward	Opening roster — active
Connor Doherty — Defense	Opening roster — active
Christian Propp — Goaltender	Opening roster — reserve

Roster changes

Maxim Andreev appears on the active opening roster after his earlier movement through Providence. Dylan Mackinnon and Kalle Vaisanen also join the available group. Christian Propp begins on reserve behind the active goalie pair of Luke Cavallin and Max Lundgren. October 15: Providence assigned Josh Bloom; Jackson Stewart moved to seven-day IR.

Venuto returns | Doherty returns to Maine | Propp joins Maine | ECHL transactions October 1 | ECHL transactions October 3 | ECHL transactions October 5 | ECHL transactions October 6 | ECHL transactions October 9 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions | October 15 transactions

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MAINE MARINERS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Antonio Venuto

Forward | Opening roster — active

A returning contributor up front

Venuto finished 2025–26 with 34 points in 66 games across Kalamazoo and Maine. With the Mariners, he added seven points in 14 playoff games after his 20-point regular-season contribution. His return gives Maine a player whose recent work with the club is already visible. The next step is sustaining that contribution through a full campaign and helping the offense remain productive beyond its leading line.

Venuto returns | Official season-opening rosters

2 Connor Doherty

Defense | Opening roster — active

A former captain comes home

Doherty returns to Maine after two years with Florida, including the Everblades' 2026 championship season. He appeared in 62 regular-season games and 20 playoff games during that final year. His earlier time as Maine's captain gives the reunion added interest. On the ice, the value will come from dependable defensive minutes and helping a changing set of partners find a consistent rhythm.

Doherty returns to Maine | Official season-opening rosters

3 Christian Propp

Goaltender | Opening roster — reserve

A chance to settle into one role

Propp's 11 ECHL appearances last season were spread across Greensboro, Tulsa and Norfolk. He joins Maine with 37 career games in the league, but without a recent full-season workload. A more settled situation could help establish what he can provide. His place in this preview identifies an incoming option; it does not assume that he will receive the majority of the Mariners' starts. He begins on reserve, so activation is needed before he can enter the lineup.

Propp joins Maine | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

NORTH DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Norfolk Admirals

Division	NHL affiliate
North	To be announced

Forecast

Norfolk's goaltending is a prominent early storyline. Matt Vernon's previous ECHL work gives the Admirals a credible goaltending option, while Grant Hebert returns after a career-best offensive season. A stronger forecast will require more certainty about the depth around those two, especially the forwards expected to share the scoring.

How the team is taking shape

Hebert's 35 points in 50 games offer a useful returning contribution. Nathan Noel adds familiarity after spending part of last season with Norfolk. The Admirals need those pieces to fit into a balanced attack; the early signings alone do not settle how the lines will be arranged.

In goal

Collin Delia and Matt Vernon are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. Luke Pavicich begins on reserve. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Matt Vernon — Goaltender	Opening roster — active
Grant Hebert — Forward	Opening roster — active
Nathan Noel — Forward	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Vernon and Collin Delia give the crease experienced options, while Hebert and Noel keep familiar forwards involved. Holden Wale signed after Ian Pierce's release; Matt Koethe was also released. Those changes sharpen the supporting group as Norfolk prepares its opening lineup. Dalton Norris was acquired from Cincinnati. October 15: Tyler Ryder moved to seven-day IR.

Vernon joins Norfolk | Hebert re-signs | Noel returns | Official affiliations | ECHL transactions October 4 | ECHL transactions October 5 | ECHL transactions October 12 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions | October 15 transactions

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NORFOLK ADMIRALS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Matt Vernon

Goaltender | Opening roster — active

A proven ECHL option returns

Vernon's last full ECHL season, with Jacksonville in 2024–25, produced a 24–8–6 record and a .916 save percentage. He then spent 2025–26 with Innsbruck. Norfolk is therefore adding relevant league experience, not relying solely on an overseas résumé. How quickly he settles behind a new defense will matter. His earlier success makes him worth watching without guaranteeing that those results repeat.

Vernon joins Norfolk | Official season-opening rosters

2 Grant Hebert

Forward | Opening roster — active

Build on a career-best season

Hebert recorded 13 goals and 22 assists in 50 games for Norfolk last season. Those 35 points marked a career high and give the Admirals a clear recent contribution to retain. The next question is whether he can sustain that pace over a longer schedule. More games at a similar level would help the club build its attack around something dependable.

Hebert re-signs | Official season-opening rosters

3 Nathan Noel

Forward | Opening roster — active

Familiarity with room for more

Noel appeared in 63 games between Iowa and Norfolk in 2025–26, finishing with ten points. His return brings experience, but the recent scoring record suggests that he should not be presented as the main offensive answer. He is a player to follow as the Admirals sort their supporting lines and look for contributions that allow their leading forwards to be used more effectively.

Noel returns | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

NORTH DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Reading Royals

Division	NHL affiliate
North	Philadelphia Flyers

Forecast

Braeden Kressler gives Reading an appealing active attacking option, supported by arrivals Dalton Bancroft and Brady Berard. Nolan Burke begins on reserve. Keith Petruzzelli and Yaniv Perets form the active goalie pair, making the opening picture clearer as the Royals establish their combinations.

How the team is taking shape

Burke supplied 27 points in 51 Reading games last season. Kressler brings a productive, if relatively short, ECHL record. On defense, the acquisition of Wyatt McLeod adds experience from Trois-Rivières, while the same three-team trade sends Carter Schade to Toledo.

In goal

Keith Petruzzelli and Yaniv Perets are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. Ian Shane begins on reserve. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Nolan Burke — Forward	Opening roster — reserve
Braeden Kressler — Forward	Opening roster — active
Ian Shane — Goaltender	Opening roster — reserve

Roster changes

Dalton Bancroft signed and Brady Berard was assigned, adding forward options around Nolan Burke and Braeden Kressler. Cooper Wylie was recalled October 11 after his earlier loan to Reading. Wyatt McLeod remains a notable defensive addition as the Royals work to replace Brandon Saigeon’s offense. October 15: Luke Reid was reassigned by Lehigh Valley after a loan.

Burke and Shane return | Kressler joins Reading | McLeod trade | Saigeon joins Orlando | Royals at AHL camp | Reading assignments and camp returns | ECHL transactions October 4 | ECHL transactions October 5 | ECHL transactions October 6 | ECHL transactions October 8 | ECHL transactions October 11 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions | October 15 transactions

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READING ROYALS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Nolan Burke

Forward | Opening roster — reserve

A returning piece of the attack

Burke's 27 points in 51 Royals games included ten goals. That gives Reading a known contribution to retain as the forward group takes shape. His next season will be interesting for how much responsibility he receives and whether his production grows with it. He does not need to carry the entire offense to be important; dependable scoring from several forwards is the more useful team goal. He begins on reserve, so activation is needed before he can enter the lineup.

Burke and Shane return | Official season-opening rosters

2 Braeden Kressler

Forward | Opening roster — active

An addition with offensive promise

Kressler joins Reading with 27 points in 32 career ECHL games. His most recent season included seven games for Cincinnati, in which he recorded five points. The overall record is encouraging, but still short. A sustained role with the Royals would provide a better test of how consistently he can contribute and where he fits among the club's attacking options.

Kressler joins Reading | Royals at AHL camp | Reading assignments and camp returns | Official season-opening rosters

3 Ian Shane

Goaltender | Opening roster — reserve

From a brief look to a full competition

Shane appeared in eight Kansas City games last season before a short stint with Reading. His 118-game Cornell career gives him a substantial college foundation, but the ECHL evidence is much smaller. A full the opening weeks should clarify his place in the Royals' plans. The important development will be earning and handling consecutive opportunities rather than reading too much into a handful of previous results. He begins on reserve, so activation is needed before he can enter the lineup.

Burke and Shane return | Royals at AHL camp | Reading assignments and camp returns | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

NORTH DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Trenton Ironhawks

Division	NHL affiliate
North	New York Islanders

Forecast

Trenton's first season is about building a recognizable team as well as establishing its place in the North. The early signings give the Ironhawks experienced ECHL forwards and a local connection. Isaac Johnson's arrival is especially useful for a group that needs scoring options while learning how its pieces fit together.

How the team is taking shape

Johnson and Liam Coughlin give the attack experience, now joined by Kyle Penney after a 20-point season with Florida. Anthony Firriolo offers offense from defense. Artur Cholach and Mathieu Boislard add further ECHL experience to the blue line as Trenton builds its first combinations.

In goal

Ryan Fanti and Henrik Tikkanen are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. Aaron Trotter begins on reserve. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Isaac Johnson — Forward	Opening roster — active
Anthony Firriolo — Defense	Opening roster — active
Liam Coughlin — Forward	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Jesse Nurmi, Max Ellis and Chas Sharpe are among the affiliate arrivals, while Nate Hanley adds another signed forward. The camp cuts include Ryan Beck, Dylan Massie, Luke Antonacci and Noah Massie. Worcester subsequently claimed Beck. Trenton's remaining group now turns toward its first regular-season combinations.

Trenton's first signings | Johnson joins Trenton | Coughlin joins Trenton | 2026–27 schedule | Penney signs | Cholach signs | Boislard signs | Gratton trade | Trenton affiliate assignments | Hanley signs with Trenton | ECHL transactions October 6 | ECHL transactions October 11 | ECHL transactions October 12 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

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TRENTON IRONHAWKS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Isaac Johnson

Forward | Opening roster — active

An experienced scorer for the first season

Johnson produced 29 points in 42 games for Iowa last season and arrives with 188 points in 200 career ECHL games. That longer record makes him a particularly interesting addition for Trenton. The Ironhawks need players who can help establish the attack immediately. His role and linemates should reveal how much of that responsibility the coaching staff plans to place on him.

