



## GRAND RAPIDS GRIFFINS 2025-26 SEASON IN REVIEW

### Chapter 30

The 2025-26 season was the Grand Rapids Griffins' 30th overall season, the 25th campaign as a member of the American Hockey League, and their 24th as the primary affiliate of the 11-time Stanley Cup champion Detroit Red Wings. Grand Rapids concluded with a franchise-best 51-16-4-1 record (.743), including 24-9-3-0 at Van Andel Arena and 27-7-1-1 on foreign ice, which were the most road wins in franchise history. The Griffins' longest losing skid was just three games (three times), while they dropped two straight at home five times and lost consecutive road games just once. The Griffins placed first in the Central Division, first in the Western Conference and second in the AHL. The Griffins have competed in 2,277 regular-season games between the International Hockey League and the AHL since 1996-97 and totaled a 1,196-834-27-90-130 (.585) ledger to go along with eight division titles, 20 playoff appearances (in 28 postseasons), and two Calder Cups (2017, 2013).

### The Watson Supercomputer

Third-year head coach **Dan Watson** is making his third straight trip to the Calder Cup Playoffs, becoming just the third head coach in franchise history to reach the postseason in each of his first three full years as head boss (Jeff Blashill 2012-15 & Todd Nelson 2015-18). Watson was named the Central Division head coach at the All-Star Classic for the second straight season, becoming the second coach in team history to attend two all-star events and the first in its AHL history. Watson has a 125-68-16-7 record (.632) with Grand Rapids during the regular season and a 5-7 mark in the postseason, reaching the 2024 division finals. The 125 regular-season victories are the fifth-most in franchise history and his .632 points percentage ranks third in team history. Prior to joining the Griffins, Watson spent six seasons as head coach of the ECHL's Toledo Walleye, leading Toledo to three division titles (2016-17, 2017-18 and 2021-22), three 100-point seasons (2016-17, 2017-18 and 2021-22), and two regular season championships (2016-17 and 2021-22). Watson has never missed the playoffs as head coach, reaching the Calder Cup Playoffs in three straight years, the Kelly Cup Finals twice (2019 and 2022) and leading Toledo to four Western Conference Finals berths (2017, 2019, 2022 and 2023).

### Follow The Leaders

*Points:* **John Leonard** (33-21—54)

*Goals:* Leonard (33)

*Assists:* **Erik Gustafsson** (33)

*PIM:* **Austin Watson** (146)

*Plus-Minus:* **William Lagesson** (+33)

*Goaltender Wins:* **Sebastian Cossa** (26)

*Goals Against Average:* **Michal Postava** (1.71)

*Save Percentage:* Postava (.937)

### Griffins to Wings

Of the 31 players to compete for the Detroit Red Wings this season, 17 had spent time in Grand Rapids at some point during their careers. A total of eight players appeared in games for both the Griffins and Red Wings this season (**Michael Brandsegg-Nygaard, Nate Danielson, Sheldon Dries, Erik Gustafsson, John Leonard, Carter Mazur, Axel Sandin-Pellikka** and **Dominik Shine**).

### The Promised Land

On Feb. 27, the Griffins clinched their 20th playoff berth with a 4-1 Hershey Bears victory over the Rockford IceHogs and became the first team to clinch a spot in the postseason. Feb. 27 was the earliest clinching date in team history, surpassing the previous mark of March 6 during the 2003-04 season, and the earliest for an AHL team since 1992-93, when the Binghamton Rangers clinched on Feb. 24 with 24 games remaining. Grand Rapids returns to the Calder Cup Playoffs for the third consecutive season under head coach **Dan Watson**, after missing the previous two postseasons in 2022 and 2023. The Griffins held at least a share of first place in the Central Division for the entire season and led the entire AHL for much of the campaign.

### Championship-Caliber Team

With a 5-2 win at the Cleveland Monsters on March 26, the Griffins clinched a division title for the first time since 2014-15, when they won the Midwest, and claimed the Central Division crown for the first time since 2002-03. With three weeks remaining in the regular season, this marked the Griffins' second-earliest title in franchise history (2002-03 Central—March 9) and their eighth division title overall. Grand Rapids, which has now won six division titles as a member of the AHL, has earned the Sam Pollock Trophy for the first time since 2005-06, when it was awarded to the champion of the North Division. With San Jose's 6-3 win over Colorado on April 3, the Griffins clinched the Western Conference regular-season title. This marked their third regular-season conference championship as members of the AHL (2005-06 & 2002-03) and the fifth in franchise history, including IHL Eastern Conference crowns in 2000-01 and 1999-00.

## Going Back to Back

Compare the statistics for when the Griffins played on successive nights:

	W	L (incl. OT, SO)	GF	GA	PP%	PK%	SF	SA
First Night	10	8	2.94	2.56	17.5%	83.3%	29.3	27.7
Second Night	15	3	3.72	2.06	20.4%	92.0%	26.7	27.4
Third Night	0	1	1.00	4.00	0.0%	N/A	32.0	23.0

## Win Some, Lose Some

Compare the statistics during the Griffins' 51 wins and 21 losses (including overtime and shootout):

	GF	GA	PP%	PK%	SF	SA
W (51)	4.25	1.65	21.5%	88.9%	28.4	27.1
L (21)	1.81	3.71	13.7%	76.2%	28.6	29.0

## Home vs. Road

Home		Road
24-9-3-0	<b>Record</b>	27-7-1-1
+32	<b>Goal Differential</b>	+64
3.06	<b>GF (avg.)</b>	4.03
2.17	<b>GA (avg.)</b>	2.25
17.35%	<b>PP%</b>	19.84%
87.13%	<b>PK%</b>	84.91%
28.7	<b>SF (avg.)</b>	28.2
27.7	<b>SA (avg.)</b>	27.6

## Career Years

Nineteen Griffins set personal AHL career highs this season:

**Tyler Angle** +17 rating

**Carson Bantle** 52 games played, 3 goals, 4 assists, 7 points, +0 rating, 55 penalty minutes

**Ondrej Becher** 60 games played, 19 assists, 28 points, 42 penalty minutes, +5 rating, 3 game-winners

**Shai Buium** 3 goals

**Sebastian Cossa** 26 wins, 5 shutouts, 2.33 GAA

**Sheldon Dries** +20 rating

**Alex Doucet** 8 goals, +10 rating

**Erik Gustafsson** 33 assists, 37 points, +21 rating

**Alex Kannok Leipert** 64 games played, 14 assists, 16 points

**William Lagesson** +33 rating

**Amadeus Lombardi** 26 assists, 42 points, 22 penalty minutes, +11 rating, 5 game-winners

**Carter Mazur** +4 rating

**Jakub Rychlovsky** 67 games played, 21 assists, 26 penalty minutes, +21 rating

**Gabriel Seger** 70 games played, 13 assists, 20 points, 20 penalty minutes, +13 rating, 2 game-winners

**Dominik Shine** 21 goals, +25 rating

**Eduards Tralmaks** 64 games played, 26 goals, 5 power-play goals, 4 game-winners

**Antti Tuomisto** 68 games played, 8 goals, 29 points, +29 rating

**William Wallinder** 66 games played, 18 assists, 20 points, 23 penalty minutes, +21 rating

**Austin Watson** 146 penalty minutes

## Climbing Up the Leaderboard

Eight Griffins have now either moved up or cracked the franchise's all-time career regular-season leaderboard:

**Sebastian Cossa** 123 games played (5th), 7,246 minutes played (5th), 2.46 GAA (10th), 70 wins (5th), 8 shutouts (T6th), 3,040 saves (5th), 7 shootout wins (T5th), .786 shootout save percentage (5th)

**Nate Danielson** .625 shootout percentage (7th)

**Sheldon Dries** .159 shooting percentage (T8th)

**John Leonard** 5 shorthanded goals (T9th), .750 shootout percentage (6th), .205 shooting percentage (1st)

**Amadeus Lombardi** 3 overtime goals (T4th)

**Carter Mazur** .169 shooting percentage (5th)

**Michal Postava** 1.71 GAA (1st), .937 save percentage (1st)

**Dominik Shine** 523 games played (3rd), 96 goals (3rd), 126 assists (7th), 222 points (4th), 594 PIM (5th), 6 shorthanded goals (T5th), 15 game-winners (T3rd), 10 unassisted goals (T1st), 901 shots (3rd)

## On a Scale of 1-10

Eleven Griffins ranked among the AHL's top-15 individual leaders during the regular season:

**Michael Brandsegg-Nygaard** 8 game-winners (2nd, 1st among rookies), 20 goals (T6th among rookies), 24 assists (T14th among rookies), 44 points (T10th among rookies), +17 rating (T8th among rookies), 7 power-play goals (T6th among rookies), 147 shots (T7th among rookies)

**Sebastian Cossa** 2.33 GAA (5th), .915 SV% (6th), 26 wins (3rd), 39 games played (T12th), 2,292:25 minutes played (12th)

**Erik Gustafsson** 33 assists (T8th among defensemen), +21 rating (T14th among defensemen)

**Alex Kannok Leipert** 2 shorthanded assists (T13th, 5th among defensemen)

**John Leonard** 33 goals (2nd), 5 shorthanded goals (T1st), 8 game-winners (2nd)

**William Lagesson** +33 rating (3rd, 1st among defensemen)

**Amadeus Lombardi** 5 game-winners (T12th)

**Eduards Tralmaks** +29 rating (T7th)

**Antti Tuomisto** +29 rating (T7th, 5th among defensemen), 2 game-winners (T14th among defensemen)

**William Wallinder** +21 rating (T14th among defensemen)

**Austin Watson** 146 penalty minutes (8th)

## Single-Season Leaders

Eight Griffins authored performances that ranked among the top 10 single-season efforts in franchise history:

**Michael Brandsegg-Nygaard** 8 game-winners (T5th)

**Sebastian Cossa** 26 wins (8th), 5 shutouts (T7th)

**William Lagesson** +33 rating (7th)

**John Leonard** 33 goals (T7th), 5 shorthanded goals (T1st), 8 game-winners (T5th), 8 first goals (T5th), 4 unassisted goals (T5th). 750 shootout percentage (T6th), .205 shooting percentage (T2nd)

**Amadeus Lombardi** 3 overtime goals (T1st)

**Michal Postava** 1.71 GAA (1st), 4 shutouts (T10th), .937 SV% (1st)

**Dominik Shine** .202 shooting percentage (T4th)

**Eduards Tralmaks** 7 first goals (T9th), .205 shooting percentage (T2nd)

## Best Fans in the Business

The Griffins finished with a regular-season attendance of 286,195 over 36 games at Van Andel Arena, for an average of 7,950 fans per contest.

Grand Rapids ranked fifth out of 32 AHL teams in attendance this season. The Griffins welcomed four sellout crowds of 10,834 this campaign.

Excluding the 2020-21 season when capacity was severely restricted due to COVID, the Griffins have averaged more than 7,000 fans for 18 consecutive seasons.

## A Season to Remember

The Griffins concluded the regular season with a 51-16-4-1 record (.743) and 107 points, which were the fourth-most points in team history. Grand Rapids reached at least 100 points for the first time since 2016-17 and hit the century mark (66 games) faster than any team in franchise history (previously 69 games in 2005-06). The team had at least 50 wins for the first time since 2005-06 and reached the 50-win mark in its 70th game, which was the fewest games in team history (2005-06, 71st game). The 51 wins also tied for the third-most in the Griffins' 30-year history. The team saw its franchise-record tying 15-game win streak from Nov. 22-Dec. 27 come to an end in overtime on Dec. 31, which also tied for the sixth-longest run in AHL history. Grand Rapids had the longest (15) and third-longest (8) win streaks in the AHL this season. In addition, the Griffins' 19-game point streak from Nov. 22-Jan. 7 (18-0-1-0) ended on Jan. 9, which tied for the longest run in franchise history (see table). The 17-game points streak on the road from Oct. 10-Jan. 23 (15-0-1-1) set a new AHL record, eclipsing the 2010-11 Milwaukee Admirals' 16-game run (10-0-4-2). The Griffins finished 24-9-3-0 at home and 27-7-1-1 on the road, setting a new franchise best with 27 road victories (2003-03 26 wins in 40 games). Grand Rapids' .778 road points percentage also set a franchise record, beating the previous record of .713 (26-9-3-2) set in 2002-03.

