

# THE LOCKEROOM: BOSTON’S BLUEPRINT

**Boston Bruins player Marat Khusnutdinov warming up. The Bruins are one of the best teams in the NHL under first-year head coach Marco Sturm.** PHOTO COURTESY OF @NHLBRUINS ON INSTAGRAM



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The Bruins are having one of the best campaigns this season in the NHL, despite being overlooked by many insiders to start the season. However, the Bruins did not let the outside noise get to them, as first-year head coach Marco Sturm has his team to a 32-20-4 record, just before the NHL takes a break for the Olympics.

Boston traded away many of their aging veterans prior to the season, which GM Don Sweeney had hoped would bring new success to the squad, following a year being one of the worst teams in the league. The move, however, has turned out to be ecstasy, as Sweeney had hoped.

One of the players who has been a focal point for the Bruins’ success is Morgan Geekie, who is having a stellar year following a 2024-2025 season that saw him amass 57 points in 77 games.

However, that stat line has already been shattered for Geekie, who, just 54 games into the year, has 30 goals and 20 assists.

David Pasternak has also elevated his play as he anchors the front line, continuing to be Boston’s franchise player. Pasternak’s goal pace may be down from prior seasons; although this may be his best year as a playmaker, as he already has 47 assists on the year to pair with 22 goals.

In net, Jeremy Swayman has also been quietly great again, as he has continued his all-star play. He looks to stay hot as he heads closer to a trip to the Olympics with Team USA later this month.

Fraser Minton was also named rookie of the month to end January as he continues to stack on great performances for

Boston. Fans have been lucky this season, as Boston has also been razor-sharp at home in TD Garden. In January, they went a perfect 9-0, showing that the Garden is a tough place to win at for opposing teams.

Just two nights ago, the Bruins also headed to Tampa for a clash with the Tampa Bay Lightning at Raymond James Stadium for the NHL’s annual Stadium Series. Despite the Lightning coming out with the win, the Bruins put up a consistent fight, as the game ended in a shootout, with a final score of 6-5.

In terms of the upcoming trade deadline, Sweeney most likely will add a piece or two to help his team come playoff time before the March 6 date. Boston will have a surplus of prospects to deal if it looks to make a splash, although it is unlikely that they will part with many.

Sturm has surpassed expectations in his first year as he has unlocked many of his players’ games. He holds the team accountable, and it is finally starting to translate into the win department, as seen from the month of January.

This team will have the chance to compete for it all if they can keep up this style of pace and hopefully earn their first cup in over 10 years.

If not this year, the footprint has been laid for Sturm and his staff as young prospects will be flooding in the next few years, along with the already established talent that Boston has on the ice.

Ultimately, whether the full breakthrough comes this season or soon after, the franchise is positioned in a great spot for sustained success with Sturm and, the belief of Boston’s next championship window no longer being a question of if, but when.

# CARLOS ALCARAZ CONQUERS MELBOURNE, BECOMES YOUNGEST PLAYER TO COMPLETE THE CAREER GRAND SLAM

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Spanish tennis star Carlos Alcaraz took the court Feb. 1 in Australia to compete for history. Alcaraz faced off against tennis legend Novak Djokovic who was competing for his 11th Australian Open title. Djokovic knew this stage very well; however, all the experience came with being a 38-year-old tennis star.

On the other side, Alcaraz was fighting for his first Australian Open title at the young age of 22. Alcaraz had previously won two Wimbledon titles US Open titles and French Open titles. The final one on his checklist to complete the Career Slam, the Australian Open. This was the stars’ fifth Australian Open appearance, where the furthest he got was the quarterfinals in both 2024 and 2025.

His path was nothing short of difficult, however Alcaraz seemed to make it easy after not dropping a single set until the Semi-Finals against third ranked player, Alexander Zverev. This may have been the match of the tournament as the two battled out a five-hour-27-minute epic. Alcaraz came out on top 6-4, 7-6 (7-5), 6-7 (3-7), 6-7 (4-7), 7-5. If you do not know how tennis scoring works, it is safe to say this was a legendary showdown. Directly after the match though, Alcaraz needed to start the recovery process for his first Australian Open Final.