Johnson joins Trenton | Official season-opening rosters

2 Anthony Firriolo

Defense | Opening roster — active

Offense from the blue line

Firriolo recorded seven goals and 24 assists in 57 games split between Atlanta and Iowa in 2025–26. His signing gives Trenton a defenseman with recent ECHL production, as well as a New Jersey connection. The key question is how that offense fits into the new team’s overall play. A useful contribution would include helping the forwards create chances while the pairings build familiarity.

Trenton’s first signings | Official season-opening rosters

3 Liam Coughlin

Forward | Opening roster — active

Experience for a new dressing room

Coughlin’s 2025–26 season included 58 games across Jacksonville and Iowa, with 18 points. He arrives with nearly 300 career ECHL appearances, giving Trenton another forward accustomed to the league’s travel and roster changes. The attraction is experience and a potential supporting role. His contribution should be judged within the team’s overall balance rather than as a promise of leading-line scoring.

Coughlin joins Trenton | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

NORTH DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Trois-Rivières Lions

Division	NHL affiliate
North	Montreal Canadiens

Forecast

Trois-Rivières enters with Kaleb Ergang and Brooklyn Kalmikov among its attacking options, but Zachary Massicotte begins on seven-day injured reserve. The available defense must establish its combinations without him. Francesco Lapenna and Hunter Jones form the active goalie pair.

How the team is taking shape

Ergang supplies an attacking option after a 29-point season with Manchester, and Kalmikov adds another forward. Massicotte's experience may help when he returns from injured reserve. Until then, the active defense must find dependable partnerships and support the new goalie combination.

In goal

Francesco Lapenna and Hunter Jones are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. Samuel St-Hilaire begins on reserve. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Zachary Massicotte — Defense	Opening roster — 7-day IR
Kaleb Ergang — Forward	Opening roster — active
Samuel St-Hilaire — Goaltender	Opening roster — reserve

Roster changes

Kalmikov signed October 6. Israel Mianscum was recalled to Laval, Thomas Darcy was released and Robert Orr was traded to Florida. Those moves change the group assessed earlier in camp and make the remaining forwards' opportunities clearer as opening night approaches.

Massicotte signs | Ergang joins the Lions | St-Hilaire joins the Lions | Darcy signing | McLeod trade | Huard signs | Lions invited to Laval camp | ECHL transactions October 4 | ECHL transactions October 5 | ECHL transactions October 6 | ECHL transactions October 10 | ECHL transactions October 12 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

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TROIS-RIVIÈRES LIONS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Zachary Massicotte

Defense | Opening roster — 7-day IR

League experience on the blue line

Massicotte joins after recording six points in 29 games for Maine last season. His wider background includes 189 ECHL appearances and 27 AHL games. That experience gives the Lions a player familiar with the level as the defense changes. The most useful early sign will be a regular, dependable role alongside his new partners, with offensive contributions adding to that foundation. He begins on seven-day injured reserve; his return to availability is the first development to follow.

Massicotte signs | Official season-opening rosters

2 Kaleb Ergang

Forward | Opening roster — active

Back to the ECHL after a year abroad

Ergang recorded nine goals and 20 assists in 50 games for Manchester in 2025–26. Before that, he made a productive professional introduction with Adirondack, collecting nine points in 13 games after college. The Lions are giving him a chance to build a longer ECHL record. His progress will depend on turning those encouraging stretches into reliable contributions over a full season.

Ergang joins the Lions | Official season-opening rosters

3 Samuel St-Hilaire

Goaltender | Opening roster — reserve

A new opportunity at this level

St-Hilaire’s recent workload came in the LNAH, where he made 18 appearances last season. He previously played one ECHL game in 2024–25. That leaves a considerable difference between his experience elsewhere and an established role with the Lions. The opening weeks will be important in showing how quickly he can adapt and what share of the work the club is prepared to give him. He begins on reserve, so activation is needed before he can enter the lineup.

St-Hilaire joins the Lions | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

NORTH DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Worcester Railers

Division	NHL affiliate
North	St. Louis Blues

Forecast

Worcester's early roster offers a mix of familiar contributors and experienced additions. Cole Donhauser and Cam McDonald provide continuity, while the new St. Louis affiliation adds another layer of change. The next step is to establish enough depth that the team's outlook does not depend entirely on which players arrive from above.

How the team is taking shape

Donhauser returns after a 27-point season, and McDonald supplies another familiar presence on defense. Jordan Kaplan and Tyson Fawcett are also among the announced signings. There is useful league experience in the group; the important question is how the coaching staff turns it into productive lines.

In goal

William Lavallière and Parker Gahagen were active on the opening roster, with Chase Clark on reserve. Worcester then claimed Gibson Homer from Kansas City, adding another option. The first lineup will clarify the immediate pairing.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Cole Donhauser — Forward	Opening roster — active
Cam McDonald — Defense	Opening roster — active
William Lavallière — Goaltender	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Anthony Repaci begins on seven-day injured reserve. Cole Donhauser and Cam McDonald are active. Connor Sweeney and Ryan Beck were released. Gibson Homer was claimed from Kansas City. Ryan Wheeler and Anthony Kehrer were assigned; Riley Ginnell moved to three-day IR and Connor Federkow to reserve.

Donhauser and Campagna sign | Five Railers signings | Official affiliations | Worcester camp roster | ECHL transactions October 9 | ECHL transactions October 12 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions | October 15 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

WORCESTER RAILERS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Cole Donhauser

Forward | Opening roster — active

A returning source of offense

Donhauser recorded 27 points in 68 games for Worcester last season. Bringing him back retains a forward with recent experience of the club and a sizeable run of games to build on. The next question is whether he can increase his contribution as the lines change around him. Consistent scoring from returning players would reduce the burden on the new arrivals.

Donhauser and Campagna sign | Worcester camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

2 Cam McDonald

Defense | Opening roster — active

A familiar foundation on defense

McDonald played 63 games for the Railers in 2025–26 and recorded 12 assists. His return gives Worcester continuity while other parts of the roster change. He is worth following for his role in the pairings and the responsibility he earns over the season. A regular presence on defense can be particularly useful when assignments and injuries keep changing the surrounding lineup.

Five Railers signings | Worcester camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

3 William Lavallière

Goaltender | Opening roster — active

A chance to earn a bigger place

Lavallière’s ECHL appearances last season included five games with Trois-Rivières and two with Worcester. His new deal keeps him in the Railers’ plans, but that small sample does not establish a starting claim. The next stage is a full camp and a clearer view of the competition. Regular work would give both the club and its supporters a better measure of his contribution.

Five Railers signings | Worcester camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

SOUTH DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Atlanta Gladiators

Division	NHL affiliate
South	Nashville Predators

Forecast

Atlanta comes off a 44-win season and has added experienced forwards with substantial professional backgrounds. That creates an interesting starting point for another playoff push. The biggest early question is how much of last season's strength can carry over while the returning overseas players adjust to new teammates and a new schedule.

How the team is taking shape

Josh Winquist, Branden Troock and Sam Tremblay give coach Matt Ginn several experienced options. All three played in Europe last season. They bring different histories and recent levels of production, so the useful test is how they fit together rather than the reputation attached to any single name.

In goal

Ethan Haider is joined by newly signed Troy Kobryn. The addition gives Atlanta another option for opening weekend; the early games will show how the staff divides the starts.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Josh Winquist — Forward	Opening roster — active
Branden Troock — Forward	Opening roster — active
Sam Tremblay — Forward	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Milwaukee has assigned Hiroki Gojsic, Austin Roest and Ben Strinden, giving Atlanta fresh options up front. Max Neill, Kirklan Irey and Kyle Pow were released October 12. The staff now needs to fit the affiliate arrivals around its experienced signings and identify reliable scoring combinations. October 15: Troy Kobryn signed to join Ethan Haider in goal. Max Neill re-signed and went on seven-day IR; Stephen Calisti was activated and Mason Ward moved to reserve.

Atlanta's season review | Winquist joins Atlanta | Troock returns | Tremblay signing | Less returns | Friesen signs | Atlanta camp roster | ECHL transactions October 11 | ECHL transactions October 12 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions | October 15 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

ATLANTA GLADIATORS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Josh Winquist

Forward | Opening roster — active

An experienced offensive option

Winquist joins after recording 27 points in 41 games for Fife in Britain. His ECHL career includes 234 points in 227 games, giving Atlanta a substantial record to consider beyond that latest season. The immediate question is where he fits in the attack. His experience should be useful, but his current contribution will depend on chemistry and opportunity rather than past scoring totals alone.

Winquist joins Atlanta | Atlanta camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

2 Branden Troock

Forward | Opening roster — active

A return with a different challenge

Troock's last ECHL season, with Allen in 2021–22, produced 55 points in 51 games. He has since played overseas, including 36 games across three European leagues last season. Atlanta is bringing back a player with an established league background, but several years separate him from that scoring campaign. A settled role would provide a better guide to what he can contribute now.

Troock returns | Atlanta camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

3 Sam Tremblay

Forward | Opening roster — active

A familiar coaching connection

Tremblay recorded 17 points in 48 games for Sheffield last season and has previously worked with Matt Ginn in Manchester. That connection gives the signing some useful context. It should help the coach understand what he is adding, although the role still has to be earned. Watch how Tremblay fits among Atlanta's supporting forwards and whether familiarity helps him settle quickly.

Tremblay signing | Atlanta camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

SOUTH DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Florida Everblades

Division	NHL affiliate
South	Pittsburgh Penguins

Forecast

Florida begins as the league's benchmark after winning the 2026 Kelly Cup, its fourth championship in five seasons. That history makes the Everblades an obvious team to watch again. The roster is still changing, however, and the new Pittsburgh affiliation means the shape of the title defense will depend partly on a different organizational pipeline.

How the team is taking shape

Ben Brar and Riese Zmolek return with championship experience, helping preserve some continuity. Connor Doherty has moved back to Maine. The task is to keep enough of the group's understanding while finding players capable of taking on the minutes and responsibilities that have opened up.

