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First Month of the NHL Regular Season

Hockey is back! The National Hockey League's 2023-2024 season started on October 10th with six of the 32 teams seeing action. The season started with the Tampa Bay Lightning defeating the Nashville Predators 5-3. In his debut, Connor Bedard helped the Chicago Blackhawks defeat the Pittsburgh Penguins 4-2. The reigning champs, the Vegas Golden Knights, defended their title in their 4-1 win over the Seattle Kraken.

Mia's Terrific Three are the three teams that have been dominant through the first month of the regular season. The Colorado Avalanche set the record for the longest road winning streak in League history following their 7-3 win over the New York Islanders on October 24th, marking their 15th road win. Their winning streak of 15 games dates back to last season. The Avalanche are currently 6-2-0 with 12 points after their first eight games. The Vegas Golden Knights resume their dominance this season after winning the 2023 Stanley Cup. The Golden Knights became the first defending champions to start the season with seven straight wins, the most since the 1997-1998 Detroit Red Wings won their first four games following winning the Cup. After their first ten games of the season, the Golden Knights currently are 9-0-1 with 19 points. The Boston Bruins make up the third and final team to start the 2023-2024 campaign with a dominant start. The Bruins' only loss for the month comes against the Anaheim Ducks in overtime. After the first month, the Bruins have a record of 8-0-1 with 17 points.

On the opposite end, three teams have been struggling through the first month, making up Mia's Troubling Three. The San Jose Sharks are still looking for their first win of the 2023-2024 campaign, going winless through October. They went 0-8-1, collecting only one point through their first nine games of the season. Edmonton Oilers have been off to a slow start this season, going 2-5-1 and collecting five points. One may wonder if their slow start has to do with being without their star forward, Connor McDavid, for two games due to injury. McDavid returned in their last game in October, where the Oilers defeated Calgary 5-2 in the Heritage Classic. Calgary Flames make up the third team in Mia's Troubling Three. Calgary in October went 2-6-1, collecting five points. All three teams come from the Pacific Division, it is not surprising

that the bottom teams so far this season are from the Pacific as it has been on a trend of the worst division for the past couple of seasons.

Four players have set themselves apart to be one of Soracco's Standout Stars of the Month. Auston Matthes started his season off by scoring back-to-back hat tricks in the Toronto Maple Leafs' first two games of the season. Matthews became the 5th player in NHL history to record a hat trick in his first two games this season. Newly acquired San Jose Sharks' goalie MacKenzie Blackwood shined in his Sharks debut. Blackwood kept the Sharks alive in their 2-1 shootout loss to the Colorado Avalanche on October 14th with his 51-save performance. In his five starts this season, Blackwood has made 204 saves on 225 shots faced. Washington Capitals forward Alex Ovechkin became the first player in NHL history to score 300 powerplay goals when he scored the lone goal and first this season in the Capitals' 4-1 loss to the Toronto Maple Leafs on October 24th. Ovechkin is 70 goals behind Wayne Gretzky's 894 on the all-time goals list. After the first month of games, New Jersey Devils' forward Jack Hughes leads all skaters with 18 points. Hughes's 18 points have come from his five goals and league-leading 13 points in the 5-2-1 month of October.

This year's rookie class is quite deep. Connor Bedard is the favorite to win the Calder Trophy his fellow rookie competition will put up a tough fight. There have been three standout rookies after a month of play, making up Soracco's Rockin' Rookies. 2023 first overall pick Connor Bedard wasted no time getting on the scorebook. Bedard recorded his first NHL point in his first game with an assist on Ryan Donato's goal in Chicago's 4-2 win over the Pittsburgh Penguins. The following day, Bedard scored his first goal in Chicago's 3-1 loss to the Boston Bruins. Bedard has six points in nine games this season with two assists, and his four goals lead all rookies. Luke Hughes, the 2021 4th overall pick for the New Jersey Devils, leads all rookie defensemen with six points with one goal and five assists in eight games. Luke's lone goal this season comes off an assist from his older brother, Jack. An underrated rookie who has had a great month is Boston Bruins forward Matthew Poitras. He was drafted 54th overall in the 2022 NHL Draft by the Bruins. Poitras has three goals and two assists for five points through the Bruins' first nine games of the season.