Point Streak	Record	Date
19	18-0-1-0	Nov. 22, 2025-Jan. 7, 2026
19	15-0-3-1	Feb. 4-March 20, 2015 (Jeff Blashill)
18	13-0-3-2	Jan. 13-March 2, 2024 (Dan Watson's 1st season)

## Award Season

Griffins goaltenders **Sebastian Cossa** and **Michal Postava** were named the winners of the 2025-26 Harry "Hap" Holmes Memorial Award, given annually since 1972 to the goaltender(s) on the team that allows the fewest goals per game in the regular season. This marked the third time the Griffins have won the award and the first since they earned it back to back in 2001-02 and 2002-03. Grand Rapids paced the AHL with 159 goals allowed, an average of just 2.21 per game. The 159 goals allowed set a franchise record for the fewest in a season, surpassing the 166 mark from 2003-04 when it played 80 games (2.08 GAA). The Griffins logged an AHL-high 10 shutouts during the regular season, tying the team record established in 2003-04. The Griffins also won five Howies Hockey Tape/AHL Player of the Week honors, marking the most in their AHL history (4 in 2005-06) and tying for the most in franchise history (5 in 2000-01 IHL). The Players of the Week included Postava (April 19), **Michael Brandsegg-Nygaard** (March 1), **Dominik Shine** (Feb. 15), **Sheldon Dries** (Dec. 21) and Cossa (Nov. 30). **John Leonard** was named to the AHL Second All-Star Team for the second straight season and became the first Griffin selected to an AHL All-Star Team since 2020-21 (Riley Barber) and the first named to the Second All-Star Team since 2015-16 (Robbie Russo). Leonard was also named the Fortune Tires "Expect More" AHL Player of the Month for November. Leonard became just the third player in franchise history to win the award, joining Riley Barber (April 2022) and Chris Minard (Feb. 2012). Finally, Cossa was dubbed the AHL Goaltender of the Month for both November and December, becoming the first netminder in team history to win the award twice in the same season and the first AHL goalie to win consecutive months since Henderson's Logan Thompson in Feb.-March 2021. The clean sweep in November marked the first time that the Griffins won both the player and goaltender of the month.

## Record Setters

Below is a list of team and league records that the Griffins have either set or tied this season.

- Best record in AHL history (90 seasons) through 25 games (23-1-0-1, 47 pts.), 30 games (27-1-1-1, 56 pts.), 40 games (32-5-2-1, 67 pts.) and 50 games (40-7-2-1, 83 pts.), while tying for the best start through 35 games (29-3-2-1, 61 pts.)
- Reached the 60-point mark in just 32 games, three games faster than any team in AHL history
- Only team in AHL history to win 40 of its first 50 games
- AHL record 17-game road points streak from Oct. 10-Jan. 23 (15-0-1-1)
- Tied franchise-record 15-game winning streak from Nov. 22-Dec. 27, which also tied for sixth-longest in AHL history
- Tied franchise-record 19-game points streak from Nov. 22-Jan. 7 (18-0-1-0)
- Franchise-record start with an 8-0 record and was the league's last undefeated team for first time since 2000-01 IHL season
- Started 6-0 at home for first time since 2009-10 (8-0)
- Franchise record for largest margin of victory (9) on Nov. 25 at Texas (10-1 W)
- Franchise record for fewest shots in a game (10) on Jan. 17 versus Milwaukee
- Earliest playoff clinching date in franchise history on Feb. 27 (previously March 6)
- Second-earliest division title in franchise history on March 26 (previously March 9)
- Fastest to 100 points in franchise history, in game 66 (previously game 69 in 2005-06)
- Franchise record for most home wins (24) in a 36-game slate (previously 23 in 2023-24)
- AHL record for most road wins (27) in a 36-game slate (tied with 2025-26 Providence; previously 26 by two teams)
- Franchise record for most road points (56) in a 36-game slate (previously 42 in 2024-25)
- Franchise record for most road wins (27) (previously 26 in 2002-03, when it played 40 road contests instead of the current 36)
- Franchise record for best road record (.778) (previously .713 in 2002-03)
- Franchise record for most overall points (107) in a 72-game season (previously 86 in 2023-24)
- Franchise record for most overall wins (51) in a 72-game season (previously 37 in 2024-25 & 2023-24)
- Franchise record for best overall record (.743) (previously .719 in 2005-06)
- Fastest to 50 wins in franchise history, in game 70 (previously game 71 in 2005-06)
- Franchise record for largest shutout margin on April 17 at Milwaukee (8-0 W)

## What's The Password?

The Griffins' defense remained the best in the AHL for the majority of the season, as it ranked first with 2.21 goals allowed per contest. Grand Rapids posted its 10th shutout of the season on April 17 in an 8-0 win at Milwaukee, which tied the team record established in 2003-04. The Griffins shut out their opponent in two straight games from Jan. 17-21 in addition to posting consecutive shutouts from Dec. 21-27. Prior to this season, the last time Grand Rapids logged two straight shutouts was Feb. 15-17, 2018. The Griffins allowed more than two goals just 25 times all season (34.7%). In addition, the team's penalty kill finished first in the AHL at 86.0%. In net, **Sebastian Cossa** sported a 2.33 GAA with a .915 save percentage and five shutouts, while rookie netminder **Michal Postava** possessed a 1.71 GAA, a .937 save percentage and four shutouts.

## Pucks on Net

The Griffins ranked second in the AHL with 3.54 goals per game, showing 255 tallies across the 72 outings. The 255 goals were the most since 2008-09 (255) when it played 80 games instead of 72. The team outscored its opponents 255-159 and went 38-3-1-0 when scoring the game's first goal. The Griffins outscored their opponents 110-78 at home, while possessing a 145-81 advantage on the road. Grand Rapids had its largest scoring margin against its opponents in the third period (100-51). The only month the team averaged less than three goals per game was in January (2.46) and showed more than 3.50 goals per game in October (4.00), November (4.08), December (3.73) and April (4.75), which was the highest goal count. **John Leonard** led the team and ranked second in the AHL with 33 goals, while **Eduards Tralmaks** finished second on the roster with 26 and **Sheldon Dries** placed third with 23. Leonard, Tralmaks, Dries, **Dominik Shine** (21) and **Michael Brandsegg-Nygaard** (20) all hit the 20-goal mark this season, which marked the first time since 2017-18 that Grand Rapids had at least five 20-goal scorers. Brandsegg-Nygaard was also the 11th Griffins rookie to score 20 goals and the first since Jonatan Berggren (21) in 2021-22.