In goal

Cam Johnson and Roddy Ross are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Ben Brar — Forward	Opening roster — active
Riese Zmolek — Defense	Opening roster — reserve
Roddy Ross — Goaltender	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Robert Orr is on team suspension and Connor Milburn was released, so neither trade addition is counted as opening help. Riese Zmolek and Max Graham begin on reserve. Cam Johnson and Roddy Ross are active in goal, while Ben Brar remains part of the available forward group. October 15: Troy Murray was activated.

Florida wins the Kelly Cup | Brar re-signs | Zmolek returns | Ross trade | Johnson's AHL contract | Doherty returns to Maine | Official affiliations | Penney signs | Florida camp schedule | ECHL transactions October 4 | ECHL transactions October 3 | ECHL transactions October 7 | ECHL transactions October 12 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions | October 15 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

FLORIDA EVERBLADES PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Ben Brar

Forward | Opening roster — active

Continuity within a championship club

Brar returns after recording eight points in 24 regular-season games for Florida last season and appearing twice in the playoffs. He has been part of two Everblades championship teams. His signing preserves familiarity, with room for a larger contribution if the opportunity arises. The interesting question is whether he can turn a supporting role into more regular work as the forward group takes shape.

Brar re-signs | Official season-opening rosters

2 Riese Zmolek

Defense | Opening roster — reserve

A returning playoff contributor

Zmolek played only nine regular-season games for Florida in 2025–26, then appeared in 20 playoff games during the championship run. That contrast makes his return interesting: the club has recent postseason experience to retain, but the regular-season workload was limited. A longer, steadier run would give the defense useful continuity as new players move into the organization. He begins on reserve, so activation is needed before he can enter the lineup.

Zmolek returns | Official season-opening rosters

3 Roddy Ross

Goaltender | Opening roster — active

A new option with recent regular work

Ross arrives through a trade after making 40 appearances for Wichita last season, posting a .900 save percentage. His workload gives Florida a more substantial recent professional sample than a short late-season audition. The trade adds him to the picture without settling the starting role. His place in the rotation will depend on camp performances and the staff’s plans for the season.

Ross trade | Johnson’s AHL contract | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

SOUTH DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Greenville Swamp Rabbits

Division	NHL affiliate
South	Los Angeles Kings

Forecast

Greenville pairs Mike O'Leary's professional experience with forwards competing for larger roles. The club's progress will depend on finding dependable contributions around him and turning its changing personnel into an effective attack.

How the team is taking shape

O'Leary comes off a 33-point season with Tahoe and brings extensive AHL experience. Jake Percival returns following a short introduction with Greenville. The staff needs to identify players who can contribute consistently alongside them as the forward group changes.

In goal

Owen Flores and Mattias Sholl are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Mike O'Leary — Forward	Opening roster — active
Ryan McAllister — Forward	Opening roster — active
Jake Percival — Forward	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Michael Mastrodomenico's assignment adds to the defensive options. Ryan McAllister's signing and the earlier Ontario arrivals broaden the forward group after Connor Milburn's trade to Florida. Oliver Tarr was released and subsequently claimed by Tulsa. Greenville now needs dependable contributions around Mike O'Leary.

O'Leary joins Greenville | Milburn returns | Percival returns | De Jong and Martin join | ECHL transactions October 1 | ECHL transactions October 3 | ECHL transactions October 10 | ECHL transactions October 11 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

GREENVILLE SWAMP RABBITS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Mike O’Leary

Forward | Opening roster — active

An experienced addition to the attack

O’Leary recorded 12 goals and 21 assists in 65 games for Tahoe last season. He also brings 188 games of AHL experience to Greenville. That combination gives the Swamp Rabbits a player with recent ECHL production and a broader professional background. His role should be especially interesting alongside younger teammates who are still learning how to contribute consistently at this level.

O’Leary joins Greenville | Official season-opening rosters

2 Ryan McAllister

Forward | Opening roster — active

A fresh opportunity in a changing attack

McAllister’s signing gives Greenville another forward to assess as camp takes shape. The first questions concern where he fits, who he plays alongside and which responsibilities he earns. Watch for a consistent contribution as the staff tests its combinations. A place in this preview highlights that opportunity without assuming an opening-night role.

ECHL transactions October 3 | Official season-opening rosters

3 Jake Percival

Forward | Opening roster — active

Build beyond the late-season debut

Percival made his Greenville debut on April 9 and scored his first goal two days later. Before turning professional, he recorded 16 points in 38 games during his senior season at UConn. That brief start creates interest, but little basis for a full-season prediction. His progress through camp and the first month will offer a much clearer view of his place in the attack.

Percival returns | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

SOUTH DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Jacksonville Icemen

Division	NHL affiliate
South	Minnesota Wild

Forecast

Adam McMaster's encouraging finish to last season gives Jacksonville an attacking foundation. Chase Wutzke and Cameron Rowe begin as the active goalie pair, with Michael Bullion on reserve. The early test is whether the surrounding depth can turn those individual opportunities into consistent team play.

How the team is taking shape

McMaster's 25 points in 31 Jacksonville games provide a useful starting point. Drew Kuzma and trade addition Tyler Schleppe are active, while Blake Biondi has been recalled to Iowa. Finding productive combinations around McMaster should help the Icemen spread their scoring.

In goal

Chase Wutzke and Cameron Rowe are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. Michael Bullion begins on reserve. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Adam McMaster — Forward	Opening roster — active
Chase Wutzke — Goaltender	Opening roster — active
Michael Bullion — Goaltender	Opening roster — reserve

Roster changes

Tyler Schleppe arrives through a trade with Kalamazoo, adding another forward as the Icemen prepare to open. T.J. Friedmann remains on team suspension and is not treated here as an available contributor. The new depth must now support Adam McMaster and help Jacksonville spread its scoring. October 15: Timothy Heinke was claimed from South Carolina.

McMaster returns | Friedmann returns | Bullion re-signs | Ennis–Hislop trade | Jacksonville camp roster | ECHL transactions October 1 | ECHL transactions October 8 | ECHL transactions October 12 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions | October 15 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

JACKSONVILLE ICEMEN PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Adam McMaster

Forward | Opening roster — active

Build on a productive Jacksonville start

McMaster finished last season with 43 points across Tulsa and Jacksonville, including 25 points in 31 games for the Icemen. That latter stretch makes his return especially interesting. A full season at a similar pace would give the offense an important contribution. The early focus should be on his linemates and whether the club can preserve the conditions that helped him produce.

McMaster returns | Jacksonville camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

2 Chase Wutzke

Goaltender | Opening roster — active

A new option in a competitive crease

Wutzke joins Michael Bullion and Cameron Rowe in Jacksonville’s goalie group. For a young goalie, the first task is earning the staff’s confidence through repeatable performances. Watch how he handles traffic and rebounds, and how quickly he develops an understanding with his defensemen. The camp listing creates an opportunity without promising a particular share of starts.

Jacksonville camp roster | ECHL transactions October 8 | Official season-opening rosters

3 Michael Bullion

Goaltender | Opening roster — reserve

A returning option the club already knows

Bullion posted a 10–9–4 record in 26 appearances last season, with a .904 save percentage. The Icemen are retaining a goalie with a meaningful recent workload rather than only a brief audition. His new deal gives the preseason picture some stability. The remaining question is how his role fits alongside the other goaltending options once camp and organizational assignments are complete. He begins on reserve, so activation is needed before he can enter the lineup.

Bullion re-signs | Jacksonville camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

SOUTH DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Orlando Solar Bears

Division	NHL affiliate
South	Tampa Bay Lightning

Forecast

Orlando's announced additions make experience in its own end a prominent early theme. Ryan Bednard returns to the ECHL after a season in Germany, while Jack Dougherty brings a familiar name back to the defense. The team's next task is to connect that experience with enough attacking depth to support it.

How the team is taking shape

Brandon Saigeon adds offense after leading Reading's forwards with 39 points. Zach Faremouth joins after a 21-point season split between Greensboro and Bloomington. Alongside returning defenseman Kade Landry and the experienced Jack Dougherty, those additions make Orlando's roster easier to assess beyond the crease.

In goal

Ryan Bednard and Scott Ratzlaff are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Ryan Bednard — Goaltender	Opening roster — active
Jack Dougherty — Defense	Opening roster — reserve
Kade Landry — Defense	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Zach Uens has been assigned and is active on the opening roster. Jack Dougherty begins on reserve and Andrew Bruder on seven-day injured reserve. Connor Kurth and Milo Roelens are active forward additions; Harrison Meneghin and Dyllan Gill have been recalled to Syracuse.

Bednard joins Orlando | Dougherty returns | Landry returns | Drevitch joins New Mexico | Saigeon joins Orlando | Faremouth joins Orlando | Orlando camp roster | ECHL transactions October 2 | ECHL transactions October 4 | ECHL transactions October 8 | ECHL transactions October 12 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

ORLANDO SOLAR BEARS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Ryan Bednard

Goaltender | Opening roster — active

A return backed by a substantial ECHL record

Bednard's 151 career ECHL games include a .911 save percentage and a 2.83 goals-against average. Orlando is adding a goalie with plenty of relevant experience after his season in Germany. Those career figures provide context, not a forecast for the new team. His early work with the Solar Bears' defense will offer the better guide to how much stability he can provide.

Bednard joins Orlando | Orlando camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

2 Jack Dougherty

Defense | Opening roster — reserve

An experienced return from overseas

Dougherty comes back to Orlando after a 15-point season with Sheffield. He previously appeared in 19 Solar Bears games during 2022–23. The return gives him some familiarity with the club, though much can change over several seasons. Watch how the coaching staff uses his experience and which partners give the defense the best balance as the opening lineup takes shape. He begins on reserve, so activation is needed before he can enter the lineup.

Dougherty returns | Orlando camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

3 Kade Landry

Defense | Opening roster — active

Availability is the first step

Landry recorded five points in eight Orlando games during an injury-shortened season. That brief run showed a contribution, but not the sustained workload the Solar Bears would like to see next. His return is interesting primarily because a healthier campaign could give the club more of what it only saw in small doses. The first weeks will help establish that possibility.

