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## Maple Leafs sweep Canadiens on record-breaking night

Leafs hit playoffs on a high, opponent still to be determined, with Frederik Andersen's 38th win among the notable numbers now in the books.



Leafs linemates Zach Hyman and Auston Matthews both had goals to celebrate in Saturday night's win over the Canadiens at the Air Canada Centre to close out the regular season. (BERNARD WEIL / TORONTO STAR)

By **KEVIN MCGRAN** Sports Reporter  
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Play well. Finish strong. Get prepared.

That was the message [Maple Leafs](#) coach Mike Babcock gave to his team prior to their otherwise meaningless season finale.

While the intensity might have been lacking, the message was received.

The Leafs delivered, beating the Montreal Canadiens 4-2 Saturday night in the final game of the regular season for both teams at the Air Canada Centre. With the win, the Leafs set a franchise record with 105 points, eclipsing the mark of 103, set in 2003-04.

Auston Matthews, Zach Hyman, Nazem Kadri and Patrick Marleau scored for the Leafs. Matthews finished the season on a nine-game scoring streak, in which he amassed 13 points. The streak tied the longest of his career.

Frederik Andersen picked up the win, his 38th, setting a Leaf record for victories in a season by a goalie. Ed Belfour (2002-03) and Andrew Raycroft (2006-07) had shared the record at 37.

“It’s fun when you set goals at the beginning of the year and then you achieve some of them,” the workhorse Andersen said after the season finale. “It goes without saying there are bigger goals.”

The Maple Leafs also swept all four games against Montreal this season.

“More points, more wins and a special night there for Freddie as well,” said Matthews. “Definitely a good two points and get ready for what’s next.”

What’s next, though, remained unsettled, with the Boston Bruins and Tampa Bay Lightning both still potential first-round playoff dance partners.

The Bruins’ makeup game against the Florida Panthers on Sunday night will settle it, with whichever team finishes second in the Atlantic Division hosting the Leafs in Game 1.

“Both teams are very good. We’re in for a great test, and it should be a lot of fun,” said Leafs coach Mike Babcock. “We’ve been dialed in on both teams.”

Babcock added that he had hoped to start preparing for one team starting Sunday morning, “but the (Bruins-Panthers) game’s at 7:30 (p.m.) so instead of working in the morning we’ll work at night.”

It’s the first time Toronto has ever swept Montreal in years in which they met at least four times. The Leafs did sweep the Canadiens three times when Toronto was a Western Conference team, playing teams in the East just twice a season, and when ties were still counted they went undefeated against Montreal over five games in 2001-02: winning twice and tying three times.

In so many ways the game didn't matter, though. Not in the standings nor off the ice.

Players on both teams had spent much of the morning recounting their own experiences riding buses and expressing their condolences to the members of the Humboldt Broncos hockey team who were killed and injured in a bus crash in Saskatchewan on Friday.

The Leafs wore Broncos stickers, a moment of silence was observed and those in attendance were encouraged to contribute to a GoFundMe campaign to support the families touched by tragedy.

The schedule-maker probably had something more meaningful in mind in pitting Toronto and Montreal together for the regular-season finale. No matter the outcome, the Leafs were locked into third place in the Atlantic Division, while Montreal was long ago relegated to non-playoff status and reduced to giving prospects a long tryout.

Toronto, though, went with a lineup Babcock envisions will start the playoffs on Thursday.

"That's what I'm thinking. Now, who knows what happens, you know what I mean? My thought is, if we were starting today this is how we'd be starting," said Babcock.

That included Travis Dermott, the rookie defenceman who has made a big impact since his call-up in early January. Babcock said Dermott was sorely missed when he was out nursing a sore left ankle for two games.

"He's quick," said Babcock. "He wasn't quick out there this morning. He's got to get his game back — any time you're out. Real quick, he can break the puck out and get it through to the net. He's getting better and better at sorting it out in his own zone, but he's going to be a guy that forwards like to play with because he can get the puck going for them.

"It makes our third pair way better, just because of the kind of player Roman Polak is, and then you give him Dermott. He's just got to pass the puck over and they're out. It makes them — they're better together than they would be apart I guess is what I'm saying."

Dermott feared his foot might have been broken in the March 31 game against Winnipeg, when a shot shattered his boot.

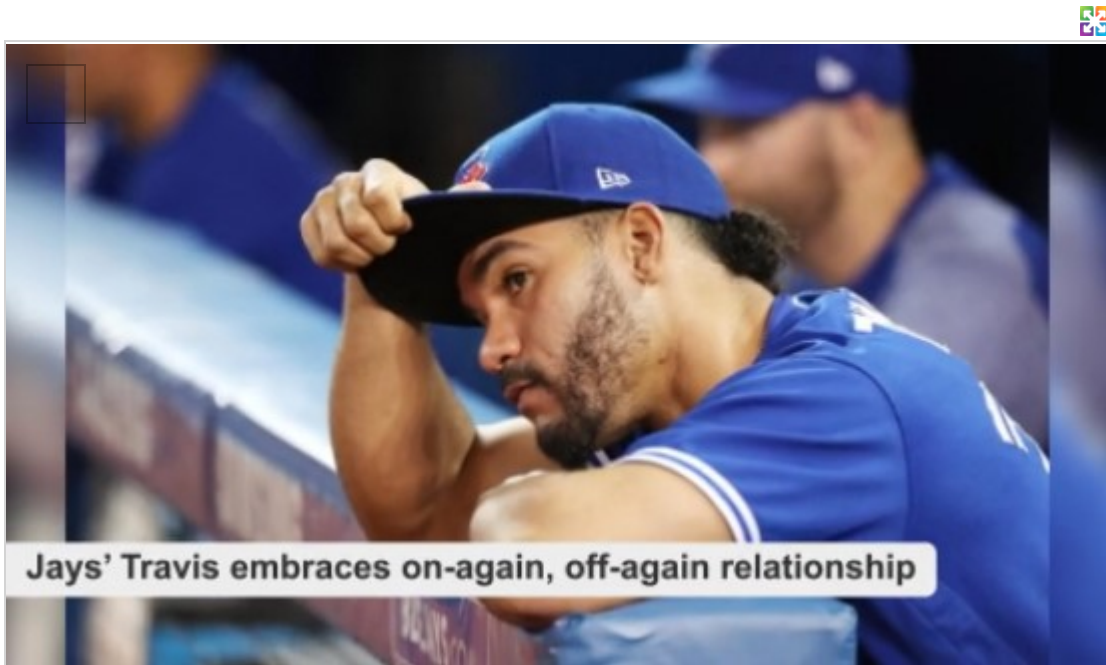
"It's good to be back and get a game in before playoffs, try to get back on track," said Dermott. "It's what you live for. You dream about playing in the NHL so you can play for the Stanley Cup. It's what everyone wants to achieve in their career. It's good to be part of it.

"We still don't know how far we're going to, but it's exciting to have the opportunity."

It was the last regular-season game at the Air Canada Centre. Scotiabank will take over naming rights next year. There were Air Canada giveaways all evening, including plane tickets to a road playoff game.

Defenceman Connor Carrick, centre Dominic Moore and wingers Matt Martin, Andreas Johnsson and Josh Leivo were healthy scratches for the final game of the schedule.

**Read more about:** [Nazem Kadri](#), [Mike Babcock](#)



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