## Road Warriors

The Griffins set the best road record in franchise history with a .778 points percentage (27-7-1-1), beating out the previous record of .713 (26-9-3-2) set in 2002-03. Grand Rapids also set a franchise record for most road victories in a single season at 27, surpassing the 2002-03 team (26 wins), when it played 40 road contests instead of the current 36. Grand Rapids outscored its opponents 145-81 in foreign territory and lost consecutive road games just once (March 21 at MIL, March 22 at RFD). The Griffins have also scored at least five goals in six straight road contests since March 26, and has a plus-66 scoring margin in foreign territory this season (141-75). The 17-game points streak on the road from Oct. 10-Jan. 23 (15-0-1-1) set a new AHL record, eclipsing the 2010-11 Milwaukee Admirals' 16-game run (10-0-4-2). **Sheldon Dries** logged a seven-game goal streak on the road from Dec. 19-Feb. 3, which was the longest run on the road in the AHL this season.

## Untouchables

Below are statistical categories in which the Griffins went undefeated.

- 24-0 when leading after the first period
- 12-0 in games decided by four or more goals
- 4-0 when allowing 10-19 shots

## Welcome to Grand Rapids

Below is a list of players who joined the Griffins following their European or collegiate seasons.

- **Trey Augustine** (from Michigan State (NCAA)): Made pro debut on April 10 against Chicago (L, 26 saves)
- **Kienan Draper** (from Michigan (NCAA)): Made pro debut on April 15 at Iowa
- **Eddie Genborg** (from Timrå (SHL/Sweden)): Three points (1-2—3) in 11 AHL games. Made AHL debut on March 20 at Rockford. First AHL goal on April 4 at Manitoba
- **Dylan James** (from North Dakota (NCAA)): Made pro debut on April 15 at Iowa. First pro goal during two-goal game on April 19 at Cleveland
- **Anton Johansson** (from Leksands (SHL/Sweden)): Six points (2-4—6) in eight AHL games. First AHL goal on April 4 at Manitoba
- **Jesse Kiiskinen** (from HPK (Liiga/Finland)): Two points (1-1—2) in three AHL games. Made AHL debut on April 11 against Rockford (one assist). First AHL goal on April 19 at Cleveland

## Important Starts

Playing with a lead was crucial for the Griffins this season, as they went 38-3-1-0 when scoring the game's first goal compared to 13-13-3-1 when conceding the opening tally. In addition, Grand Rapids went 24-0 when leading after the first period and 4-7-2-1 when trailing after the opening frame. When trailing after the second stanza the Griffins finished 5-11-0-1, compared to 35-1 when leading after the second.

## United Nations

The Griffins' roster comprised of nine different nationalities throughout the season. Grand Rapids' lineup on March 24 included players from nine different birth countries, which was a first in the franchise's 30-year history.

USA (16): Sheldon Dries, John Leonard, Austin Watson, Shai Buium, Trey Augustine, Kienan Draper, Carter Mazur, Dominik Shine, Nolan Moyle, Chad Hillebrand, Justin Holl, Nick Andrews, Brandon Hawkins, Jackson Jutting, Jacob Truscott, Carson Bantle

Canada (11): Nate Danielson, Alex Doucet, Tyler Angle, Amadeus Lombardi, Sebastian Cossa, Dylan James, Dustin Tokarski, Ian Mitchell, William Dufour, Carter Gylander, Michael Milne

Sweden (7): Gabriel Seger, Eddie Genborg, William Wallinder, Anton Johansson, William Lagesson, Erik Gustafsson, Axel Sandin-Pellikka

Czechia (3): Ondrej Becher, Jakub Rychlovsky, Michal Postava

Finland (2): Antti Tuomisto, Jesse Kiiskinen

Norway (1): Michael Brandsegg-Nygard

Latvia (1): Eduards Tralmaks

Poland (1): Wojciech Stachowiak

Thailand (1): Alex Kannok Leipert

## Shine On, Captain

**Dominik Shine** was named the 19th captain in franchise history, as he returned to Grand Rapids for his 10th season, becoming just the third player in team history to reach the milestone (Brian Lashoff 14, Travis Richards 10). He finished the regular season with 39 points (21-18—39), 41 penalty minutes and a plus-25 rating, setting career highs in goals, plus-minus rating and shooting percentage (20.5%). When Shine was in the lineup, the Griffins went 35-3-2-0 (.900). Shine participated in his first-ever AHL All-Star Classic and served as an alternate captain for the Western Conference. He was named the Howies Hockey Tape/AHL Player of the Week for the period ending Feb. 15, 2026, when he logged five goals, 13 shots and a plus-six rating in two games. In a 5-0 win against Texas on Feb. 15, the 33-year-old collected his second hat trick of the season and surpassed Mitch Callahan for the third-most goals in franchise history (95), securing his first-ever 20-goal campaign. On the all-time regular-season franchise leaderboard, Shine ranks third in games played (523), third in goals (96), seventh in assists (127), fourth in points (222), fifth in penalty minutes (594), tied for fifth in shorthanded goals (6), tied for third in game-winners (15), tied for first in unassisted goals (10), and third in shots (901). Shine spent from Feb. 28 until the end of the NHL regular season with the Detroit Red Wings and showed three goals and seven penalty minutes in 18 outings. He scored his first NHL goal on March 8 at New Jersey, becoming the fifth-oldest player in Red Wings history to score his first-career NHL goal. Throughout parts of two NHL campaigns, Shine has notched four points (3-1—4), 22 penalty minutes and a minus-one rating in 27 outings. He made his NHL debut last season on Jan. 27, 2025 against the Los Angeles Kings, becoming the oldest skater to make his NHL debut since Evgeny Medvedev did so at 33 on Oct. 8, 2015, and the oldest Red Wings player to make his debut since Vaclav Nedomansky did it at 33 on Nov. 18, 1977.

