

= 2011 ? 12 Columbus Blue Jackets season =

The 2011 ? 12 Columbus Blue Jackets season was the team 's 12th season in the National Hockey League (NHL) . The Blue Jackets ' record of 29 ? 46 ? 7 [note 1] was the worst record in the NHL for 2011 ? 12 and the first time in franchise history they finished in last place . It also marked the third straight year that they missed the playoffs . Consequently , they had the best chance to receive the first overall selection in the 2012 NHL Entry Draft lottery , but lost out to the Edmonton Oilers and received the second pick instead .

The Blue Jackets began the year with the worst start in franchise history and the worst by any team in an NHL season in 19 years . After an 11 ? 25 ? 5 start , Head Coach Scott Arniel was fired and replaced by Assistant Coach Todd Richards . The poor season prompted several personnel changes including the trade of All @-@ Star forward Jeff Carter , who was acquired with much fanfare during the off @-@ season . With the prospect of another rebuild looming the Blue Jackets ' captain and best player , Rick Nash , requested to be traded , though he would remain with the team for the entire season .

The team was involved in a controversial loss to the Los Angeles Kings , when the Staples Center clock appeared to freeze at 1 @.@ 8 seconds allowing the Kings time to score the tying goal , before winning in overtime . During the season Columbus managed only two winning streaks of three or more games . One of which came towards the end of the year helping the Blue Jackets finish with 65 points , the third worst point total in franchise history .

= = Off @-@ season = =

In the off @-@ season the Blue Jackets ' approach to building their team changed , moving from a team of young developing players into one with established players . The first deal General Manager Scott Howson made was the acquisition of All @-@ Star forward Jeff Carter on June 23 , 2011 . The deal sent Jakub Voracek , Columbus ' first @-@ round draft choice , the eighth overall , and their third @-@ round pick in the 2011 Draft to the Philadelphia Flyers in exchange for Carter . The trade received a positive response in Columbus from fans and management who felt they finally had a number one center to play alongside of their best player , Rick Nash . Next , they traded for the negotiating rights of soon to be free agent James Wisniewski . Wisniewski scored a career high 51 points during the 2010 ? 11 season , splitting time between the New York Islanders and Montreal Canadiens . The point total was fifth @-@ highest in the league for defenseman scoring , tying Tobias Enstrom . The Blue Jackets came to terms with Wisniewski , just an hour prior to the start of free agency , signing him to a six @-@ year , \$ 33 million deal .

Columbus also traded former first round draft pick Nikita Filatov to the Ottawa Senators for a third @-@ round pick in the 2011 Draft . Filatov had failed to live up to expectations in Columbus , playing in only 44 games over three seasons scoring six goals . Prior to the start of the season , the Blue Jackets were questioned for not signing a veteran back @-@ up to starting goaltender Steve Mason , as the former Calder Memorial Trophy winner had struggled in consecutive seasons . The Blue Jackets signed Mark Dekanich as the back @-@ up who had only 50 minutes of NHL experience prior to the start of the season . Columbus did sign a veteran Curtis Sanford to be their third string goaltender and to start for their American Hockey League (AHL) affiliate , the Springfield Falcons . Sanford had not played in the NHL since 2009 . During training camp , Dekanich suffered a high ankle sprain that was expected to keep him out of the line @-@ up for a month . Additionally , Sanford suffered a groin injury , leaving Allen York as the back @-@ up . York had only played four professional games , all in the AHL , entering the season .

= = Regular season = =

= = = October ? December = = =

After the first five games , all losses , Jeff Carter suffered a broken foot that kept him out of the line @-@ up for 10 games . While Carter was injured , the Blue Jackets continued to lose games . In the eighth game of the year , they had a chance to end the losing streak against the Ottawa Senators . Columbus held a 3 ? 2 lead with under a minute to play . Jason Spezza tied the game on a late power play , and with just 4 @.@ 7 seconds remaining , Milan Michalek notched the winning goal for the Senators . The loss helped set a franchise record for futility with a 0 ? 7 ? 1 record to start a season . [note 1] The losing streak came to an end three days later with a win over the Detroit Red Wings . During the game , several milestones were reached . James Wisniewski made his Columbus debut , Ryan Johansen and John Moore scored their first career NHL goals and Grant Clitsome had a career @-@ high three assists . Columbus was unable to create any momentum from the win , however , and continued to struggle , culminating in a 2 ? 12 ? 1 record , which was the worst start to an NHL season for any team in 19 years . With the team struggling , management attempted to " shake things up " by making some roster moves . The first move was the acquisition of center Mark Letestu from the Pittsburgh Penguins . Next , they traded defenseman Kris Russell to the St. Louis Blues for Nikita Nikitin . As the clubs slow start continued , there were rumors that Head Coach Scott Arniel would be fired and replaced with Ken Hitchcock . Hitchcock had previously coached the Blue Jackets to their only playoff appearance in club history and was still under contract with the franchise through to the end of the season . Before any of these rumors came to fruition , the St. Louis Blues asked Columbus for permission to hire Hitchcock , which the Blue Jackets allowed . Hitchcock began his Blues coaching career with a 6 ? 1 ? 2 record in his first nine games , while Columbus amassed a 6 ? 13 ? 3 record to start the season .

