2022-23 Season Review – Columbus Blue Jackets

Standings

			Columbus Blue Jackets				League	
Season	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA	Rank	PlyOff
2021-22	37	38	7	81	258	297	21	No
2022-23	25	48	9	59	213	329	30	No
Change	-12	+10	+2	-22	-45	-32	-9	

Team Record by Game Type

| Game Type	GP	Record	Point %
Overtime and Shoot Out Games	19	10 - 0 - 9	0.763
Best 10-Game Streak	10	5 - 3 - 2	0.600
Conceding Exactly 3 goals	18	9 - 6 - 3	0.583
Fire-wagon Hockey (more than 8 goals in game)	17	7 - 9 - 1	0.441
Scoring Exactly 3 Goals	14	4 - 6 - 4	0.429
Home Games	41	16 - 23 - 2	0.415
Against Non-Playoff Team	40	14 - 21 - 5	0.413
2-Goal Margin	17	7 - 10 - 0	0.412
All Games	**82**	**25 - 48 - 9**	**0.360**
1-Goal Margin (Excluding overtime games)	9	3 - 6 - 0	0.333
Against Playoff Teams	42	11 - 27 - 4	0.310
Away Games	41	9 - 25 - 7	0.305
Worst 10-Game Streak	10	1 - 9 - 0	0.100
Defensive Battles (fewer than 4 goals in game)	7	0 - 6 - 1	0.071
Blowouts (Margin of 4 or more goals)	7	0 - 7 - 0	0.000

Talent Distribution

Count by Category			PR% by Age Group			PR% by Draft Status		
PR Category	Fwd	Def	Age Group	NHL PR%	Team PR%	Draft Status	NHL PR%	Team PR%
PR-Elite	0	0	18 to 23	18%	29%	Drafted by Current Team	48%	44%
PR-Star	0	0	24 to 28	45%	43%	Drafted by Other Team	41%	34%
PR-First5	2	1	29 to 33	29%	27%	Undrafted	10%	22%
PR-Regular	6	2	34+	8%	0%			
PR-Fringe	5	5						
PR-CallUp	13	7						

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Return From Play

Team Placement - Return From Play Dollars

Lines and Pairs

Lines and Pairs - NHL vs. CBJ (32.24)
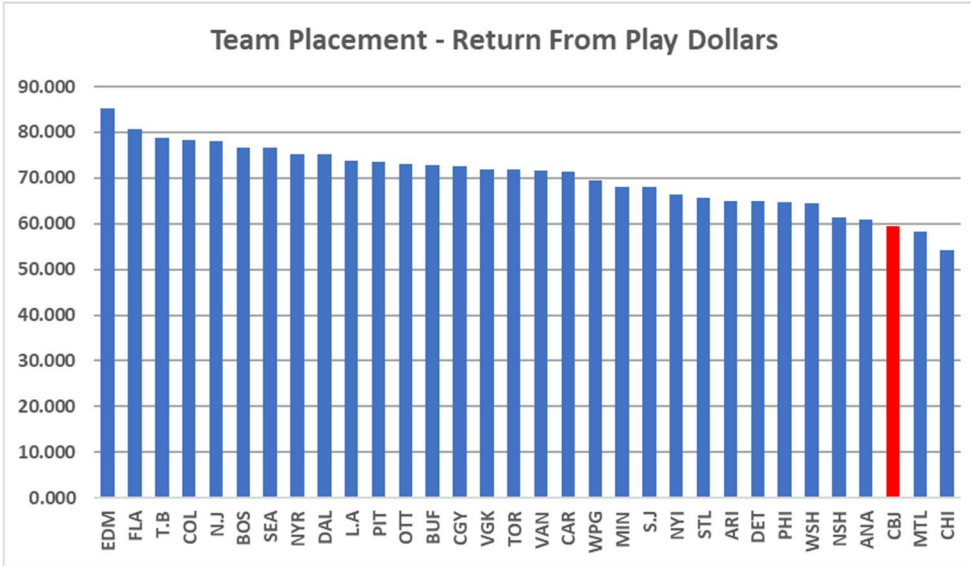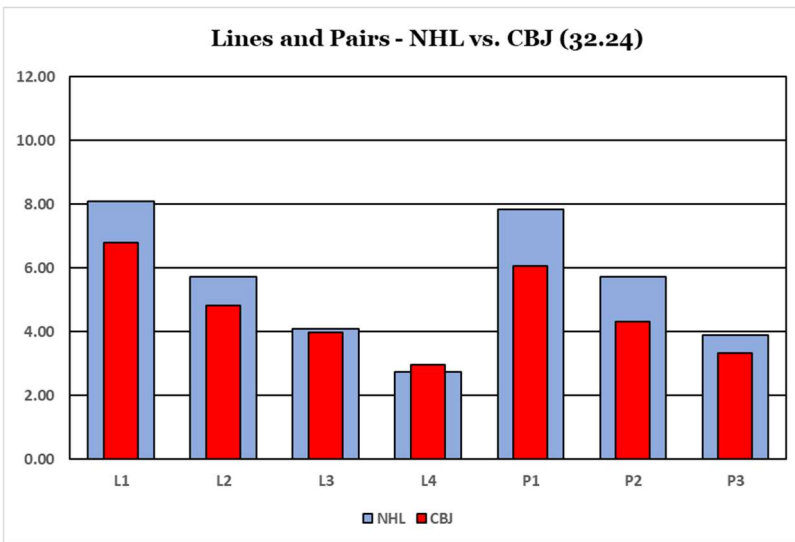
L1	Johnny Gaudreau		Boone Jenner		Patrik Laine	
L2	Jack Roslovic		Sean Kuraly		Kent Johnson	
L3	Eric Robinson		Kirill Marchenko		Gustav Nyquist	
L4	Mathieu Olivier		Emil Bemstrom		Liam Foudy	
P1		Andrew Peeke		Erik Gudbranson		
P2		Vladislav Gavrikov		Adam Boqvist		
P3		Gavin Bayreuther		Tim Berni		