## The Leader

**John Leonard** was named to the AHL Second All-Star Team for the second consecutive season (Charlotte in 2024-25). He became the first Griffin selected to an AHL All-Star Team since 2020-21 (Riley Barber) and the first named to the Second All-Star Team since 2015-16 (Robbie Russo). The 27-year-old led the team in points (33-21—54) and goals (33), while tying for fifth in assists. Leonard also ranked among the AHL leaders in goals (33, 2nd), shorthanded goals (5, T1st) and game-winners (8, T2nd). He also placed fourth in points-per-game (1.15) among AHL players with at least 40 games played. Leonard, a sixth-year pro, returned to the AHL All-Star Classic for the second straight season after being one of Charlotte's representatives last year. Leonard logged a team-best six-game goal streak from Oct. 11-Nov. 2, which marked a career high, and showed a 10-game point streak from Oct. 10-Nov. 19, which set a career high and a new franchise record to begin a season. Leonard also appeared in 11 games with the Detroit Red Wings and totaled four points (2-2—4). He made his Red Wings debut on Dec. 16 against the New York Islanders and registered a three-game point streak with Detroit from Dec. 17-21 (2-1—3).

## The Well is Not Dry

**Sheldon Dries** posted 45 points (23-22—45), 13 penalty minutes and a career-best plus-20 rating in 57 games. The Macomb, Michigan, native ranked second on the roster in points, fourth in assists, and third in goals. Dries notched his third-straight 20-goal season in the AHL and has reached at least 20 goals in five straight AHL seasons when he plays at least 50 games. He was selected as the Howies Hockey Tape/ AHL Player of the Week for the period ending Dec. 21 when he logged six points (2-4—6) and a plus-eight rating in three games. Throughout his nine-year AHL career, Dries has 289 points (161-128—289), 270 penalty minutes and a plus-47 rating in 396 games. He made his Red Wings debut on March 12 at Tampa Bay and appeared in five games with Detroit this season.

## Putting the League on Notice

Rookie netminder **Michal Postava** went 17-6-0 with four shutouts, a 1.71 goals-against average and a .937 save percentage in 25 games. In an 8-0 victory at Milwaukee on April 17, Postava logged his fourth shutout of the campaign behind 24 saves, which set a franchise rookie record for most shutouts in a single season. Postava finished the regular season on a four-game win streak, showing two shutouts, a 1.00 GAA and a .960 save percentage. If he had enough minutes played to qualify (39 short), Postava would have ranked first in the league in GAA and save percentage, and tied for third in shutouts. He tied a franchise record by becoming the 10th netminder in team history to post back-to-back shutouts from Jan. 17-21. Postava collected his first AHL shutout on Jan. 17 with 10 saves in a 2-0 victory over Milwaukee and followed that performance with a 19-save blanking of Milwaukee on Jan. 21. Postava logged a shutout streak of 156:20 from Jan. 9-25, which was 3:47 short of breaking the franchise record by Jared Coreau in 2014-15 (160:06). In the franchise's all-time single-season record book, he placed first in GAA (1.71), first in save percentage (.937) and tied for 10th in shutouts (4).

## The Brick Wall

**Sebastian Cossa**, the 15th overall pick in 2021, registered a 26-8-4 record with a 2.33 goals-against average, a .915 save percentage and a career-best five shutouts in 39 contests. His 2.33 GAA, .915 save percentage and 26 wins also set AHL career highs for the netminder. His career-high five shutouts were the most by a Griffin since 2015-16 (Jared Coreau). Cossa enjoyed a career-high 10-game win streak from Nov. 25-Dec. 27, showing a 1.51 GAA and a .939 save percentage, and a 14-game point streak from Nov. 25-Jan. 13 (12-0-2). In the AHL rankings, Cossa ranked fifth in GAA, sixth in save percentage, second in shutouts, third in wins and 12th in minutes played (2292:25). Cossa became the first Griffins goalie to earn consecutive all-star selections, and the first Griffins player since Chris Terry (2019 and 2020). Cossa won two straight AHL Goaltender of the Month awards (November and December), becoming the first netminder in franchise history to receive the honor twice in the same season. The 23-year-old also became just the third goaltender in team history to win the award twice in any fashion, joining Jared Coreau (Feb. 2018, Dec. 2015) and Jimmy Howard (Dec. 2007, March 2006). In parts of four seasons with Grand Rapids since 2022-23, Cossa has notched a 70-33-18 mark with eight shutouts to go along with a 2.46 GAA and a .911 save percentage in 123 outings, becoming just the sixth netminder to reach the century mark with the team. In the Griffins' all-time rankings, Cossa places fifth in games played (123), fifth in minutes played (7,246), 10th in GAA (2.46), fifth in wins (70), tied for sixth in shutouts (8), and fifth in saves (3,040).

## On The Right Trail

**Eduards Tralmaks** logged AHL career high numbers in games played (64), goals (26), assists (16), points (42) and plus-minus rating (+29). He placed among the team leaders in points (T4th), goals (2nd) and plus-minus rating (3rd). Tralmaks' 26 goals tied for 19th in the AHL and his +29 rating placed eighth. On Nov. 25 at Texas, he posted his first AHL hat trick and had a season-high four-game goal streak from March 26-April 3. Tralmaks also competed in his first Olympics with Team Latvia and recorded four points (3-1—4) in four games. He paced Latvia in points and goals and finished the tournament tied for eighth in goals among all skaters. At least one active Griffin has been loaned to his country's national team in six of the last seven Olympics. Of those seven players, Tralmaks was by far the most productive on the world stage, equaling the goal total of the other six combined (see table).