During the same time frame as the Hitchcock rumors , goaltender Curtis Sanford returned from his groin injury on November 13 . He made his first start of the season against the Boston Bruins , losing 2 ? 1 in a shootout . Sanford continued his strong play , posting a 3 ? 1 ? 2 record , 1 @.@ 38 goals against average and .947 save percentage over his next six games . Sanford started 12 consecutive games before Steve Mason made his next start . The number of starts might not have been as numerous , but prior to the November 23 game , Mason was hit in the head by a shot from Rick Nash during pre @-@ game warm @-@ ups and suffered a concussion . Mason returned from his concussion after two games , making a start against the Vancouver Canucks . Mason allowed only one goal in the game despite suffering from cramping in the third period , temporarily being replaced by Sanford for just over three minutes . Columbus won the game 2 ? 1 in a shootout , breaking a nine @-@ game losing streak to the Canucks . After the game , Arniel stated that Sanford was still seen as the team 's number one goaltender . However , Mason started four of the next six games with the Blue Jackets going 0 ? 5 ? 1 during that stretch .

= = = January ? February = = =

With the losing continuing , more rumors began to surface . Unlike before , the rumors were about player moves rather than coaching changes . The majority of rumors were that the Blue Jackets would trade Rick Nash . While Howson stated that he had never brought up trading Nash in discussions , other teams had inquired about his availability . Nash stated that if Columbus felt it would make the franchise better than he would be willing to waive his no @-@ trade clause . Howson publicly stated that he had no intention of trading Nash . More rumors came to light when reports attributed to Réseau des sports stated that Carter was unhappy in Columbus and demanded a trade . Howson , Carter and his agent all denied that a trade request was ever made , and they were unsure where the reports were coming from . With the trade deadline approaching , speculation picked up on the Blue Jackets trading Carter . Reports were that Columbus was trying to trade Carter and that he was " 100 percent available . "

At the halfway point of the season , with the Blue Jackets barely into double digit wins with an 11 ? 25 ? 5 record , worst in the league , and sitting 20 points out of playoff position , Columbus fired Arniel . He was replaced by Assistant Coach Todd Richards on an interim basis . Richards had previously coached the Minnesota Wild . He recorded his first coaching victory for the Blue Jackets in his second game , a 4 ? 3 win over the Phoenix Coyotes . The change in coaching did not change

the fortunes of the team , as they reached the All @-@ Star break with a 13 ? 30 ? 6 record . At the break , Blue Jackets ' owner John P. McConnell sent out a letter to fans stating his understanding of their frustration . He added that action would be taken around the trade deadline , the Entry Draft and free agency to take the team in a new direction . When speaking of the season , McConnell stated " disappointing is not a strong enough word " and that he was committed to giving fans a team of which they can be proud of . He also thanked them for their dedication and passion , while reiterating that the team goal was to " win consistently and compete for the Stanley Cup . " Days later , a 250 @-@ person protest occurred outside of Nationwide Arena . Fans were upset with the Blue Jackets ' management and were calling for changes at the top . The same day the fans protested , it was announced that the franchise would host the 2013 All @-@ Star Game . Columbus was without a representative for the 2012 All @-@ star Game , but Ryan Johansen represented the club as a rookie participant in the Super Skills Competition . In the competition , Johansen participated in the Allstate Insurance NHL Breakaway Challenge , a shootout themed event judged by the fans . He received just 1 % of the vote and finished last .

Following the break , the Blue Jackets were on the road playing the Los Angeles Kings , and with the score tied late in the game , Kings ' defenseman Drew Doughty scored with just 0 @.@ 4 seconds remaining to win the game . Upon review of the goal it , was determined that the clock at Staples Center froze at 1 @.@ 8 seconds for over a full second , which would have resulted in time expiring prior to the goal being scored . Kings ' General Manager Dean Lombardi stated that the clock was correct and no extra time had been added due to the way the clock self @-@ corrects at various times . Howson stated on the team 's blog that " It is an amazing coincidence that with the Kings on a power play at Staples Center and with a mad scramble around our net in the dying seconds of the third period of a 2 ? 2 hockey game that the clock stopped for at least one full second , " adding that , " Either there was a deliberate stopping of the clock or the clock malfunctioned . " NHL Senior Vice President of Hockey Operations Colin Campbell stated that the Blue Jackets were wronged , but that the outcome of the game could not be changed , and that the delay was not noticed by the off @-@ ice officials or the situation room in Toronto . To determine the true cause of the clock pause , the NHL launched an investigation , talking with the clock 's manufacturer and interviewing Staples Center staff .

