

2022/2023 Mid-Season All-Stars

I started writing this article a few days after the NHL had announced the first wave of All-Stars. Fan selections were still to be done, and it is an open question who this year's John Scott will be. In this article the Stapled To The Bench All-Stars will be identified without the wisdom and guidance that comes from a fan vote.

The first thing to clear up is the All-Star game itself. Who is it for?

Who is the All-Star Game for?

Is the All-Star Game an honour for the players, or is it something fun for the fans? It cannot be both: players selected on merit will not represent all teams, and some players selected by fans will not be there on merit.

Whatever it was meant to be originally, it is now clearly a fan-centered event. That is why every team has to have a player: Gary Bettman does not want somebody in Anaheim saying, "I'm not watching the All-Star game because no Ducks are playing."

At Stapled To The Bench, All-Star selections are considered an honour for the players. The reason an Anaheim player would not be on the STTB All-Star teams is that the best Duck is not among the best Pacific Division players. As to fans not watching the game, their reason should be that it is a terrible game to watch rather than that their local team is not represented.

In total, ten teams have no STTB All-Stars. The Ducks are not alone.

Selecting the STTB All-Stars

I got all of the data I need from NaturalStatTrick.com on the morning of January 10, 2023. I then did the Productivity Rating (PR) calculations and extrapolated those calculations to 82 games so that players whose teams have played a different number of games are fairly treated in the All-Star selection process.

STTB All-Stars will be the four defensemen and eight forwards with the highest PR in each division. They will be shown in a table grouped by position and in order of ranking within their position. For example, Brent Burns is listed second in the Metropolitan Division because he is the division's second-highest rated defenseman.

Where a team (such as Anaheim) does not have an STTB All-Star, I will note which of their players was the best.

2022/2023 Mid-Season All-Stars

Metropolitan Division All-Stars

| Metropolitan Division | | |
|-----------------------|------|-----|
| Name | Team | POS |
| Adam Fox | NYR | D |
| Brent Burns | CAR | D |
| Dougie Hamilton | N.J | D |
| K'Andre Miller | NYR | D |
| Sidney Crosby | PIT | F |
| Jack Hughes | N.J | F |
| Mika Zibanejad | NYR | F |
| Nico Hischier | N.J | F |
| Travis Konecny | PHI | F |
| Alex Ovechkin | WSH | F |
| Jesper Bratt | N.J | F |
| Chris Kreider | NYR | F |

The Islanders and (to no one's surprise) Columbus have no players on the Metropolitan STTB All-Stars.

Brock Nelson of the Islanders is 9th among forwards, while Johnny Gaudreau of Columbus is 15th.

Atlantic Division All-Stars

| Atlantic Division | | |
|-------------------|------|-----|
| Name | Team | POS |
| Rasmus Dahlin | BUF | D |
| Mikhail Sergachev | T.B | D |
| Hampus Lindholm | BOS | D |
| Filip Hronek | DET | D |
| Tage Thompson | BUF | F |
| David Pastrnak | BOS | F |
| Patrice Bergeron | BOS | F |
| Matthew Tkachuk | FLA | F |
| Mitchell Marner | TOR | F |
| Nikita Kucherov | T.B | F |
| Auston Matthews | TOR | F |
| Alex Tuch | BUF | F |

The Atlantic Division STTB All-Star team lacks players from Montreal and Ottawa.

Ottawa's Tim Stutzle is 11th among forwards and Montreal's Nick Suzuki is 20th.

2022/2023 Mid-Season All-Stars

Central Division All-Stars

| Central Division | | |
|-------------------|------|-----|
| Name | Team | POS |
| Cale Makar | COL | D |
| Roman Josi | NSH | D |
| Josh Morrissey | WPG | D |
| Devon Toews | COL | D |
| Jason Robertson | DAL | F |
| Mikko Rantanen | COL | F |
| Kirill Kaprizov | MIN | F |
| Kyle Connor | WPG | F |
| Roope Hintz | DAL | F |
| Pierre-Luc Dubois | WPG | F |
| Joel Eriksson Ek | MIN | F |
| Mats Zuccarello | MIN | F |

Only five of the eight Central Division teams are represented in their STTB All-Star team.

Robert Thomas of St. Louis is 10th among forwards. Shayne Gostisbehere is 8th among defencemen, while Jake McCabe of Chicago is 13th.

