

# NHL playoffs begin

Associated Press

The Calgary Flames are expecting a shootout at the Saddledome with the Los Angeles Kings when the NHL playoffs start Wednesday night.

The Flames finished with 105 points this season, tops in the league. They also were first in goals scored with 397. The Kings scored 318 goals, fifth in the league.

"I've said ever since February that I'd rather not play L.A. because of their scoring punch," Calgary goaltender Mike Vernon said.

The Kings finished 30-42-8 with 88 points, fourth in the Smythe Division. While Los Angeles has one of the best offenses, their defense ranked last, allowing 359 goals — 4.4 a game. The Flames were 13th, allowing 305 goals and 3.77 a game.

## Smythe Division: Jets vs. Oilers

After finishing a disappointing second and failing to win the division title for the first time in seven years, the Edmonton Oilers hope to redeem themselves against Winnipeg. The Oilers, led on offense by Wayne Gretzky, Mark Messier and Glenn Anderson, have beaten Winnipeg in 14 straight playoff games.

## Patrick Division: Devils vs. Islanders

The Islanders hold a 35-1-3 record over the Devils at Nassau Coliseum and will have four potential home games.

The Devils nailed down the last playoff spot on the final day of the season for their first postseason berth since moving to New Jersey in 1982.

New Jersey has the hot goaltender in rookie Sean Burke. Burke, who played for the Canadian Olympic team, was 10-1.

## Flyers vs. Capitals

The Flyers, Stanley Cup finalists last year against Edmonton, had a weak finish due to an unusual amount of injuries. Both teams were inconsistent in the late stages of the Patrick race, when the Islanders took charge.

## Adams Division: Hartford vs. Montreal

At one point near the end of the season, the Canadiens had a 15-game unbeaten streak and finished with the second-best record in the league.

The defensive-minded Canadiens are big, fast and talented and have many players back from their Stanley Cup championship team of two years ago, including 50-goal scorer Stephane Richer.

As for the Whalers, it looked for a while as if they wouldn't make this year's playoffs at all. But a late-season slump by Quebec helped.

## Sabres vs. Bruins

The Bruins had a midseason streak that put them in first until the

Canadiens ripped off a 15-game unbeaten streak. The Bruins slumped at the end but still finished with the fourth-best record in the NHL.

The Sabres, one of the league's youngest clubs, overcame a slow start to finish a strong third.

## Norris Division: Toronto vs. Detroit

Detroit lost superstar Steve Yzerman to injury late in the season, still finished strong, becoming the first divisional title-winner this season. The Red Wings won their division by the biggest spread, 17 points over St. Louis.

Although Toronto (21-49-10, 52 points) enters the playoffs with the worst record among the 16 teams and the worst for a playoff team since the 80-game schedule was adopted, the Maple Leafs have given the division champions trouble this year.

## Chicago vs. St. Louis

The Blackhawks finished third in the Norris, a spot they had sewn up for nearly a month. But they slid toward the playoffs with an 0-7-1 record and carry a two-year postseason drought into their first-round series with the Blues. The Blackhawks were swept 3-0 by Toronto in the 1986 playoffs and 4-0 by Detroit last year.

The Blackhawks were 9-24-7 on the road.

# Astros rally to top Padres 6-3

HOUSTON (AP) — Kevin Bass pinch-hit a two-run single and Billy Hatcher doubled in the winning run in the eighth inning, rallying Houston to a 6-3 victory over San Diego Tuesday night.

Terry Puhl, who was playing because Bass had a pulled right hamstring muscle, started Houston's rally with a single off pitcher Ed Whitson's hand. Rafael Ramirez doubled to right field off reliever Lance McCullers, 0-1, before Bass singled to left, scoring both runners.

That tied the score 3-3, setting the stage for Hatcher's double down the left-field line that scored Chuck

Jackson, pinch-running for Bass.

The Astros had tried to trade Bass to the New York Yankees for Dave Winfield on the weekend, but Winfield vetoed the deal as a 10-and-5 player.

The Astros added two more runs in the eighth when pinch-hitter Steve Henderson's single scored Hatcher and Glenn Davis, who was intentionally walked, scored on a wild pitch by Mark Davis.

The Padres had taken a 3-1 lead on Keith Moreland's two-run double in the eighth inning. Garry Templeton singled off starter Mike Scott, 1-0, and Tony Gwynn walked on four pitches prior to Moreland's hit.

Dave Smith pitched the ninth for a save.

The Padres, who won the season series 13-5 in 1987, took the lead on Chris Brown's solo home run over the 400-foot mark in center field in the third inning.

Brown continued his hot-hitting streak from spring training, when he hit safely in eight of the final nine games.

Glenn Davis tied it in the fourth with a home run over the left field fence, the first home run Whitson had yielded to the Astros in 10 1/2 innings.

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