

Game One recap — Energetic start, flat finish

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During the regular season the Canadiens owned the series against the Rangers, winning every matchup against the team from Broadway. From the outset of the game last night it looked like Montreal found another gear against New York, coming out of the gate fast and dominating the flow of play. The opening period was played as if someone set the game on fast forward, and not only was it played with speed, but also physicality. The opening frame saw 40 hits thrown between the two sides, including Jordie Benn wiping out Tanner Glass in the first few minutes. In past years this would lead to concerns that the “small Habs” wouldn’t stand up to the playoff demands. Not only did Montreal stand up and hit back against the Rangers

http://www.canadienswinterclassicprostore/Dominic_Moore_Winter_Classic_Jersey, they proceeded to dominate the possession game as well, handily outshooting New York.

Image credit: HockeyStats.ca Though in the playoffs magical things happen sometimes, tonight that moment was a Tanner Glass backhand goal. Tomas Plekanec won the faceoff in the defensive zone, but Glass came up with the loose puck and lifted a perfect shot over Carey Price.

The Habs responded by continuing to hound Henrik Lundqvist, and despite a 14-5 shot advantage, could not get a puck past him before the period ended.

The second period, however was not as kind to Montreal, as the Rangers altered their game plan and put the Habs’ strategy into disarray. The Rangers seemed poised to take advantage when the fourth line of Alex Galchenyuk, Steve Ott, and Andreas Martinsen played with Nathan Beaulieu and Nikita Nesterov hemming that quintet in their own end for an extended period of time on more than one occasion Bryan Allen Winter Classic Jersey. Thankfully, some masterful goaltending from Price guided the Habs out of a potential disaster. In fact, not long after their first extended stay, made worse by an icing call, it was a Habs power play that breathed some life back into the Bell Centre. With play back in his end, Lundqvist rose to the occasion, coming across his crease and taking away what would have been a goal from Shea Weber.

Special teams were the lone positive for the Habs from the second period, as their penalty killers were tasked with stopping an extended five-on-three late in the period. Phillip Danault was up to the task, and helped end the Rangers’ man advantage without any dangerous shots on net. New York exited the period with a 13-9 shot advantage, but after a large kill the momentum appeared to be turning in the direction of Montreal. A Habs comeback was not in store in the third, though. Despite holding the lead, the Rangers outshot Montreal 13-5. Montreal had no answer for the breakout from their own end, resorting to the old dump-and-chase method, leading to varying degrees of failure. Perhaps worse, after shutting the Rangers down in the opening period, the defence had no answer for the speed of the New York forwards who made in-game adjustments. A late empty-net goal by Michael Grabner sealed their fate, and despite a .967 save percentage from Price, the Canadiens dropped game one 2-0 to the Rangers. ThoughtsGame One was a mixed bag for the Habs

http://www.canadienswinterclassicprostore/Andrei_Markov_Winter_Classic_Jersey, with several positives and a mountain of things that needed to change before Game Two. Starting with the bad: the lesson being taught to Alex Galchenyuk needs to come to a conclusion immediately. In the early going, Galchenyuk was putting up a dominant performance in the first period. But even if he does manage to set up good chances, his linemates are unable to finish them, something that wouldn’t be an issue with offence-oriented linemates. It looked like Claude Julien understood this, and moved Galchenyuk to a new line late in the game, but with just three minutes left it was far too late for that shift to make an impact. If Dwight King is going to be a part of the lineup going forward, then he can’t be in a spot that he doesn’t fit. His inclusion on the third line alongside Andrew Shaw and Artturi Lehkonen neutered what could be a solid third scoring line. Moving Galchenyuk back to that line gives it the scoring and playmaking punch it needs to be more effective. Now for the good: Carey Price was pretty much lights out all night. He had no chance on the Glass goal, and helped stifle a late Rangers power play. That being said he can’t do it all, but if that’s the form Price is going to be in throughout the series, the Habs are going to be fine in net. Shea Weber looked like a new player out there, making life a nightmare for

the Rangers forwards who invaded his side of the ice, and if not for a crazy save likely would have had a game-tying goal as well. The key going into Game Two is to recapture that dominant first-period form, and apply it to the entire game. A bounce here or there, and a small lineup tweak headed into the next game means the Habs are right back in business. It's only one game, and no time to panic. Especially since we've seen how the Habs bounce back from a loss under Claude Julien.

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