

# biggest upsets in nhl history

**Biggest upsets in NHL history** are moments that have shocked fans and analysts alike, shaking the very foundation of what was expected in the world of professional hockey. The National Hockey League (NHL) has a storied history, filled with intense rivalries, legendary players, and unforgettable moments. Among these, some games stand out as monumental upsets, where the underdog triumphed against the odds. In this article, we will explore some of the biggest upsets in NHL history, detailing the circumstances surrounding each event and the impact they had on the league.

## The Nature of Upsets in Sports

Upsets in sports are defined as instances where a less favored team defeats a more favored opponent. In the NHL, this can happen in various contexts, including regular-season games, playoff series, and even the Stanley Cup Finals. The unpredictability of sports is part of what makes them so thrilling, and hockey's fast-paced nature adds to this unpredictability. Factors contributing to upsets include:

- Injuries to key players
- Goalie performances that exceed expectations
- A team's underestimation of their opponent
- Momentum shifts during games

## Memorable Upsets in NHL History

The NHL has witnessed numerous upsets throughout its history. Below are some of the most notable examples:

### 1. The 1994 New York Rangers vs. New Jersey Devils

The 1994 Eastern Conference Finals featured the heavily favored New York Rangers, who finished the regular season with the best record. They faced off against their arch-rivals, the New Jersey Devils, who were considered underdogs.

Key Moments:

- Game 7 Drama: The series went to a decisive Game 7, where the Rangers found themselves trailing 2-0 late in the third period.

- Mark Messier's Heroics: Captain Mark Messier delivered a legendary performance, scoring a hat trick to lead the Rangers to a 4-2 victory, propelling them to the Stanley Cup Finals.

This upset was significant as it not only solidified the Rangers' status as a powerhouse but also ended a 54-year championship drought for the franchise.

## **2. The 2006 Carolina Hurricanes vs. Edmonton Oilers**

In the 2006 Stanley Cup Finals, the Carolina Hurricanes faced the Edmonton Oilers, a team that had entered the playoffs as the eighth seed. The Oilers were seen as significant underdogs, yet they managed to push the series to seven games.

Key Moments:

- Dramatic Game 7: The Hurricanes took an early lead but were pushed to the limit by the resilient Oilers.
- Cam Ward's Performance: Rookie goalie Cam Ward was instrumental for the Hurricanes, earning the Conn Smythe Trophy as the playoff MVP.

Ultimately, the Hurricanes triumphed, winning their first Stanley Cup, but the series showcased the unpredictable nature of playoff hockey.

## **3. The 2010 Philadelphia Flyers vs. Boston Bruins**

In the 2010 NHL playoffs, the Philadelphia Flyers pulled off one of the biggest upsets in playoff history by coming back from a 3-0 series deficit against the Boston Bruins.

Key Moments:

- Historic Comeback: The Flyers made history by becoming the third team in NHL history to win a series after losing the first three games.
- Game 7 Victory: The Flyers won Game 7 decisively, with a score of 4-3, showcasing their resilience and determination.

This upset not only highlighted the Flyers' tenacity but also underscored the unpredictability of playoff series.

## **4. The 1993 Montreal Canadiens vs. Los Angeles Kings**

The Montreal Canadiens, a storied franchise, faced the upstart Los Angeles Kings in the 1993 Stanley Cup Finals. The Canadiens were favored, but the Kings, led by Wayne Gretzky, were poised to cause an upset.

Key Moments:

- Kings' Unexpected Run: The Kings surprised everyone by reaching the Finals after finishing with a lower seed in the playoffs.
- Montreal's Dominance: Ultimately, the Canadiens won the series 4-1, but the Kings' journey to the

Finals was a testament to their unexpected success and resilience.

The upset potential of the Kings added intrigue to the series, making it one of the most memorable finals in NHL history.

## 5. The 2012 Los Angeles Kings vs. New Jersey Devils

The 2012 Stanley Cup Final featured the eighth-seeded Los Angeles Kings against the New Jersey Devils, who were considered a stronger team.

Key Moments:

- **Kings' Playoff Run:** The Kings' journey through the playoffs was remarkable, defeating higher-seeded teams along the way.
- **Game 6 Victory:** The Kings clinched the Stanley Cup in Game 6, showcasing a blend of stellar goaltending and balanced scoring.

This upset was significant as it marked the Kings' first Stanley Cup victory in franchise history, highlighting the unpredictability of the playoffs.

## The Impact of Upsets on the NHL

Upsets in NHL history have far-reaching implications, affecting teams, players, and fans alike. Here are some ways in which upsets impact the league:

- **Changing Perceptions:** Upsets challenge preconceived notions about teams and players, often changing how they are viewed in future seasons.
- **Inspiring Underdogs:** Underdog victories inspire other teams to believe in their potential, contributing to a more competitive league.
- **Fan Engagement:** Upsets create memorable moments that engage fans and keep them invested in the sport.
- **Shifting Power Dynamics:** Unexpected victories can shift the balance of power within the league, prompting teams to reevaluate their strategies and rosters.

## Conclusion

The **biggest upsets in NHL history** serve as a reminder of the unpredictable nature of sports. From the underdog triumphs to historic comebacks, these moments have left an indelible mark on the league and its fans. They highlight not only the skill and determination of the players involved but also the passion that surrounds the game of hockey. As new seasons unfold, fans eagerly

anticipate the possibility of witnessing the next great upset, continuing the legacy of unpredictability that defines the NHL.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is considered the biggest upset in NHL playoff history?**

The 2010 Philadelphia Flyers' comeback against the Boston Bruins in the Eastern Conference Semifinals, where the Flyers overcame a 0-3 series deficit, is often cited as one of the biggest upsets.

### **Which number 8 seed defeated a number 1 seed in the 1994 NHL playoffs?**

The New York Rangers, as the number 1 seed, were defeated by the number 8 seed, the New Jersey Devils, in the first round of the playoffs.

### **What happened in the 2006 Stanley Cup Finals that shocked fans?**

The Carolina Hurricanes, a 3 seed, defeated the heavily favored Edmonton Oilers, a 2 seed, in a thrilling 7-game series, surprising many hockey analysts.

### **Which team pulled off a major upset in the 2012 playoffs?**

The Los Angeles Kings, as the 8th seed, made a stunning run to the Stanley Cup Finals, defeating the Vancouver Canucks, St. Louis Blues, and Phoenix Coyotes along the way.

### **What was the outcome of the 1996 Stanley Cup playoffs involving the Colorado Avalanche?**

The Colorado Avalanche, a strong favorite, were upset by the Detroit Red Wings, who were seen as underdogs, in a thrilling series that ended their hopes for a repeat championship.

### **Which expansion team shocked the NHL in their inaugural season?**

The Vegas Golden Knights made history in the 2017-2018 season by reaching the Stanley Cup Finals in their inaugural year, defeating several higher-seeded teams along the way.

### **How did the 2001 playoffs feature a significant upset involving the New Jersey Devils?**

The New Jersey Devils, a 3 seed, upset the top-seeded Philadelphia Flyers in the Eastern Conference Finals, which was a surprising result for many fans.

## **What notable upset occurred in the first round of the 2019 playoffs?**

The Columbus Blue Jackets, as the 8th seed, swept the Tampa Bay Lightning, who had set a record for most wins in a regular season, marking a significant upset.

## **Which notable player was involved in the 1980 'Miracle on Ice' upset?**

While not part of the NHL, the 'Miracle on Ice' featured amateur players, including Mike Eruzione, who led Team USA to an improbable victory over the Soviet Union, a result that shocked the sports world and resonates within hockey history.

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