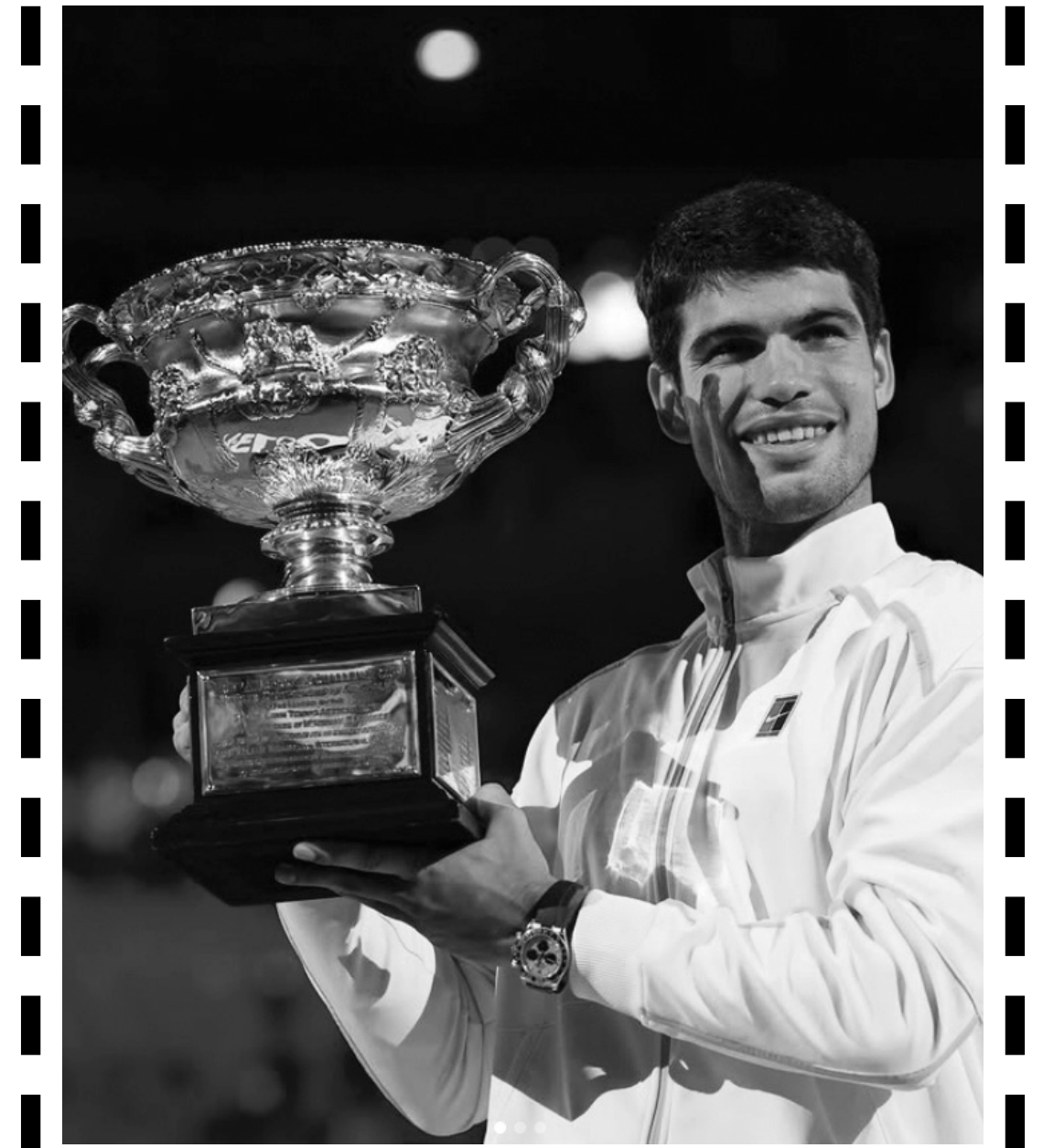
On the other side of the tournament, world ranked No. 2 Jannik Sinner took the court against No. 4 Djokovic. The match would also take five sets, last over 4 hours, and end around 2 a.m. on the East Coast. Djokovic would get the final push despite his age and beat

the young star 3-6, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 6-4.

During the post-game interview, Djokovic told the crowd, “I think you guys got the value for the ticket” according to ESPN. He later talked about the respect he had for Sinner and the talent he holds later saying, “...I told him [Sinner] at the net thanks for allowing me at least one,” also from ESPN. This might be Djokovic’s last Australian Open considering his age and the physical demand involving tennis. It’s uncommon to see someone competing the way Djokovic did for over four hours.

In the final, Djokovic came out fighting taking the first set 6-2. Following Alcaraz’s lowest scoring set of the tournament, he took the wheel and never stepped off the gas. He responded with a 6-2 second set followed by a 6-3 set. The third set displayed the point of the match with Djokovic sprinting to the left side of the court before hitting a shot around the net. This shot normally is a winner with very few players quick enough to return it; however, Alcaraz saw the vision and was able to lunge for the winning point. The play ended with all of Rod Laver Arena on their feet in applause. With one more set needed for Alcaraz, he pushed through and took it 7-5, becoming the youngest player ever to complete the Career Grand Slam at the age of 22 years and 272 days old, from an NBC New York source.

The respect continued for the two players following the match as they gave their post-game speeches to the crowd after they received their accolades. Alcaraz started by acknowledging Djokovic and his journey along with the viewership he brought to the sport. “for me I just enjoy so much watching you play, for me it’s been an honor sharing the locker, sharing the court and



**Carlos Alcaraz holding a trophy after winning the Australian Open. Alcaraz beat Novak Djokovic 2-6, 6-2, 6-3, 7-5.** PHOTO COURTESY OF @CARLITOSALCARAZZ ON INSTAGRAM.

watching you play so thank you very much for what you’re doing because it is very inspiring to me,” he said. No matter how hard these two athletes compete against each other, they will always have respect for one another.

With Djokovic nearing the

end of his career, it is a question on everyone’s mind when he will retire, and whether he will get another chance to add to his record-breaking 24 Grand Slam Singles titles.

As for Alcaraz, there is no limit to what he can accomplish in his career. Already collecting

seven Grand Slam Singles titles at the age of 22, the young star looks to follow in other legends’ footsteps such as Rafael Nadal, Roger Federer and his most recent opponent, Djokovic. Setting records already, the next decade of men’s tennis could very well belong to him.