Player	Country	Year/Site	Finish	GP	G	A	PTS
<b>Eduards Tralmaks</b>	<b>Latvia</b>	<b>2026/Milano Cortina</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
Niklas Kronwall	Sweden	2006/Turin	Gold	2	1	1	2
Tomas Jurco	Slovakia	2014/Sochi	11th	4	1	0	1
Julien Vauclair	Switzerland	2002/Salt Lake City	11th	4	1	0	1
Justin Abdelkader	USA	2022/Beijing	5th	1	0	1	1
Ole-Kristian Tollefsen	Norway	2010/Vancouver	10th	3	0	0	0
Sergei Kolosov	Belarus	2010/Vancouver	9th	4	0	0	0

## Be Like Mike

Rookie forward **Michael Brandsegg-Nygaard** registered 44 points (20-24—44), 42 penalty minutes and a plus-17 rating in 60 AHL outings. The Oslo, Norway, native ranked third on the team in points, third in assists, fifth in goals, tied for first in game-winners and third in shots. Brandsegg-Nygaard also placed among the AHL rookie leaders in goals (T6th), assists (T14th), points (T10th), plus-minus (T8th), power-play goals (7, T6th), shots (147, T7th) and game-winners (8, 1st). His eight game-winners also tied for second among all skaters. Brandsegg-Nygaard was the 11th Griffins rookie to score 20 goals and the first since Jonatan Berggren (21) in 2021-22. The 20-year-old was one of three rookies to make the Detroit Red Wings' opening-night roster out of training camp and showed one assist in 14 games.

## The Lombardi Trophy

**Amadeus Lombardi** posted career high totals in assists (26), points (42), plus-minus (+11), penalty minutes (22) and game-winners (5) to go along with 16 goals in 47 games. The third-year pro was sidelined for 20 straight games from Nov. 22-Jan. 9 due to rehabbing an injury. Lombardi showed five points (3-2—5) in two games from Feb. 20-21, which included an overtime-winner in both contests. He became just the third player in Griffins history to score an overtime goal in consecutive games, joining Turner Elson and Filip Hronek. Lombardi's three OT goals this campaign tied the Griffins' single-season record, and his four-career OT winners are tied for fourth in franchise history. With Grand Rapids since the spring of 2023, Lombardi has 109 points (40-69—109) in 163 outings, becoming the 22nd fastest player in franchise history to reach the century mark (149 games). Lombardi was named the team's winner of the IOA/American Specialty AHL Man of the Year award for his outstanding contributions to the Grand Rapids community during the 2025-26 season.

## Sparkling Stars

Griffins goaltender **Sebastian Cossa** and forwards **John Leonard** and **Dominik Shine** served as the team's representatives at the 2026 AHL All Star Classic presented by BMO in Rockford, Illinois. Due to an injury, Leonard was unable to participate. They joined their head coach, **Dan Watson**, who served as the coach for the Central Division. The three all-star player selections were the most for the Griffins since 2013 (Chad Billins, Petr Mrazek, Gustav Nyquist). Including Watson, the four all-star representatives were the most in team history since four players were chosen for the 2004 event in Grand Rapids (Jiri Hudler, Niklas Kronwall, Travis Richards, Nathan Robinson). Cossa became the first Griffins goalie to earn consecutive all-star selections, and the first Griffins player since Chris Terry (2019 and 2020). This was also Leonard's second straight all-star selection, as he was chosen for last year's event as a member of the Charlotte Checkers, while captain Shine competed in his first ever all-star game. Leonard was unable to participate due to injury. Shine posted one assist, three shots and an even plus-minus rating during the three-on-three tournament, and Cossa ranked second among all goalies with a 1.05 goals-against average and an .818 save percentage in 15:10 minutes. Watson led the Central Division to its second-consecutive finals appearance, falling 3-1 to the Pacific Division.

## Ready When Called

Rookie netminder **Carter Gylander** was impressive this season, showing a 7-0-1 record with one shutout, a 1.62 goals-against average and a .942 save percentage in eight games. The 24-year-old showed an AHL career-high seven-game win streak from Nov. 12-March 26 with a 1.42 GAA and a .950 save percentage. Gylander collected his first AHL shutout on Dec. 21 against the Cleveland Monsters behind 22 saves. His 28-save victory at Cleveland on March 26 clinched the division title for the Griffins. In his two-year AHL career with Grand Rapids, Gylander has a 9-1-1 ledger with a 2.15 GAA and a .926 save percentage in 11 appearances. Gylander spent the majority of the season in the ECHL with Toledo and has totaled a 2.78 GAA and a .901 save percentage in 34 regular-season games.

## Special Powers

The Griffins' special teams had a solid season, as the power play finished 15th in the AHL at 18.7% and the penalty kill was the best on the circuit at 86.0%. To break it down even further, the home power play stood at 17.3% (24th) and the road power play concluded in 11th place (19.7%). Both the home (87.1%) and road (84.9%) penalty-kill units ranked fifth in the AHL. The Griffins scored a season-high three power-play goals on Nov. 9 at Chicago, which was part of their season-best four-game streak of scoring on the man-advantage from Nov. 1-12. **Sheldon Dries** and **Michael Brandsegg-Nygaard** tied for the team lead with seven power-play tallies. Grand Rapids allowed more than one power-play goal just five times all season. The Griffins did not allow a power-play goal in a season-high five straight games from Jan. 16-25, going 9-for-9. **John Leonard** led the roster and tied for first in the AHL with five shorthanded goals, which also tied for first on franchise's all-time single-season leaderboard.

## Good Problem to Have

The Griffins' roster featured eight veterans for much of the season, including forwards **Sheldon Dries**, **John Leonard**, **Dominik Shine** and **Austin Watson**, and defensemen **Erik Gustafsson**, **Justin Holl** (traded to St. Louis), **William Lagesson** and **Ian Mitchell** (traded to Tampa Bay). With eight veterans, the Griffins were two over the playing limit and were required to scratch two of them each game due to the AHL's development rule. Even with two being scratched for each contest, the veterans on the team have combined for 254 points (102-152—254) in 392 games, which accounted for 38% of the scoring for the team and 40% of the goals. Leonard ranked first among the veterans with 54 points (33-21—54) in 47 games, while Dries (23-22—45 in 57 GP) finished second, and Shine (21-18—39 in 40 GP) placed third.