Landry returns | Orlando camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

SOUTH DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Savannah Ghost Pirates

Division	NHL affiliate
South	Florida Panthers

Forecast

Savannah's additions suggest a club trying to build on its first playoff appearance with more established help. Eddie Matsushima brings recent scoring, while the defense gains experience through David Drake and Will Zmolek. The opportunity is to turn that greater depth into a steadier team over the full season.

How the team is taking shape

Will Riedell supplies continuity on defense, while Eddie Matsushima brings a 40-point season with Bloomington to the attack. Riley Hughes and Liam McLinskey are active affiliate arrivals. Matt Koopman remains on team suspension, leaving others to take on the available forward responsibilities.

In goal

Vinnie Purpura and Christian Cicigoi are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Eddie Matsushima — Forward	Opening roster — active
Will Riedell — Defense	Opening roster — active
Vinnie Purpura — Goaltender	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Alex DiPaolo was released after his brief stay, and Tyler Muszelik was recalled to Charlotte. Christian Cicigoi signed and joins Vinnie Purpura on the active roster. Skate Skalde also converted his tryout into a contract and is among the available forwards. October 15: Charlotte assigned Philip Tresca.

Drake and Matsushima join | Riedell and Zmolek sign | Koopman and Carroll return | Official affiliations | Charlotte loans five to Savannah | ECHL transactions October 5 | ECHL transactions October 7 | ECHL transactions October 11 | Savannah acquires DiPaolo | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions | October 15 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

SAVANNAH GHOST PIRATES PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Eddie Matsushima

Forward | Opening roster — active

An experienced addition with recent production

Matsushima recorded 18 goals and 22 assists in 56 games for Bloomington last season. Savannah is adding a forward with current ECHL production as it looks to strengthen its attack. His arrival should be judged by how he fits alongside the returning players and whether the club can maintain scoring across several lines. A reliable contribution would make the offense harder to shut down.

Drake and Matsushima join | Official season-opening rosters

2 Will Riedell

Defense | Opening roster — active

A familiar contributor returns

Riedell's 58-game season produced seven goals and ten assists. His return gives Savannah a known piece of a defense that is also bringing in new experience. That combination creates an interesting camp: the club can retain some established understanding while testing different pairings. Riedell's role and consistency will matter as the Ghost Pirates decide how best to distribute the defensive minutes.

Riedell and Zmolek sign | Official season-opening rosters

3 Vinnie Purpura

Goaltender | Opening roster — active

An opening opportunity in goal

Purpura begins on Savannah's active roster alongside Christian Cicigoi. Tyler Muszelik's recall to Charlotte changes the combination described earlier in camp. Purpura's early work will be worth following as the Ghost Pirates establish their rotation. Communication with the defense, rebound control and dependable performances across consecutive appearances will matter as much as the first starting assignment.

Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

SOUTH DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

South Carolina Stingrays

Division	NHL affiliate
South	Washington Capitals

Forecast

South Carolina has a promising blend of returning offense and experienced additions. Josh Wilkins supplies a recent scoring foundation, while Zack Andrusiak brings a history of finishing chances. The Prokop brothers add another intriguing element. The Stingrays have reasons for optimism, with the final roster still needed to judge the balance of the whole team.

How the team is taking shape

Wilkins' 45 points in 52 games make his return meaningful. Andrusiak arrives after scoring 23 goals in Norway, and Luke Prokop brings recent AHL experience to the defense. Josh Prokop adds another forward coming off a productive season overseas. The challenge is giving each addition a role that fits.

In goal

Ben Kraws and Garin Bjorklund are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Josh Wilkins — Forward	Opening roster — active
Zack Andrusiak — Forward	Opening roster — active
Luke Prokop — Defense	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Ludwig Persson, Jalen Luypen and Tyler Kopff add to Hershey's earlier forward loans. Noah Beck, Jeremie Biakabutuka and Rhett Parsons strengthen the defensive competition. Luke Prokop has also returned from his Bakersfield tryout, giving the staff more options as it settles its pairings.

Wilkins returns | Andrusiak joins | Prokop brothers sign | Official affiliations | Stingrays at AHL camps | Hershey loans and Stingrays returns | ECHL transactions October 5 | ECHL transactions October 12 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

SOUTH CAROLINA STINGRAYS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Josh Wilkins

Forward | Opening roster — active

The returning offensive reference point

Wilkins recorded 21 goals and 24 assists in 52 regular-season games last season, then added six playoff points. His return gives South Carolina a current contribution around which to build. The arrivals elsewhere in the forward group may change his combinations, but they also offer the possibility of sharing the scoring responsibility. Sustaining his recent production would give the Stingrays a useful foundation.

Wilkins returns | Official season-opening rosters

2 Zack Andrusiak

Forward | Opening roster — active

A scorer returns to the league

Andrusiak scored 23 goals in 41 games in Norway last season. His earlier ECHL work includes a 34-goal, 68-point campaign in 2023–24 across Cincinnati and Fort Wayne. Those results make his return interesting without guaranteeing the same totals in South Carolina. The early question is whether his new linemates and opportunities allow him to become a regular finishing option again.

Andrusiak joins | Official season-opening rosters

3 Luke Prokop

Defense | Opening roster — active

Recent AHL experience for the blue line

Prokop played 42 games for Bakersfield last season and recorded 11 points. His move gives South Carolina a defenseman coming directly from a substantial AHL workload. The Stingrays will be looking for that experience to translate into reliable minutes. His role should become clearer as the pairings form and the coaching staff decides how to distribute responsibility across the defense.

Prokop brothers sign | Stingrays at AHL camps | Hershey loans and Stingrays returns | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

CENTRAL DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Bloomington Bison

Division	NHL affiliate
Central	Winnipeg Jets

Forecast

Vladislav Kamenev's arrival gives Bloomington another experienced forward to place alongside its established pieces. Nikita Sedov remains a major source of offense from defense, while Markus Stensrud begins his transition from Norway. The Bison have an interesting mix; making the new combinations work is the next test.

How the team is taking shape

Sedov's 59-point season made him a major contributor from the blue line. Raivis Ansons brings substantial AHL experience, while Vladislav Kamenev adds another experienced forward. The new combinations matter as Bloomington replaces Eddie Matsushima, now with Savannah. Evgeniy Oksentyuk was released October 7.

In goal

Alex Worthington and Isaac Poulter are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. Markus Stensrud begins on reserve. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Nikita Sedov — Defense	Opening roster — active
Vladislav Kamenev — Forward	Opening roster — active
Markus Stensrud — Goaltender	Opening roster — reserve

Roster changes

Kamenev signed October 1 after a career that includes NHL and AHL appearances and two KHL championships. He joins a group already adding Raivis Ansons and several rookies. That experience should give the staff more choices as it replaces departed scoring and assigns responsibilities. Manitoba has also assigned Sullivan Mack and Deni Goure.

Sedov returns | Ansons and Oksentyuk sign | Stensrud signing | Drake and Matsushima join | Bison add three | Bison forward signings | Bloomington signs Kamenev | ECHL transactions October 3 | ECHL transactions October 7 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

BLOOMINGTON BISON PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Nikita Sedov

Defense | Opening roster — active

A major offensive contributor returns

Sedov recorded 59 points last season, including 46 assists, and earned selection to the All-ECHL Second Team. His return retains a considerable source of offense from defense. That makes him central to Bloomington's early outlook. The next challenge is maintaining that influence as teammates change, while ensuring that the club's attacking play remains a shared responsibility rather than resting too heavily on one defenseman.

Sedov returns | Official season-opening rosters

2 Vladislav Kamenev

Forward | Opening roster — active

Experience joins a changing attack

Kamenev brings 146 career AHL games and 105 points at that level, along with NHL experience and two KHL championships. Bloomington gains a forward whose background offers several possible uses. His first task is settling into the new team and finding productive combinations. Watch where the staff deploys him and whether his presence helps the younger forwards make better decisions with the puck.

Bloomington signs Kamenev | Official season-opening rosters

3 Markus Stensrud

Goaltender | Opening roster — reserve

A new league after success in Norway

Stensrud posted a 27–7 regular-season record for Storhamar last season, then went 12–3 with a .928 save percentage in the playoffs. Bloomington is adding a goalie with recent success, but those results came in Norway. The transition to the ECHL is the story to follow. A good camp and steady early appearances would give the Bison a clearer view of his potential role. He begins on reserve, so activation is needed before he can enter the lineup.

Stensrud signing | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

CENTRAL DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Cincinnati Cyclones

Division	NHL affiliate
Central	Toronto Maple Leafs

Forecast

Cincinnati begins a different chapter after Justin Vaive's retirement. Alexander Burmistrov brings extensive experience, while Ryan Kirwan returns through assignment after earning All-Rookie recognition. The challenge is turning that mixture into a clear identity and sharing the responsibilities left by the former captain.

How the team is taking shape

Burmistrov has played 348 NHL games and spent nine seasons in the KHL. Kirwan offers a more recent Cincinnati reference after his 2025–26 All-Rookie selection. Those different backgrounds give the Cyclones interesting combinations to try as they look for sustained offense across the lineup.

In goal

Timofei Obvintsev remains available, with Connor Green newly signed. Kaidan Mbereko moved to reserve October 15 and needs activation before entering the lineup. That change leaves the opening workload to be established.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Alexander Burmistrov — Forward	Opening roster — active
Ryan Kirwan — Forward	Opening roster — active
Kaidan Mbereko — Goaltender	October 15 update — reserve

Roster changes

Connor Sweeney was released and claimed by Worcester. Sahil Panwar is on the published active opening roster, resolving the earlier uncertainty about his place. Zack Trott remains on team suspension. Kirwan and Burmistrov give the opening attack two distinct storylines to follow. October 15: Connor Green signed; Kaidan Mbereko moved to reserve.