Two weeks prior to the NHL trade deadline , Columbus announced that unlike earlier in the season , they would listen to trade proposals involving Rick Nash , though they were not actively shopping him . Howson stated that the team was open to all options for improving the team , including trading Nash . Speculation was that in return for Nash the Blue Jackets would ask for a " combination of young , proven players , high @-@ end prospects and draft picks . " Leading up to the trade deadline , the Blue Jackets dealt Antoine Vermette to the Phoenix Coyotes for two draft picks and goaltender Curtis McElhinney . Despite being injured at the time , the acquisition of McElhinney was believed to give Columbus the flexibility to trade Curtis Sanford . The following day , on February 23 , Columbus traded Jeff Carter to the Kings . In the deal , Columbus acquired defenseman Jack Johnson and a first @-@ round draft pick ; the team was given the choice of taking the pick in either 2012 or 2013 . At the deadline , Columbus was unable to come to terms on a deal involving Nash , but they did make one more move ; they sent center Samuel Pahlsson to the Vancouver Canucks in exchange for two fourth @-@ round draft picks and minor league defenseman Taylor Ellington . Following the trade deadline , Howson announced that the team had attempted to trade Nash at the player 's request . Nash stated that he had requested the trade after being informed that the franchise was going into another rebuilding phase . He further noted that he felt that he " could be a huge part of that towards bringing assets in , " and in his view " it was the best thing for the team , the organization , and personally for [his] career . " After the personnel changes , the Blue Jackets closed out the month with a three @-@ game losing streak .

= = = March ? April = = =

Columbus started March with a 2 ? 0 shutout against the Colorado Avalanche . They proceeded to win their next game against the Phoenix Coyotes 5 ? 2 , which marked the first time that the Blue

Jackets posted back @-@ to @-@ back regulation victories during the season . Columbus again defeated the Coyotes three days later to earn their first three @-@ game win streak of the season . They extended the streak to four with a win over the Los Angeles Kings before it came to an end with a 4 ? 1 loss to the St. Louis Blues . It was the only four @-@ game win streak of the season for the Blue Jackets . They immediately matched their four @-@ game win streak with a four @-@ game losing streak and with ten games remaining , the Blue Jackets were the first team eliminated from playoff contention . Shortly after being eliminated , they were defeated by the Edmonton Oilers 6 ? 3 ; the loss clinched last place in the NHL for Columbus . It was the first time in franchise history the Blue Jackets finished in 30th place .

Three days later , on March 28 , goaltender Steve Mason was injured in the morning skate when a shot from Colton Gillies hit him in the mask . With Sanford again injured , York made an emergency start . Playing against the Detroit Red Wings , York made 29 saves , including 17 in the third period , helping Columbus to a 4 ? 2 victory and giving York his first career NHL win . York remained the starter and led the Blue Jackets to a second three @-@ game winning streak . In his fourth start , Columbus was shutout by the Coyotes despite a franchise @-@ record 54 shots on goal , losing 2 ? 0 . The 54 saves by Phoenix goaltender Mike Smith set an NHL record for a regulation shutout . Mason returned to the starter 's role for the final two games , winning both . The two victories gave Columbus 65 points for the year , their third @-@ lowest total in franchise history .

The Blue Jackets struggled in shorthanded situations , allowing the most power @-@ play goals in the League , with 64 , and having the lowest penalty @-@ kill percentage , at 76 @. @ 64 %

= = Post @-@ season = =

Finishing with the worst record in the NHL , Columbus had the best chance of receiving the first overall pick in the 2012 draft . With the NHL 's weighted draft lottery the Blue Jackets had a 48 @. @ 2 % chance of drafting first overall . However , the lottery was won by the Edmonton Oilers , who proceeded to leapfrog Columbus and secure the number one draft pick for a third consecutive year . It was the fifth time that the Blue Jackets were dropped one draft position in the franchise 's 12 lottery participations .

A month later , on May 14 , the Blue Jackets announced that Richards would remain as head coach and signed him to a two @-@ year contract . During the press conference , Howson noted , " Our team continuously improved under Todd and he has earned the opportunity to build upon the work he started . " Columbus posted an 18 ? 21 ? 2 record under Richards , including winning seven of their final 11 games .

= = Standings = =

Since being founded as an expansion team , the Blue Jackets have played in the Central Division of the Western Conference . Division rivals Chicago Blackhawks , Detroit Red Wings , Nashville Predators and St. Louis Blues , all made the playoff during the 2011 ? 12 season , which helped Columbus finish 36 points behind fourth place Chicago and 44 points out of first .

Divisions : CE ? Central , NW ? Northwest , PA ? Pacific

bold - qualified for playoffs , y ? Won division , p ? Won Presidents ' Trophy (best record in NHL)

= = Schedule and results = =

= = = Pre @-@ season = = =

= = = Regular season = = =

Green background indicates win (2 points) .

Red background indicates regulation loss (0 points) .
Silver background indicates overtime / shootout loss (1 point) .

= = Player statistics = =

In ice hockey , a combination of a player 's goals and assists are collectively called points . Penalty minutes are the total number of minutes assigned to a player for infractions assessed during the season.Plus @-@ minus is a statistic that tracks when a player was on the ice while goals were scored , both for and against their team , though some in game situations will not effect the statistic . Below is a listing of all player statistics for the Blue Jackets during the season .

= = = Skaters = = =