## Debut for the Ages

On Oct. 9 with the Detroit Red Wings against the Montreal Canadiens, rookies **Michael Brandsegg-Nygaard**, **Emmit Finnie** and **Axel Sandin-Pellikka** all made their NHL debuts at the age of 20. That marked just the second time in Griffins history that three alumni all made their debuts on the same night. The last time it occurred was on Oct. 4, 2018, when defensemen Dennis Cholowski, Filip Hronek and Libor Sulak all made their NHL debuts with Detroit. Finnie, a seventh-round pick by Detroit in 2023, has competed in 13 games with Grand Rapids since the spring of 2024 with five points (1-4—5), adding three appearances in the 2025 Calder Cup Playoffs. Sandin-Pellikka was the 17th overall pick by Detroit in 2023 and showed one assist in two games with the Griffins in the spring of 2025 before skating in three Calder Cup Playoff outings last season. Brandsegg-Nygaard, the 15th overall pick by the Red Wings in 2024, suited up for two games with Grand Rapids at the end of the last season and then tied for the team lead with three points (2-1—3) in three 2025 Calder Cup Playoff appearances.

## Leaders of the Pack

The Griffins were in first place or tied for first in the Central Division for the entire season and finished with a 40-11-4-1 mark against their most familiar foes, which were the most divisional wins since 2016-17 (40-20-1-3), when they played eight more games. Grand Rapids lost just once in regulation against Iowa (7-1-0-0), Manitoba (6-1-1-0) and Texas (7-1-0-0), while Rockford and Chicago managed to defeat the Griffins a season-high three times in regulation. The Griffins had a plus-81 scoring margin against the division (205-124) and averaged 3.67 goals per game while allowing just 2.21 goals on average. Grand Rapids finished 20 points ahead of second-place Chicago and 44 points ahead of a playoff spot.

## Race for the Cup

The Stanley Cup playoffs got underway on Saturday, April 18, with 13 of the 16 teams having a Griffins alum among their player or hockey ops ranks.

<b>Team</b>	<b>Alumni</b>
Anaheim Ducks	Ville Husso, Petr Mrazek, GM Pat Verbeek, Asst. Athletic Trainer Josh Chapman, Collegiate Scout Patrick Rissmiller
Boston Bruins	Asst. Coach Chris Kelly
Buffalo Sabres	Asst. Coach Matt Ellis, Scout Stacy Roest
Colorado Avalanche	Head Coach Jared Bednar
Dallas Stars	Adam Erne, GM Jim Nill, Asst. Equipment Manager Andrew Stegehuis
Edmonton Oilers	Mattias Janmark, Calvin Pickard, Skills Coach Conor Allen, Pro Scout Chris Cichocki, Head of Goalie Scouting & Development Jeff Salajko
Minnesota Wild	Pro Scout Mark Mowers
Montreal Canadiens	Joe Veleno, Pro Scout Neil Little
Ottawa Senators	Nick Jensen
Philadelphia Flyers	Luke Glendening, Dir. of Player Development Riley Armstrong, Amateur Scout Mark Greig
Pittsburgh Penguins	Anthony Mantha, Elmer Soderblom, Asst. GM Jason Spezza, Asst. Coach Todd Nelson, Asst. Coach Mike Stothers, Player Development Coach/Pro Scout Sheldon Brookbank, Special Assignment Scout Chris Mueller
Tampa Bay Lightning	Charle-Edouard D'Astous
Utah Mammoth	Pro Scout David Oliver

## In the Show

With the advancement of nine former Griffins to the NHL this season, Grand Rapids has now sent 223 players on to the NHL during its 30 seasons of play. Thirty-nine Griffins alumni logged ice time in the NHL during the 2025-26 season. (\*Played for Grand Rapids this season)

Player	NHL Club(s)	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM	
Zach Aston-Reese	Columbus	27	1	4	5	-1	12	
Jonatan Berggren	St. Louis/Detroit	51	8	14	22	-5	12	
Tyler Bertuzzi	Chicago	79	32	26	58	-16	42	
*Michael Brandsegg-Nygaard	Detroit	14	0	1	1	-5	2	
Dennis Cholowski	New Jersey	17	0	2	2	-6	2	
*Nate Danielson	Detroit	28	2	5	7	-7	4	
*Sheldon Dries	Detroit	5	0	0	0	0	0	
Charle-Edouard D'Astous	Tampa Bay	70	6	23	29	-4	112	
Simon Edvinsson	Detroit	72	9	16	25	12	75	
Adam Erne	Dallas	45	6	2	8	1	19	
Emmitt Finnie	Detroit	82	13	17	30	-10	6	
Luke Glendening	Philadelphia/New Jersey	70	2	7	9	-7	8	
*Erik Gustafsson	Detroit	2	0	0	0	-2	2	
*Justin Holl	St. Louis	9	1	1	2	5	6	
Filip Hronek	Vancouver	82	8	41	49	-23	33	
Mattias Janmark	Edmonton	43	1	7	8	-8	22	
Calle Jarnkrok	Toronto	56	6	2	8	-15	8	
Nick Jensen	Ottawa	61	4	13	17	-2	22	
Albert Johansson	Detroit	82	3	8	11	-18	16	
Marco Kasper	Detroit	81	9	10	19	-20	33	
Dylan Larkin	Detroit	74	34	33	67	3	48	
*John Leonard	Detroit	11	2	2	4	-3	0	
Matt Luff	St. Louis	5	1	0	1	-2	0	
Anthony Mantha	Pittsburgh	81	33	31	64	10	43	
*Carter Mazur	Detroit	8	0	0	0	-3	0	
Dylan McIlrath	Washington	13	0	0	0	-1	10	
Tomas Nosek	Florida	21	2	2	4	-8	4	
Gustav Nyquist	Winnipeg	51	1	11	12	-8	10	
Michael Rasmussen	Detroit	64	6	8	14	-10	8	
*Axel Sandin-Pellikka	Detroit	68	7	14	21	-20	18	
Donovan Sebrango	Florida/Ottawa	42	0	8	8	-5	68	
Moritz Seider	Detroit	82	10	50	60	15	57	
*Dominik Shine	Detroit	18	3	0	3	0	7	
Brendan Smith	Columbus	15	0	2	2	-1	11	
Elmer Soderblom	Pittsburgh/Detroit	59	7	6	13	-1	23	
Joe Veleno	Montreal	61	2	3	5	-12	19	
Goalie	NHL Club	GP	W	L	OT	SO	GAA	SPCT
Ville Husso	Anaheim	20	10	8	2	0	3.25	.884
Calvin Pickard	Edmonton	16	5	6	2	0	3.68	.871
Petr Mrazek	Anaheim	10	3	5	0	0	4.07	.858
Alex Nedeljkovic	San Jose	40	18	14	4	0	2.87	.896