Burmistrov joins Cincinnati | Trott returns | Mbereko returns | Vaive retires | Bohlinger trade | Cincinnati signs Sweeney | ECHL transactions October 4 | ECHL transactions October 5 | Kirwan earns All-Rookie recognition | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions | October 15 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

CINCINNATI CYCLONES PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Alexander Burmistrov

Forward | Opening roster — active

A notable arrival with a new task

Burmistrov brings 348 NHL games and nine KHL seasons to Cincinnati. That background makes his signing one of the more eye-catching moves in the league. His value now will depend on how his experience fits the Cyclones' current needs. The useful early questions concern his role, linemates and effectiveness over a regular schedule, rather than treating a past NHL résumé as a scoring guarantee.

Burmistrov joins Cincinnati | Official season-opening rosters

2 Ryan Kirwan

Forward | Opening roster — active

A returning scorer to build around

Kirwan earned selection to the 2025–26 ECHL All-Rookie Team during his first season with Cincinnati. His October 4 assignment gives the Cyclones a returning player with a recent record of making an impact. The next challenge is sustaining that contribution as teammates and responsibilities change. Watch his combinations and the opportunities he receives in an attack also adding Alexander Burmistrov's experience.

Kirwan earns All-Rookie recognition | ECHL transactions October 4 | Official season-opening rosters

3 Kaidan Mbereko

Goaltender | October 15 update — reserve

From college success to a longer pro test

Mbereko made four ECHL appearances after a Colorado College season in which he posted a .915 save percentage over 30 games. His return gives Cincinnati a young goalie whose professional story is still beginning. The college results are encouraging background, but the next task is handling ECHL shooters and a professional schedule. The opening weeks will help determine the size of that opportunity. He moved to reserve October 15 and must be activated before playing.

Mbereko returns | Official season-opening rosters | October 15 transactions

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

CENTRAL DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Fort Wayne Komets

Division	NHL affiliate
Central	Edmonton Oilers

Forecast

Arnaud Durandeau and returning goalie Samuel Jonsson give Fort Wayne appealing opening pieces. Simon Després begins on injured reserve and Jack Kopacka remains on AHL loan, however, so the Komets cannot initially rely on their full summer signing list. The available depth faces an immediate test.

How the team is taking shape

Durandeau brings a substantial AHL scoring record. Patrick Guzzo, Randy Hernandez and Brady Stonehouse are among the active forward options, while Cole Hults and Jack Matier help form the defense. Després starts on seven-day injured reserve and Mitch Hults on reserve, leaving responsibility for the available group.

In goal

Nathaniel Day and Samuel Jonsson are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. Eemil Vinni begins on reserve. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Arnaud Durandeau — Forward	Opening roster — active
Samuel Jonsson — Goaltender	Opening roster — active
Simon Després — Defense	Opening roster — 7-day IR

Roster changes

Kopacka was loaned to Bakersfield October 4. Josh Davies, Hunter Johannes, Brady Stonehouse and John Gormley joined the assigned group, while Cole Hults signed October 8. Victor Hadfield was released. Those moves make the opening picture different from the summer signing list.

Durandeau and Kopacka join | Després and Hernandez sign | Three more Komets additions | Official affiliations | ECHL transactions October 5 | ECHL transactions October 8 | ECHL transactions October 12 | Condors preseason goalie background | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

FORT WAYNE KOMETS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Arnaud Durandeau

Forward | Opening roster — active

An experienced attacking addition

Durandeau arrives with 135 points in 234 AHL games. That is a substantial professional foundation for a forward entering Fort Wayne's plans. The key question is how his new role lets him contribute at this level. With other experienced additions around him, the Komets have several possible combinations to explore, and his chemistry with those teammates will be an important early storyline.

Durandeau and Kopacka join | Official season-opening rosters

2 Samuel Jonsson

Goaltender | Opening roster — active

Familiarity returns to the crease

Jonsson went 21–8–2 for Fort Wayne last season, with a 2.38 goals-against average, a .910 save percentage and five shutouts. His assignment gives the Komets a goalie with recent success in their own lineup. Nathaniel Day and Eemil Vinni also arrive, so the workload is still to be decided. Jonsson's early performances will show how that familiar foundation fits with a changing defense.

Condors preseason goalie background | ECHL transactions October 5 | Official season-opening rosters

3 Simon Després

Defense | Opening roster — 7-day IR

Experience for a changing blue line

Després brings a career that includes six NHL seasons and eight years in Europe. Fort Wayne is adding a defenseman with a very different background from a typical first-year professional. The practical value will come through his current play: handling regular minutes, building partnerships and helping the defense settle. His role in the opening weeks should offer a clearer guide than his résumé alone. He begins on seven-day injured reserve; his return to availability is the first development to follow.

Després and Hernandez sign | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

CENTRAL DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Indy Fuel

Division	NHL affiliate
Central	Chicago Blackhawks

Forecast

Indy starts with a new head coach in Jesse Messier and some recognizable forwards to build around. Jesse Tucker and Cody Laskosky return, while Mitchell Hoelscher comes back after two seasons in Europe. The opportunity is to combine that continuity and new scoring help into an attack that can produce regularly across the lineup.

How the team is taking shape

Tucker played all 72 games last season, and Laskosky supplied 33 points in 50 appearances. Hoelscher adds an established professional option. Messier's first the opening weeks will be important for deciding how those pieces fit and which supporting players can take on more responsibility.

In goal

Thomas Gale and Adam Gajan are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. Ryan Ouellette begins on reserve. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Jesse Tucker — Forward	Opening roster — active
Cody Laskosky — Forward	Opening roster — active
Mitchell Hoelscher — Forward	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Terry Broadhurst and Lane Brockhoff begin on seven-day injured reserve. The active forward group includes Jesse Tucker, Cody Laskosky and Mitchell Hoelscher, while Thomas Gale and Adam Gajan form the available goalie pair. Those are the immediate pieces for Jesse Messier's opening lineup.

Messier named head coach | Tucker re-signs | Fuel signings | Hoelscher returns | Ennis–Hislop trade | Ouellette returns | Bohlinger trade | Cameron retires | Rockford assigns seven to Indy | ECHL transactions October 3 | ECHL transactions October 9 | ECHL transactions October 11 | ECHL transactions October 12 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

INDY FUEL PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Jesse Tucker

Forward | Opening roster — active

Durability and a familiar contribution

Tucker appeared in every regular-season game for Indy last season, recording 12 goals and 26 assists. His return preserves both a useful offensive contribution and a player who was consistently available. That should help as a new coach establishes the lineup. The next question is whether he can build on those 38 points while adapting to different combinations around him.

Tucker re-signs | Official season-opening rosters

2 Cody Laskosky

Forward | Opening roster — active

A returning piece of the offense

Laskosky produced 33 points in 50 games for the Fuel last season and added four points in five playoff appearances. His new deal gives Indy a recent contribution to retain as the coaching staff changes. A longer stretch of regular work could make him more influential. Watch where he fits among the scoring lines and how he combines with the incoming experience.

Fuel signings | Official season-opening rosters

3 Mitchell Hoelscher

Forward | Opening roster — active

An experienced return from Europe

Hoelscher comes back after recording 74 points in 96 games across two seasons in Europe. His earlier ECHL work included a 47-point season with Orlando in 2023–24. Indy is therefore adding a forward with more than one useful professional reference point. His current role remains to be established, but his arrival gives the new coaching staff another option as it organizes the attack.

Hoelscher returns | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

CENTRAL DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Kalamazoo Wings

Division	NHL affiliate
Central	Vancouver Canucks

Forecast

Kalamazoo's outlook now depends more heavily on its new additions around Dylan Wendt. Colin Bilek is on team suspension, removing him from the available group assessed here. The club needs the reshaped attack to find dependable scoring while the staff organizes a deeper goalie competition.

How the team is taking shape

Wendt and Ayden MacDonald remain useful forward options. Quinn Emerson and Ryan St. Louis have been assigned from Abbotsford, adding competition for offensive roles. The staff's task is to find combinations that can sustain pressure rather than rely on isolated contributions.

In goal

Mitchell Weeks and Aku Koskenvuo are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. Hunter Vorva begins on reserve. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Quinn Emerson — Forward	Opening roster — active
Dylan Wendt — Forward	Opening roster — active
Hunter Vorva — Goaltender	Opening roster — reserve

Roster changes

Hunter Vorva converted his tryout into a contract and begins on reserve. Victor Hadfield was claimed from Fort Wayne. Sean Chisholm and Cooper Walker are active forward options, while Colin Bilek remains on team suspension and Tim Rego has returned to Abbotsford.

Bilek and MacDonald sign | Wendt joins Kalamazoo | Vorva tryout and Shoudy signing | Sutter joins Kalamazoo | Hillier and Orr | ECHL transactions October 2 | ECHL transactions October 8 | ECHL transactions October 10 | ECHL transactions October 12 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

KALAMAZOO WINGS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Quinn Emerson

Forward | Opening roster — active

An opportunity to establish a professional role

Emerson’s assignment from Abbotsford gives Kalamazoo another forward to work into its attack. The immediate interest is where he fits among the established players and which responsibilities he can earn. Watch his decisions under pressure and his ability to keep possessions alive. A dependable contribution over several shifts will matter more than a single impressive camp play.

ECHL transactions October 2 | Official season-opening rosters

2 Dylan Wendt

Forward | Opening roster — active

An addition with productive ECHL experience

Wendt collected 21 points in 30 games for Adirondack last season and also appeared in 19 AHL games with Utica. That makes him an interesting addition for Kalamazoo, particularly if he receives a regular attacking role. His recent ECHL work provides a useful starting point. A full season with settled combinations would offer a better measure of how much he can contribute.

Wendt joins Kalamazoo | Official season-opening rosters

3 Hunter Vorva

Goaltender | Opening roster — reserve

A familiar name competing for a place

Vorva earned a contract after his tryout and begins the season on reserve behind Mitchell Weeks and Aku Koskenvuo. He made only three appearances during an injury-shortened 2025–26 season, but his wider ECHL record includes 81 games and a .917 save percentage. The next step is activation and regular work. His progress remains worth following without assuming an immediate place in the rotation.

