

Bruins Goal: Win a Playoff Series

By Jesse Almeida 4/20/24

It has been a roller coaster of a regular season for the Boston Bruins. After coming off of a season where the B's finished with the best record in NHL history, but a first round exit to the Panthers, no one knew what the team would like the next season. Patrice Bergeron retires, David Krejci retires, Tyler Bertuzzi leaves, Dmitry Orlov leaves, and many others leave as well. With their salary cap situation not in a good situation, the Bruins were left to either clear up cap space, or just resign 1 player and that would be it. The Bruins ended up trading Taylor Hall and Nick Foligno to the Blackhawks for two young defenseman who were on rookie deals. This would clear up enough space for the Bruins to fill out their roster.

There were 3 players that the Bruins signed where they would be able to make an impact on the 2023-2024 Boston Bruins. The first move was signing James Van Reimsdyk. JVR turned out to be more of a playmaker as opposed to years in the past where he would be at around the 20 goal mark. This season Van Reimsdyk had 11 goals on 27 assists, and was a plus 7 on the ice this year. The other move was the signing of Morgan Geekie. Previously on the Seattle Kraken, Geekie was not getting time on the ice at around 10 minutes a game. The Bruins signed him to be on the 3rd line and he delivered. Geekie averaged around 15 minutes a game and scored 17 goals on 22 assists, and was a plus 6 on the ice.

Even with the players that the Bruins lost in the offseason, the B's still had David Pastrnak, Charlie McAvoy, Brad Marchand, along with a good defense and a solid first and second line. There are some pieces that need to be upgraded but with how the roster was constructed, the expectation was to make the playoffs as middle of the pack team. At the start of the year, the Bruins looked like they did not miss a beat winning 9 out of their first 10 games. But then a few weeks later, something unexpected happened that changed the identity of the Bruins. During the offseason, the Bruins brought home Milan Lucic who was a part of the "Big Bad Bruins" and won the 2011 Stanley Cup with Boston. He was brought back to bring in a physical presence to the Bruins as they lacked forecheck and physicality. On November 21st, 2023, Milan Lucic was arrested for domestic violence against his wife. This would end his season with the Bruins and most likely his career.

With Lucic now gone, the Bruins lost a veteran who brings that physical mindset and forecheck. With the lack of physical presence, the Bruins would go on winning streaks and then losing streaks. Their play was not as consistent as before. Right after the All Star break, the

Bruins had a homestand where they went 2-3-2 at home. This is when questions arose where people were wondering if this team could compete with the top teams in the east. For example, Rangers, Hurricanes, and Panthers. The trade deadline hit and there were 2 big needs for the Boston Bruins. One of the needs was unrealistic for the Bruins to fill at this year's deadline due to them going all out last year and their salary cap situation, but the other one was a must. The first need was a first line center. The second and arguably biggest need was someone who brings a physical mindset. Don Sweeney went out and addressed that need by acquiring Pat Maroon from Minnesota. Maroon is a 3 time Stanley Cup Champion and was one of the most physical players in the league. Maroon was one of Bruins fans most hated players to face because of the 2019 Stanley Cup and the matchup in the 2020 playoffs. But he is a perfect fit for what the Bruins need. A player who brings a physicality mindset, who knows how to wear down opponents, and knows how to win in the playoffs.

The Bruins finished the season second in the Atlantic division and finished 4th overall in the Eastern Conference. They are facing off against the Toronto Maple Leafs in the first round in a classic match up. The goal of the 2024 Bruins in the playoffs is simple. Win a playoff series, and be competitive in the second round. The Bruins cannot have another first round exit for a 3rd year in a row. A first round exit would mean that you really have to look at this team and wonder if this is the right core to invest in for years to come. If the Bruins can make it past the first round and be competitive against the Lightning or Panthers, then the Bruins could look to make a splash to improve their roster.