## Griffins by Season

Season	Overall	Home	Road	Finish	Playoff Results
<b>2025-26</b>	51-16-4-1	24-9-3-0	27-7-1-1	1st of 7 in Central, 2nd of 32 in AHL	TBD
<b>2024-25</b>	37-29-4-2	17-15-2-2	20-14-2-0	3rd of 7 in Central, 18th of 32 in AHL	Lost to TEX (0-3)
<b>2023-24</b>	37-23-8-4	23-7-4-2	14-16-4-2	2nd of 7 in Central, 13th of 32 in AHL	Defeated RFD (3-1) Lost to MIL (2-3)
<b>2022-23</b>	28-36-4-4	12-17-4-3	16-19-0-1	7th of 7 in Central, 30th of 32 in AHL	Did not qualify
<b>2021-22</b>	33-35-6-2	17-16-4-1	16-19-2-1	7th of 7 in Central, 26th of 31 in AHL	Did not qualify
<b>2020-21</b>	16-12-3-1	8-4-3-1	8-8-0-0	3rd of 6 in Central, 14th of 28 in AHL	No playoffs held
<b>*2019-20</b>	29-27-3-4	15-11-2-3	14-16-1-1	3rd of 8 in Central, T20th of 31 in AHL	No playoffs held
<b>2018-19</b>	38-27-7-4	22-10-3-3	16-17-4-1	4th of 8 in Central, 12th of 31 in AHL	Lost to CHI (2-3)
<b>2017-18</b>	42-25-2-7	20-15-1-2	22-10-1-5	2nd of 7 in Central, 9th of 30 in AHL	Lost to MB (2-3)
<b>2016-17</b>	47-23-1-5	25-11-0-2	22-12-1-3	2nd of 8 in Central, 6th of 30 in AHL Calder Cup Champions	Defeated MIL (3-0) Defeated CHI (4-1) Defeated SJ (4-1) Defeated SYR (4-2)
<b>2015-16</b>	44-30-1-1	25-12-1-0	19-18-0-1	4th of 8 in Central, 12th of 30 in AHL	Defeated MIL (3-0) Lost to LE (2-4)
<b>2014-15</b>	46-22-6-2	23-10-4-1	23-12-2-1	1st of 5 in Midwest, 3rd of 30 in AHL	Defeated TOR (3-2) Defeated RFD (4-1) Lost to UTI (2-4)
<b>2013-14</b>	46-23-2-5	23-13-0-2	23-10-2-3	2nd of 5 in Midwest, 5th of 30 in AHL	Defeated ABB (3-1) Lost to TEX (2-4)
<b>2012-13</b>	42-26-4-4	21-12-3-2	21-14-1-2	1st of 5 in Midwest, 8th of 30 in AHL Calder Cup Champions	Defeated HOU (3-2) Defeated TOR (4-2) Defeated OKC (4-3) Defeated SYR (4-2)
<b>2011-12</b>	33-32-7-4	18-15-3-2	15-17-4-2	4th of 5 in North, 24th of 30 in AHL	Did not qualify
<b>2010-11</b>	36-34-2-8	18-16-1-5	18-18-1-3	6th of 7 in North, 23rd of 30 in AHL	Did not qualify
<b>2009-10</b>	34-39-3-4	19-19-1-1	15-20-2-3	7th of 7 in North, 26th of 29 in AHL	Did not qualify
<b>2008-09</b>	43-25-6-6	25-8-3-4	18-17-3-2	3rd of 7 in North, 8th of 29 in AHL	Defeated HAM (4-2) Lost to MTB (0-4)
<b>2007-08</b>	31-41-2-6	18-18-1-3	13-23-1-3	5th of 7 in North, 25th of 29 in AHL	Did not qualify
<b>2006-07</b>	37-32-6-5	22-13-2-3	15-19-4-2	4th of 6 in North, 17th of 27 in AHL	Lost to MTB (3-4)
<b>2005-06</b>	55-20-1-4	30-6-1-3	25-14-0-1	1st of 7 in North, 1st of 27 in AHL	Defeated TOR (4-1) Defeated MTB (4-3) Lost to MIL (0-4)
<b>2004-05</b>	41-35-2-2	19-18-2-1	22-17-0-1	5th of 7 in West, 17th of 28 in AHL	Did not qualify
<b>2003-04</b>	44-28-8-0	24-10-6-0	20-18-2-0	2nd of 7 in West, 5th of 28 in AHL	Lost to CHI (0-4)
<b>2002-03</b>	48-22-8-2	22-13-5-0	26-9-3-2	1st of 5 in Central, 2nd of 29 in AHL	Defeated WIL (3-1) Defeated CHI (4-0) Lost to HOU (3-4)
<b>2001-02</b>	42-27-11-0	24-12-4-0	18-15-7-0	1st of 5 in West, 4th of 27 in AHL	Lost to CHI (2-3)
<b>2000-01</b>	53-22-7	31-7-3	22-15-4	1st of 6 in East, 1st of 11 in IHL	Defeated CLE (4-0) Lost to ORL (2-4)
<b>1999-00</b>	51-22-9	26-12-3	25-10-6	1st of 7 in East, 2nd of 13 in IHL	Defeated CLE (4-2) Defeated CIN (4-1) Lost to CHI (2-4)
<b>1998-99</b>	34-40-8	19-18-4	15-22-4	7th of 8 in East, 15th of 16 in IHL	Did not qualify
<b>1997-98</b>	38-31-13	19-17-5	19-14-8	5th of 9 in East, 11th of 18 in IHL	Lost to CIN (0-3)
<b>1996-97</b>	40-30-12	21-13-7	19-17-5	6th of 9 in East, 10th of 19 in IHL	Lost to ORL (2-3)
<b>All-Time</b>	<b>1,196-834-27-90-130</b>		<b>Home 630-377-15-49-67</b>	<b>Road 566-457-12-41-63</b>	

\*13 games remained in the regular season when the season was cancelled.