Vorva tryout and Shoudy signing | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

CENTRAL DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Toledo Walleye

Division	NHL affiliate
Central	Detroit Red Wings

Forecast

Toledo has meaningful returning offense in Tanner Dickinson and Mitch Lewandowski. That gives the Walleye a clearer attacking foundation than many teams still waiting for their main contributors to emerge. The challenge is to turn that continuity into consistent team play while younger forwards develop and the final defensive and goalie arrangements come together.

How the team is taking shape

Dickinson’s 64-point season and Lewandowski’s 44 points in 50 Toledo games provide recent production to retain. Chris Terry joins an active forward group also containing Brandon Hawkins and Kyle Gaffney. Johnny Waldron begins on injured reserve, making the available depth important from the start.

In goal

Jonathan Lemieux and Carter Gylander are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Tanner Dickinson — Forward	Opening roster — active
Mitch Lewandowski — Forward	Opening roster — active
Kyle Gaffney — Forward	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Chris Terry signed October 14 and is on the active opening roster. Matt Jurusik is on team suspension, leaving Jonathan Lemieux and Carter Gylander as the active goalies. Marcus Crawford and Kaden Bohlsen are also available organizational arrivals.

Dickinson returns | Lewandowski and Waldron return | Gaffney returns | McLeod trade | Toledo assignments | Bertuzzi and Moyle recalled | Toledo re-signs Jurusik | ECHL transactions October 2 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

TOLEDO WALLEYE PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Tanner Dickinson

Forward | Opening roster — active

A full season of production to build on

Dickinson played all 72 regular-season games for Toledo in 2025–26 and recorded 23 goals and 41 assists. He then added six points in 12 playoff games. His return preserves a particularly substantial recent contribution. The combination of production and availability makes him central to the early outlook, with the next test being whether the surrounding attack can build on that foundation.

Dickinson returns | Official season-opening rosters

2 Mitch Lewandowski

Forward | Opening roster — active

A familiar attacking option returns

Lewandowski recorded 44 points in 50 games for Toledo after beginning last season in Sweden. Bringing him back gives the Walleye another forward with recent production in their own lineup. A full campaign would offer more time to build combinations and sustain that contribution. His role alongside the other returning scorers should be one of the more interesting parts of Toledo's opening attack.

Lewandowski and Waldron return | Official season-opening rosters

3 Kyle Gaffney

Forward | Opening roster — active

A young player with playoff experience to use

Gaffney followed five regular-season games with 12 playoff appearances for Toledo, recording five postseason points. That is a useful introduction, although still a short professional record. The next step is contributing across a full schedule rather than a late-season window. His camp and early role should show how much responsibility the Walleye are ready to give him around their established forwards.

Gaffney returns | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

CENTRAL DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Wheeling Nailers

Division	NHL affiliate
Central	Columbus Blue Jackets

Forecast

Wheeling enters a new organizational chapter with Columbus and Cleveland replacing its long Pittsburgh connection. The early roster still contains useful familiar pieces, including Mike Posma and Tristan Thompson, while Kasimir Kaskisuo adds experience in goal. How the new affiliation supports that group will be an important part of the season's opening story.

How the team is taking shape

Posma returns after a 26-point rookie season, and Thompson contributed 17 points in 31 Wheeling games after arriving from Maine. Those recent performances give the Nailers something tangible to build around while the new organizational pipeline takes shape.

In goal

Kasimir Kaskisuo and Nolan Lalonde are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. Philip Svedebäck begins on reserve. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Mike Posma — Forward	Opening roster — active
Tristan Thompson — Defense	Opening roster — active
Kasimir Kaskisuo — Goaltender	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Kevin Gursoy's visa approval moves him onto the active list as Wheeling prepares its opener. Mike Posma and Tristan Thompson provide familiar pieces under Nate DiCasmirro. The new Columbus affiliation adds another layer to the choices as the Nailers settle their first lineup.

New Columbus affiliation | Posma returns | Thompson returns | Kaskisuo joins Wheeling | Sutter joins Kalamazoo | Wheeling camp roster | ECHL transactions October 12 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

WHEELING NAILERS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Mike Posma

Forward | Opening roster — active

A second season with room to grow

Posma recorded 13 goals and 26 points during his rookie season with Wheeling, then added four points in 15 playoff games. His return gives the Nailers a young forward with a full professional year to build on. The next question is whether experience leads to a larger or more productive role. He is a useful player to follow as the new affiliation reshapes the surrounding lineup.

Posma returns | Wheeling camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

2 Tristan Thompson

Defense | Opening roster — active

A productive arrival stays

Thompson finished last season with 31 points in 64 games across Maine and Wheeling, including 17 points in 31 Nailers games. His return preserves a defenseman who had already begun contributing after the move. The next step is maintaining that influence over a longer stretch. His partnerships will be worth watching as the club incorporates players from its new organizational connection.

Thompson returns | Wheeling camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

3 Kasimir Kaskisuo

Goaltender | Opening roster — active

Experience across several professional levels

Kaskisuo brings 108 AHL appearances and 47 ECHL games to Wheeling, along with experience in Europe. Last season he made 15 appearances in Finland. The signing gives the Nailers an experienced option as their affiliation changes, but his exact role still needs to be established. His early adjustment and relationship with the defense will matter more than assuming his career record predicts this season.

Kaskisuo joins Wheeling | Wheeling camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

MOUNTAIN DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Allen Americans

Division	NHL affiliate
Mountain	Ottawa Senators

Forecast

Allen has a useful offensive starting point with Michael Gildon returning and Mathieu De St. Phalle added to the forward group. Lukas Sillinger also stays after a productive introduction. The opportunity is to spread the scoring across more combinations, giving the Americans options when opponents focus on their leading players.

How the team is taking shape

Gildon played every game last season and produced 55 points. De St. Phalle arrives after two productive years with Wheeling, while Sillinger offers continuity after his first partial season in Allen. Anthony Rinaldi is awaiting visa clearance, so his arrival should not be counted as immediate opening help.

In goal

Brett Mirwald and Jesper Vikman are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Michael Gildon — Forward	Opening roster — active
Mathieu De St. Phalle — Forward	Opening roster — active
Lukas Sillinger — Forward	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Tucson has sent Terrell Goldsmith, Miko Matikka, Noel Nordh and Sam Lipkin along with Vikman. Sam Sedley also signed. Lukas Sillinger is listed on Allen’s preseason roster, alongside the earlier attacking additions, as the Americans finish organizing their opening group.

Gildon returns | Rinaldi and De St. Phalle sign | Sillinger returns | Americans at AHL camps | ECHL transactions October 8 | Club preseason roster, checked October 13 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

ALLEN AMERICANS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Michael Gildon

Forward | Opening roster — active

A full-season contribution returns

Gildon recorded 21 goals and 34 assists while appearing in all 72 games last season. That career-best production and steady availability make his return a significant part of Allen's early outlook. The new forward additions may give the coaching staff different combinations to try. His task is to remain a dependable contributor as those changes take shape, helping the attack sustain pressure across the schedule.

Gildon returns | Official season-opening rosters

2 Mathieu De St. Phalle

Forward | Opening roster — active

An incoming scorer with recent ECHL results

De St. Phalle produced 37 points in 55 games for Wheeling last season, following a 55-point campaign the year before. Allen is adding a forward with a substantial recent ECHL contribution. The next question is how his new role and linemates fit that background. His arrival should help broaden the offense if he can establish similar consistency with the Americans.

Rinaldi and De St. Phalle sign | Official season-opening rosters

3 Lukas Sillinger

Forward | Opening roster — active

Build on the first Allen chapter

Sillinger recorded 12 points in 21 games for Allen after beginning last season with Florida. His return gives him a chance to build on that shorter introduction with the benefit of a full camp. The most useful early sign will be a settled role within the attacking group. Sustained work would offer a clearer view of how much he can contribute over a complete season.

Sillinger returns | Americans at AHL camps | Club preseason roster, checked October 13 | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

MOUNTAIN DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Idaho Steelheads

Division	NHL affiliate
Mountain	Dallas Stars

Forecast

Idaho retains familiar attacking contributors in Ty Pelton-Byce and Liam Malmquist, with new options joining through the Dallas organization. The camp group gives the Steelheads a clearer foundation. Building dependable depth behind those established forwards remains the main test.

How the team is taking shape

Malmquist's 26-goal season gives Idaho a useful returning contribution beside Pelton-Byce. Angus MacDonell is also in the camp group. On defense, John Driscoll and Niilopekka Muhonen offer younger players to follow as the pairings take shape.

In goal

Jake Barczewski and Anson Thornton are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Ty Pelton-Byce — Forward	Opening roster — active
Jake Barczewski — Goaltender	Opening roster — active
John Driscoll — Defense	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Zdenek Sedlak begins on three-day injured reserve despite his earlier visa approval. Adam Hall was acquired from South Carolina. Anson Thornton has signed and joins Jake Barczewski on the active roster; Brady Keeper remains on team suspension. October 15: Luke Mylymok moved to three-day IR; Zdenek Sedlak transferred to seven-day IR.

Pelton-Byce returns | Keeper joins Idaho | Driscoll signs | Kraws signs with Hershey | Malmquist returns | Howarth signs | Gratton trade | Idaho camp roster | ECHL transactions October 1 | ECHL transactions October 12 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions | October 15 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

IDAHO STEELHEADS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Ty Pelton-Byce

Forward | Opening roster — active

A familiar source of Idaho offense

Pelton-Byce recorded 13 goals and 28 assists in 59 games last season, then added six points in Idaho's opening playoff series. His return keeps a forward with a long history of contributing to the Steelheads. The next question is how that experience fits alongside the incoming players. Regular production from a familiar name would help the offense settle while the lineup changes around him.