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Team Leaders – Stapled To The Bench Categories

Category	Name	Rating
Most Productive	Johnny Gaudreau	PR-First5
Most Valuable	Johnny Gaudreau	VR-Star
Best Center	Boone Jenner	#1-Center
Most Disruptive	Andrew Peeke	DX-A
Best Power Player	Johnny Gaudreau	PX-B
Best Penalty Killer	Eric Robinson	KX-C

Team Leaders – On-Ice Situations

CBJ - Team Leaders in Various On-Ice Situations		
Most Time 5v5	**Most Time Power Play**	**Most Time Penalty Kill**
Andrew Peeke	Johnny Gaudreau	Andrew Peeke
Erik Gudbranson	Boone Jenner	Vladislav Gavrikov
Johnny Gaudreau	Patrik Laine	Sean Kuraly
Boone Jenner	Jack Roslovic	Eric Robinson
Kent Johnson	Kirill Marchenko	Erik Gudbranson
Most Time 3v3	**Most Used Off. Zone FO**	**Most Used Def. Zone FO**
Johnny Gaudreau	Jack Roslovic	Sean Kuraly
Patrik Laine	Kent Johnson	Eric Robinson
Adam Boqvist	Johnny Gaudreau	Andrew Peeke
Vladislav Gavrikov	Boone Jenner	Vladislav Gavrikov
Nick Blankenburg	Erik Gudbranson	Boone Jenner

Team Essay – Johnny Hockey

Johnny Gaudreau (aka Johnny Hockey) moved from Calgary to Columbus before the start of the 2022-23 season. In Calgary, Gaudreau had a plus/minus of +66 (at even strength) and 115 points. As a team, Columbus had a plus/minus of -30 and were outscored by Calgary 258 to 291.

Things in Columbus were supposed to change, and they did. They scored 213 goals on the season (down 45), and their even strength plus/minus nose-dived to -94. This was not the desired change.

Gaudreau looks to be the main culprit for the drop in scoring, as that is why he was brought to town. It would be unfair to blame Gaudreau for the team's defensive woes, as he doesn't play defensively. For proof, I give you his standing in the Disruption Index from 2022-23: of 436 players who were evaluated, he was just outside the top ten at 413th.

Did Gaudreau have a bad season? I would argue that he had a normal season.