Pacific Division All-Stars

| Pacific Division | | |
|---------------------|------|-----|
| Name | Team | POS |
| Erik Karlsson | S.J | D |
| Adam Larsson | SEA | D |
| Vince Dunn | SEA | D |
| Quinn Hughes | VAN | D |
| Connor McDavid | EDM | F |
| Bo Horvat | VAN | F |
| Leon Draisaitl | EDM | F |
| Elias Pettersson | VAN | F |
| Timo Meier | S.J | F |
| Ryan Nugent-Hopkins | EDM | F |
| Chandler Stephenson | VGK | F |
| Tomas Hertl | S.J | F |

Three Pacific Division teams do not have an All-Star.

Elias Lindholm of Calgary is 12th among forwards and Troy Terry (ANA) is 16th. In Los Angeles, Drew Doughty is their best, ranking 6th among defensemen.

Three STTB All-Stars from the Vancouver Canucks, a team which has almost no chance of making the playoffs? Two are obvious selections: Bo Horvat is on pace for 60 goals, and Elias Pettersson might break 100 points. As to Quinn Hughes, he is no slouch.

2022/2023 Mid-Season All-Stars

Young All-Stars

| U25 All-Stars | | | |
|------------------|-----|------|-----|
| Name | DIV | Team | POS |
| Rasmus Dahlin | BUF | ATL | D |
| Cale Makar | COL | CEN | D |
| Adam Fox | NYR | MET | D |
| Josh Morrissey | WPG | CEN | D |
| Mikko Rantanen | COL | CEN | F |
| Leon Draisaitl | EDM | PAC | F |
| David Pastrnak | BOS | ATL | F |
| Sidney Crosby | PIT | MET | F |
| Patrice Bergeron | BOS | ATL | F |
| Matthew Tkachuk | FLA | ATL | F |
| Mitchell Marner | TOR | ATL | F |
| Nico Hischier | N.J | MET | F |

I have three other All-Star teams for you: the youngsters, the oldsters and the cream of the crop.

The youngsters are 24 years-of-age or younger, while the old guys have ages that start with at least a “3”. The cream of the crop are the four defensemen and best eight forwards in the league, regardless their age, regardless their division.

Old All-Stars

| O29 All-Stars | | | |
|------------------|-----|------|-----|
| Name | DIV | Team | POS |
| Erik Karlsson | S.J | PAC | D |
| Roman Josi | NSH | CEN | D |
| Brent Burns | CAR | MET | D |
| Adam Larsson | SEA | PAC | D |
| Sidney Crosby | PIT | MET | F |
| Patrice Bergeron | BOS | ATL | F |
| Steven Stamkos | T.B | ATL | F |
| Tomas Hertl | S.J | PAC | F |
| Zach Hyman | EDM | PAC | F |
| Mark Stone | VGK | PAC | F |
| Claude Giroux | OTT | ATL | F |
| Alex Ovechkin | WSH | MET | F |

Finally, names we all recognize!

Can Mark Stone and Claude Giroux be considered surprises?

They are having awfully good years, and since these selections were made based on their statistics, it isn’t controversial that they were “selected”. Technically, they weren’t so much selected as they ended up at the top of the list after the players were sorted. It’s a cold process using numbers.

2022/2023 Mid-Season All-Stars

League All-Stars

| NHL All-Stars | | | |
|------------------|-----|------|-----|
| Name | DIV | Team | POS |
| Rasmus Dahlin | BUF | ATL | D |
| Erik Karlsson | S.J | PAC | D |
| Cale Makar | COL | CEN | D |
| Adam Fox | NYR | MET | D |
| Connor McDavid | EDM | PAC | F |
| Tage Thompson | BUF | ATL | F |
| Bo Horvat | VAN | PAC | F |
| Jason Robertson | DAL | CEN | F |
| Mikko Rantanen | COL | CEN | F |
| Leon Draisaitl | EDM | PAC | F |
| David Pastrnak | BOS | ATL | F |
| Elias Pettersson | VAN | PAC | F |

It does my heart good to see Karlsson on the League STTB All-Star team. As a fan of the Senators, it was incredibly depressing to see him traded away. To paraphrase Bill James, a writer on baseball, “The main idea of owning a team is to acquire a player like Erik Karlsson.”

I ran the league All-Stars past my in-house current season NHL expert (my son), and he was a little doubtful until he learned that his exceptions were the second All-Star team. Amongst other players he mentioned were defensemen Sergachev (6th) and Morrissey (8th), forwards Kucherov (15th), Crosby (9th), Bergeron (12th) and Marner (14th).

Summary

It will be interesting to see these lists at the end of the season. There will be changes, of course, as the list is based on counted statistics and players accumulate counted statistics only by playing. If Matthew Tkachuk gets a five-game injury and one of the players close behind him remains healthy, he would fall out of the Atlantic Division All-Star team.