Pelton-Byce returns | Idaho camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

2 Jake Barczewski

Goaltender | Opening roster — active

A central role in the camp competition

Barczewski shares Idaho's goalie picture with Anson Thornton, who signed October 12 after attending camp on a tryout. That makes the crease one of the opening stories to follow. The Steelheads need dependable first saves and clear communication as their defense settles. Watch how Barczewski handles repeated work and whether the group in front of him can limit second opportunities.

Idaho camp roster | ECHL transactions October 12 | Official season-opening rosters

3 John Driscoll

Defense | Opening roster — active

A local connection begins a pro chapter

Driscoll is an Eagle, Idaho native whose college career spanned Army and Sacred Heart. He recorded 54 points in 147 collegiate games before joining the Steelheads. The move creates a natural local storyline, but the on-ice task is adapting to professional forwards and a new schedule. The opening weeks should show where he fits and how the coaching staff plans to introduce him.

Driscoll signs | Idaho camp roster | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

MOUNTAIN DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Kansas City Mavericks

Division	NHL affiliate
Mountain	Seattle Kraken

Forecast

Kansas City begins with a recent championship-series standard to build toward after reaching the 2026 Kelly Cup Final. Nolan Walker's return adds another familiar connection to the club's recent history. The Mavericks have interesting pieces in place, although a new season still requires its own lineup and a fresh assessment as camp competition settles the lineup.

How the team is taking shape

Walker returns after a productive year in Kalamazoo. Lleyton Moore adds a defenseman with recent AHL experience, while Owen Lindmark joins the forward group after splitting last season between the AHL and ECHL. Those additions give the club several routes to strengthen the lineup.

In goal

Connor Murphy and Logan Terness are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Nolan Walker — Forward	Opening roster — active
Lleyton Moore — Defense	Opening roster — active
Owen Lindmark — Forward	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Andrei Loshko's assignment adds to the active attack alongside Nolan Walker, Owen Lindmark and Jakov Novak. Henry Wilder was released and Christian Cicigoi's tryout ended. Connor Murphy and Logan Terness form the opening goalie pair as the Mavericks begin another campaign.

Florida wins the Kelly Cup | Walker returns to Kansas City | Moore joins the Mavericks | Lindmark signing | Official affiliations | Kansas City signs Wilder | ECHL transactions October 1 | ECHL transactions October 3 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

KANSAS CITY MAVERICKS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Nolan Walker

Forward | Opening roster — active

A familiar scorer returns

Walker recorded 52 points in 69 games for Kalamazoo last season. His earlier Kansas City work included a 68-point campaign in 2023–24, when the Mavericks reached the Kelly Cup Final. The reunion therefore combines familiarity with recent production elsewhere. The next step is finding the combinations that let him contribute to the current team, rather than assuming a previous season can simply be repeated.

Walker returns to Kansas City | Official season-opening rosters

2 Lleyton Moore

Defense | Opening roster — active

An addition with AHL experience

Moore joins after three seasons in the Tucson organization, with 77 AHL appearances on his record. His earlier ECHL work included 39 points in 46 Wichita games during 2023–24. That background makes him an interesting addition to Kansas City’s defense. The useful early test is how much responsibility he receives and whether his attacking contribution fits alongside the team’s defensive requirements.

Moore joins the Mavericks | Official season-opening rosters

3 Owen Lindmark

Forward | Opening roster — active

A chance to establish a regular contribution

Lindmark split last season between San Diego and Tulsa, giving him experience at both the AHL and ECHL levels. Kansas City now offers a new opportunity to establish his role. His progress will be worth following as the Mavericks build their forward combinations and decide which players can contribute consistently. A settled place in the lineup would provide the clearest measure of his impact.

Lindmark signing | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

MOUNTAIN DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

New Mexico Goatheads

Division	NHL affiliate
Mountain	Colorado Avalanche

Forecast

New Mexico’s first season has an intriguing foundation in Derek Daschke, an accomplished offensive defenseman at this level. Maksim Barbashev and Tyler Drevitch add ECHL experience up front. For an expansion club, the immediate challenge is turning those individual backgrounds into a recognizable team game and a dependable full lineup.

How the team is taking shape

Daschke gives coach Zack Stortini a player with a recent All-ECHL season on his résumé. Barbashev brings experience from Utah and Allen, while Drevitch has played nearly 300 games in the league. Those signings should help the new club avoid relying entirely on players making their professional debut.

In goal

Hunter Miska and Isaiah Saville are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. Brian Wilson begins on reserve. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Derek Daschke — Defense	Opening roster — active
Maksim Barbashev — Forward	Opening roster — active
Tyler Drevitch — Forward	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Hank Kempf and Saige Weinstein have been assigned, adding options on defense. Earlier arrivals Francesco Arcuri, Evan Friesen and Rilen Kovacevic broaden the attack, alongside trade addition Cameron Buhl. The new club now needs those pieces to establish a shared game quickly for its October 16 debut. Luka Burzan also arrives from South Carolina and is active. October 15: Graeme McCrory signed; Aaron Chiarot moved to three-day IR.

Daschke joins New Mexico | Barbashev signing | Drevitch joins New Mexico | 2026–27 schedule | Official affiliations | New Mexico acquires Buhl | ECHL transactions October 1 | ECHL transactions October 10 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions | October 15 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

NEW MEXICO GOATHEADS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Derek Daschke

Defense | Opening roster — active

A notable building block for the new club

Daschke earned All-ECHL First Team recognition after a 56-point season with Utah in 2024–25. Last season included AHL work, a stint in Finland and nine Kalamazoo games. New Mexico is adding a defenseman with a clear record of offense at this level. A regular role could make him central to how the expansion team develops its attacking play from the back end.

Daschke joins New Mexico | Official season-opening rosters

2 Maksim Barbashev

Forward | Opening roster — active

A new home and a chance to grow

Barbashev recorded 21 points in 50 games between Utah and Allen last season, while also appearing three times for Tucson. His signing gives New Mexico a forward with recent experience of the league and room to develop. The opportunity will depend on his role within the new attack. Camp and the opening games should show which combinations give him the best chance to contribute.

Barbashev signing | Official season-opening rosters

3 Tyler Drevitch

Forward | Opening roster — active

League experience for a first-year roster

Drevitch brings 297 career ECHL games to New Mexico, including 47 appearances for Orlando last season. That background is useful on a club assembling its first lineup. His contribution will be interesting as the Goatheads decide how to balance experience with developing players. The early goal is a dependable role that helps the new forward group settle into the demands of a full season.

Drevitch joins New Mexico | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

MOUNTAIN DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Rapid City Rush

Division	NHL affiliate
Mountain	Calgary Flames

Forecast

Rapid City's early story combines a familiar veteran return with a new goalie beginning his professional career. Alec Butcher brings a long ECHL record, while Shane Farkas arrives after success at Mount Royal. Seth Fyten's finish to last season offers another reason for interest. The challenge is making those promising pieces part of a consistent team.

How the team is taking shape

Butcher returns to a club where he previously produced a 53-point season, although that was in 2021–22. Fyten supplies a more immediate local reference after recording eight points in his final 11 games. Sustaining useful contributions beyond short stretches will be important to the Rush attack.

In goal

Semyon Konopsky and Owen Say are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. Shane Farkas begins on reserve. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Alec Butcher — Forward	Opening roster — reserve
Seth Fyten — Forward	Opening roster — active
Shane Farkas — Goaltender	Opening roster — reserve

Roster changes

Kyle Walker returned from assignment after his earlier recall. Tyson Feist and Tyler Inamoto also arrived, giving the defense more options. Quinn Olson, Ryan Hofer and Alex Campbell are among the forward additions, while Cameron Buhl's trade to New Mexico creates an opening for others.

Butcher returns | Fyten returns | Farkas signs | Keeper joins Idaho | Rush at AHL camp | Calgary assigns players to Rapid City | New Mexico acquires Buhl | ECHL transactions October 2 | ECHL transactions October 4 | ECHL transactions October 8 | ECHL transactions October 9 | Club preseason roster, checked October 13 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

RAPID CITY RUSH PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Alec Butcher

Forward | Opening roster — reserve

A familiar veteran returns with perspective

Butcher's previous Rapid City season in 2021–22 produced 53 points in 69 games. He has since played for Reading and Tulsa and returns with 417 career ECHL games behind him. That experience gives the Rush a forward who knows the league's demands. The current question is what role best uses his contribution now, rather than expecting a four-year-old scoring season to repeat automatically. He begins on reserve, so activation is needed before he can enter the lineup.

Butcher returns | Official season-opening rosters

2 Seth Fyten

Forward | Opening roster — active

Carry the late-season progress forward

Fyten finished 2025–26 with 18 points in 51 games, including eight points over his last 11 appearances. That final stretch gives his return an interesting angle. The next step is extending useful production across more of the schedule. A full camp and settled combinations could help determine whether that finish was a brief run or a foundation for a larger role.

Fyten returns | Rush at AHL camp | Calgary assigns players to Rapid City | Club preseason roster, checked October 13 | Official season-opening rosters

3 Shane Farkas

Goaltender | Opening roster — reserve

A rookie enters a deeper goalie competition

Farkas arrives with a 51–22 university record at Mount Royal and the 2024 U Sports Goaltender of the Year award. Those achievements give his first professional season an interesting starting point. The assignments of Owen Say and Semyon Konopsky make the Rush competition deeper, so Farkas's opportunity needs to be assessed against the final roster. Watch how his game adapts to faster decisions and more traffic around the net. He begins on reserve, so activation is needed before he can enter the lineup.

Farkas signs | Rush at AHL camp | Calgary assigns players to Rapid City | Club preseason roster, checked October 13 | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

MOUNTAIN DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Tahoe Knight Monsters

Division	NHL affiliate
Mountain	Vegas Golden Knights

Forecast

Tahoe starts a new coaching chapter with Connor Jones and a roster that combines returning defensemen with changes up front. Cam Hausinger adds recent ECHL experience, while Kaelan Taylor provides continuity on the blue line. The early focus is how the new coach shapes that mix and replaces the contributions of departing players.