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In the STTB article *A Player's First Year on a New Team*, I showed that players coming off good (for them) seasons tended to have a poorer subsequent season. It happened 75% of the time. Let's see Gaudreau's Career Productivity Rating chart to see if he follows that pattern.
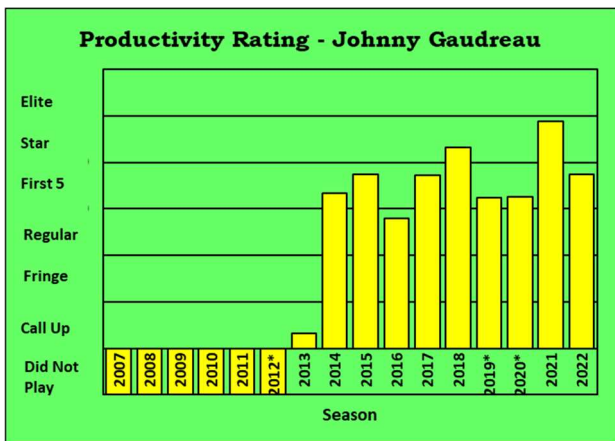
The definition of a player having a good-for-them season is that his PR-Score was higher than his VR-Score. VR-Score is a weighted three-season average, and the first season he qualified for a VR-Score was 2015-16. Gaudreau has had four good seasons, easily identifiable on the career PR chart: 2015-16, 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2021-22. His follow-up to three of those seasons was a drop in PR, with 2018 being the only season in which he had good seasons back-to-back.

Far from being a bad season for Gaudreau, 2022-23 was basically the third-best season of his career. It was worse than his 2021-22 and 2018-19 seasons, but it was essentially the same as his 2015-16 and 2017-2018 seasons. His VR-Score in 2022-23 went up.
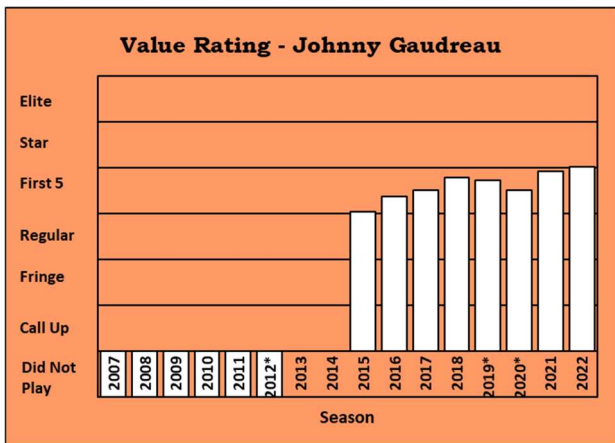
The woeful season that Columbus had in 2022-23 cannot be blamed on Gaurdreau. Of their projected top six forwards (from LastWordOnSports.com), Gustav Nyquist and Jakub Voracek both suffered season-ending injuries. Interestingly, neither is still a Blue Jacket.

Turning to the projected top four defensemen, Zach Werenski had a season-ending injury and played fewer than fifteen games, Andrew Peeke had an okay season, Vladislav Gavrikov

was traded (and was having a back-to-normal season after having had a good-for-him season), and Erik Gudbranson had a just-above-average-for-him season.

Looking between the pipes, Blue Jacket goalies conceded 40 goals more than expected (329 goals against, 288.1 expected goals against). I would place the responsibility for the +40 goals against on the goalies; the team in front of them was responsible for the 288 expected goals against.

Columbus's poor season was, in large part, caused by 30% of their top-ten players being injured in the early part of the season. Please do not confuse this statement with me saying that the poor season was the <u>fault of these players</u>. It would only be their fault if they got injured on purpose, and nobody gets a concussion or tears a labrum on purpose.

As a result of the injuries, lesser players were forced into bigger roles, and they weren't able to ramp up their skill set to those levels.

And perhaps the bigger problem for Columbus was obvious in pre-season, before a single game was played: Erik Gudbranson was projected as one of their top four defensemen. On middle-of-the-pack teams, he's a fifth or sixth defenseman. On better teams, he'd spend the season figuring out his favourite seat in the press box. He is not a top-four defenseman. That Gudbranson was given a role that was above his skill set is not his fault.

As you might infer from the last three paragraphs, I'm not big on assigning blame to people. Blaming people is not productive and it is usually inaccurate. Players got injured and it wasn't their fault. Gudbranson played like Gudbranson plays, and that isn't his fault. The goalies gave up 40 more goals than they should have, and that … well, that might be their fault. Or they might just have had below-average seasons: that happens too.