How the team is taking shape

Taylor returns after a 67-game season, and Tucker Ness remains another option on defense. Hausinger joins after playing for Greenville and Toledo. The group gives Jones both familiar Tahoe pieces and newcomers to incorporate, with forward depth still important after Mike O'Leary's move to Greenville.

In goal

Alexander Tracy and Pavel Moysevich are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. Jordan Papirny begins on reserve. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Cam Hausinger — Forward	Opening roster — active
Kaelan Taylor — Defense	Opening roster — active
Tucker Ness — Defense	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Artur Cholach has signed with Trenton, adding another departure to account for alongside Mike O'Leary's move to Greenville. Cam Hausinger joins the forwards, while Kaelan Taylor and Tucker Ness return on defense. New coach Jones enters opening week with pairings and larger roles still to settle. Five more Henderson assignments add depth. Michael Farren is on team suspension.

Jones named head coach | Hausinger joins Tahoe | Taylor returns | Ness returns | O'Leary joins Greenville | Cholach signs | ECHL transactions October 2 | ECHL transactions October 4 | ECHL transactions October 3 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

TAHOE KNIGHT MONSTERS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Cam Hausinger

Forward | Opening roster — active

An experienced addition to the new coach’s group

Hausinger recorded 15 goals and 16 assists in 64 games between Greenville and Toledo last season. Tahoe is adding a forward with a substantial recent ECHL workload as Connor Jones organizes his first lineup. The key question is where he fits among the attacking options. A dependable contribution would help the Knight Monsters replace departing offense without expecting one player to do all the work.

Hausinger joins Tahoe | Official season-opening rosters

2 Kaelan Taylor

Defense | Opening roster — active

Continuity through a coaching change

Taylor played 67 games for Tahoe last season and recorded 20 points. His return keeps a defenseman with recent experience of the club while a new coach takes over. That familiarity should be useful as different pairings are tested. The next question is how his role develops and whether he can provide the same steady availability as the lineup changes around him.

Taylor returns | Official season-opening rosters

3 Tucker Ness

Defense | Opening roster — active

A chance to build a longer professional record

Ness appeared in 17 games during his rookie season and scored one goal. Returning to Tahoe gives him another opportunity to establish a regular place, now under a new head coach. His progress will be measured first by the responsibility he earns and the consistency of his work. A larger run of games would provide a better view of his contribution than the initial sample.

Ness returns | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

MOUNTAIN DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Tulsa Oilers

Division	NHL affiliate
Mountain	Anaheim Ducks

Forecast

Jay Dickman’s recent scoring and availability make him an important addition to Tulsa’s attack. Connor Fedorek supplies a familiar defensive option, while Tomas Suchanek joins Jake Sibell in goal. The challenge is building a balanced team around those pieces.

How the team is taking shape

Dickman arrives from Wichita after a 24-goal season. Fedorek returns following a short Tulsa stint, and Jake Lee adds to the active defense. Caleb Huffman was released, so the opening defensive picture differs from the earlier preview.

In goal

Jake Sibell and Tomas Suchanek are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Jay Dickman — Forward	Opening roster — active
Connor Fedorek — Defense	Opening roster — active
Tomas Suchanek — Goaltender	Opening roster — active

Roster changes

Sasha Mutala and Kyle Kukkonen have been assigned from San Diego, along with defenseman Jake Lee. Tulsa also claimed Oliver Tarr after his release by Greenville. Those arrivals add choices around Jay Dickman as the Oilers finish organizing their lines and pairings.

Dickman joins Tulsa | Fedorek returns | Huffman signing | Propp joins Maine | Lindmark signing | McKee returns | Tulsa adds two defensemen | ECHL transactions October 5 | ECHL transactions October 9 | ECHL transactions October 11 | ECHL transactions October 12 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

TULSA OILERS PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Jay Dickman

Forward | Opening roster — active

A new source of goals

Dickman scored 24 goals for Wichita last season after a 30-goal, 73-point campaign in 2024–25. He also brings a strong recent record of availability, having played every game over the past three seasons. That makes him a significant addition to Tulsa's early picture. The next task is finding the combinations that help his scoring translate effectively to a different team.

Dickman joins Tulsa | Official season-opening rosters

2 Connor Fedorek

Defense | Opening roster — active

Build beyond the first Tulsa stint

Fedorek recorded three points in 13 games for Tulsa after arriving from Norfolk. His return gives him a chance to establish a longer role with the Oilers and allows the club to build on its first look. The opening weeks should show how he fits into the pairings. Consistent defensive work over a larger sample will be the more useful measure than that brief scoring total.

Fedorek returns | Official season-opening rosters

3 Tomas Suchanek

Goaltender | Opening roster — active

An affiliate arrival in the opening pair

Suchanek's assignment from San Diego puts him on Tulsa's active opening roster alongside Jake Sibell. His arrival gives the Oilers another option as they organize the team around a reshaped attack. Watch how quickly he develops an understanding with the defense and what share of the early work he earns. The roster establishes his availability without deciding which goalie will carry the heavier workload.

Official season-opening rosters | ECHL transactions October 12

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

MOUNTAIN DIVISION TEAM PREVIEW

Wichita Thunder

Division	NHL affiliate
Mountain	San Jose Sharks

Forecast

Wichita must replace departed offense while Spencer Blackwell and Ryan Finnegan begin on injured reserve. Tyler Preziuso and Connor Lockhart are among the available forwards. Young goalie Yaroslav Korostelev and defenseman Riley Bodnarchuk remain development stories as the Thunder establish their opening identity.

How the team is taking shape

Preziuso and Lockhart give the available attack options, with Blackwell on seven-day injured reserve and Finnegan on three-day injured reserve. Bodnarchuk begins active after college and a brief professional introduction. The early challenge is sharing responsibility while familiar forwards are unavailable.

In goal

Yaroslav Korostelev and Connor Hasley are the active goalies on the season-opening roster. The opening games will show how the staff shares the starts and how quickly the goalies establish an understanding with the defense.

Players to know

Player	Status at research date
Yaroslav Korostelev — Goaltender	Opening roster — active
Riley Bodnarchuk — Defense	Opening roster — active
Spencer Blackwell — Forward	Opening roster — 7-day IR

Roster changes

Connor Lockhart returned from assignment, while Tristan Sarsland and Mack Oliphant add defensive options. Riley Bodnarchuk is listed on Wichita’s preseason roster. The new group must help replace Jay Dickman’s offense and adjust after Roddy Ross’s trade to Florida.

Blackwell returns | Bodnarchuk joins Wichita | Korostelev and Guignard sign | Dickman joins Tulsa | Ross trade | Finnegan returns | Preziuso signs | Thunder at AHL camp | ECHL transactions October 5 | ECHL transactions October 11 | Club preseason roster, checked October 13 | Official season-opening rosters | October 13 transactions | October 14 transactions

Final opening edition, October 16. Active, reserve and injured-reserve status reflects the published opening rosters and transactions through October 15. Later transactions can change availability.

WICHITA THUNDER PLAYER SPOTLIGHTS

Three players to watch

1 Yaroslav Korostelev

Goaltender | Opening roster — active

A move from junior hockey to a new test

Korostelev recorded a 14–5 record and a .917 save percentage in 20 MHL games last season. Those numbers come from Russian junior hockey, not a professional ECHL workload. Wichita offers a different challenge against older players and within a new environment. His camp and early appearances should reveal how quickly he adapts and what role the Thunder are prepared to give him.

Korostelev and Guignard sign | Official season-opening rosters

2 Riley Bodnarchuk

Defense | Opening roster — active

A first full professional opportunity

Bodnarchuk played 95 college games over four seasons at Minnesota Duluth before appearing in three games for Florida, where he recorded two assists. Wichita is adding a defenseman at the beginning of his professional career. His early contribution will be judged by how reliably he handles a regular role. The opening weeks should help establish the partners and situations that support that transition.

Bodnarchuk joins Wichita | Thunder at AHL camp | Club preseason roster, checked October 13 | Official season-opening rosters

3 Spencer Blackwell

Forward | Opening roster — 7-day IR

A familiar contribution on a changing team

Blackwell recorded 12 goals and nine assists in 71 games last season. His return preserves a forward who was regularly available as Wichita begins to replace departed offense. The next question is whether he can build on that contribution with a different role or new combinations. Dependable scoring from returning players would help the Thunder introduce their younger additions with less pressure. He begins on seven-day injured reserve; his return to availability is the first development to follow.

Blackwell returns | Official season-opening rosters

Profiles checked October 16, 2026. Roles remain subject to roster changes.

EDITORIAL NOTES

About the preview

About this edition

This October 16, 2026 opening edition covers 30 ECHL clubs and 90 featured players. It incorporates the official season-opening rosters and daily transactions through October 15. Projected division standings and playoff selections are editorial judgments based on recent results and opening personnel, not a statistical points model. Player spotlights identify season-long stories; some featured players begin on reserve or injured reserve, as labeled.

Reading the player status

A signed ECHL contract establishes an agreement, but does not guarantee an opening lineup place or a particular role. A trade may transfer a player's rights without establishing a new contract. A professional tryout is an opportunity to earn a place. NHL and AHL contracts and affiliation links do not by themselves confirm an ECHL assignment.

Reading the numbers

Unless another period is specified, season statistics refer to 2025–26 regular-season play at the league named. College, junior, overseas and playoff results are identified separately. Short professional samples are described as such. Past results provide background and do not predict the same production with a new club.

Sources and scope

Linked references accompany the team previews and player profiles. League and club announcements supply the main reporting. Later transactions take precedence over earlier signing notices. This is a selection of important roster stories, not a complete roster register; unlisted players should not be assumed to have left a club.

Status and timing

Opening rosters are a dated snapshot. Reserve players remain with the club but are outside the active list; injured-reserve listings identify current unavailability without promising a return date. Later assignments, recalls and roster decisions may change this picture. The latest daily transaction report available at the October 16 research cutoff was October 15.

Official ECHL schedule | ECHL affiliations