

## PREP SPOTLIGHT » DOMINIC OVERBY

## West Jordan sprinter pulling away from the competition

By ERIC BUTLER

Reporter at The Tribune

When sprinters line up in the blocks against West Jordan's Dominic Overby, it can be a little bit intimidating. At 6-foot-4, Overby rarely ever encounters fellow runners at his height. In the 100 meters, the Jaguars' standout is a handful for competitors — like when he won that particular race at a Taylorsville meet in mid-April.

## Dominic Overby

School » West Jordan  
Grade » Senior  
Sports » Track, Football

But he's even better at the longer sprints when his long stride can take over.

"I just know that if I've got a guy next to me at the end, I'm definitely pulling away," he said.

Last year at the state 6A meet, Overby finished fourth in the 400-meter sprint. West Jordan is now in Class 5A and Overby figures to be right in the mix for an individual state title in that event.

"Oh yeah, I'm a 400 guy," Overby said. "I can do the 100 and 200, but the 400 is something I take pride in."

That's not all, when it comes to track and field. Overby also has one long jump this year measuring over 24 feet, putting him right with the nation's best leapers for the season.

In one sense, this is all an athletic interlude as football will be paying Overby's way through college. In the fall, he caught 67 passes for 1,140 yards for the Jaguars and he'll take his receiving talents to Ames, Iowa — on the other side of future Big 12 battles with Utah and BYU — as part of the Iowa State Cyclones.

"When I went out there for my visit, everyone was really welcoming," Overby said. "It felt like I was at home, but not at home. It was pretty cool."



A sprinter and a football player, West Jordan senior Dominic Overby is headed to Iowa State to play for the Cyclones.

## Realignment

examine the idea of NHL realignment. And since Bettman and league officials admit they didn't have adequate time to properly address the idea, we can go ahead and do the heavy lifting for them.

The idea is fairly straightforward and simple: Realign the NHL into eight divisions consisting of four teams each, similar to the NFL setup.

It's an idea we floated back in 2021, but we've made some significant amendments now that Utah is in the mix. And, over the years ago, readers had plenty of opinions about how teams should be aligned, so we've taken some of that feedback into consideration where possible.

Before we lay out the proposal, there are a few disclaimers for readers.

► This format is mostly based on geography. And where possible, we've tried to keep traditional rivals together — but there are exceptions to this rule.

► If you think any of these divisional setups are strange, please consider that in the early 1990s the Norris Division featured Montreal, Los Angeles, Detroit, Pittsburgh and Hartford. And that was in the era before charter travel for teams. So if there are a couple of teams that feel misplaced or misaligned, just remember divisional formats in the past haven't always been perfect, either. Toronto actually spent five seasons in the Western Conference in the 1990s. So no matter what you see below, there is a good chance something wackier has existed in the NHL's past.

No realignment formula is going to be perfect and please everybody. This is meant to be a leap-of-faith point to find a realignment solution that might make the most sense.

With those disclaimers out of the way, it's time to analyze the proposed realignment that would put the NHL into eight divisions of four teams apiece.

EASTERN CONFERENCE  
Proposed Division No. 1

Boston Bruins, New Jersey Devils, New York Islanders, New York Rangers

Let's get the ball rolling with an admittedly controversial suggestion: splitting up the Boston Bruins and Montreal Canadiens. They have been historic and bitter rivals for decades. And the Bruins and Canadiens have been in the same division since 1981-82. But if we're using geography as a major factor, putting the Bruins in

this division makes a ton of sense. The three metropolitan New York teams would be a short distance away from Boston. And when you think about other leagues in North America, the Boston-New York rivalry is at the top of the heap. And it's largely because the Yankees, Red Sox, Knicks-Celtics and Jets-Patriots are all in the same division. Maybe it's time to stoke the flames of a Boston-New York rivalry in the NHL.

## Proposed Division No. 2

Buffalo Sabres, Montreal Canadiens, Ottawa Senators, Toronto Maple Leafs

In 2021, I had the Sabres and Bruins swapped and Buffalo fans went ballistic. They didn't believe the Sabres should be in the same division as the Rangers and Islanders simply because they all reside in the state of New York. So this time around, I've flipped the Sabres and Bruins and put Buffalo where a lot of their fans wanted them — along side Toronto and Montreal. Ottawa fits geographically, sitting right in between Toronto and Montreal. For logistical and historical reasons, this divisional setup could make a lot of sense.

## Proposed Division No. 3

Columbus Blue Jackets, Philadelphia Flyers, Pittsburgh Penguins, Washington Capitals

The Penguins and Flyers are staying in the same division. That's non-negotiable. And Washington has some great historical rivalries with both of those Pennsylvania teams dating from their time together in the Patrick Division. The Blue Jackets are a tricky one to try and slot in. They are relatively young as a franchise, so they don't have longstanding rivalries with other teams. And geographically, they can almost push into the midwest region, so if we lumped them in with Detroit and Chicago, that would work, too.

## Proposed Division No. 4

Carolina Hurricanes, Florida Panthers, Nashville Predators, Tampa Bay Lightning

This grouping should give you Southeast Division vibes from back in the day. Putting the two Florida teams together with Carolina makes a lot of sense. Nashville is a bit of a geographic outlier. They are not within 300 miles of another NHL city. But the state of Tennessee does border North Carolina, so it's not outlandish to put Nashville and Raleigh in the same division. The mild hiccup on this is that Nashville would be the lone team in the Central Time Zone.

WESTERN CONFERENCE  
Proposed Division No. 5

Chicago Blackhawks, Detroit Red Wings, Minnesota Wild, St. Louis Blues

St. Louis fans, I heard you loud and clear. When we did this back in 2021, I took St. Louis away from Chicago and Minnesota and let's just say Blues fans didn't take it well. So I've tried to rectify that here by putting the Blues back with the Blackhawks, Wild and Red Wings. It's almost like the old Norris Division with Chicago, Detroit, Minnesota and St. Louis. Would the Red Wings be happy to be the lone Eastern Time Zone team in their division? Probably not. But that shouldn't be a huge price to pay to play in a division with either old Norris pals again. If Detroit was adamant about staying out of the Western Conference, we could always swap them out with either Nashville or Columbus to try and find a solution that works.

## Proposed Division No. 6

Colorado Avalanche, Dallas Stars, NHL Utah (formerly Arizona Coyotes), Vegas Golden Knights

Utah officially enters the mix and we've got them placed along one of their closest geographic counterparts in Colorado and Vegas. This should be a good start to create a rivalry for the fans in Salt Lake City. Given their southern location, it's always difficult to try and figure out where to put the Dallas Stars. Currently, Dallas is in the Central Division with Winnipeg, which is 1,300 miles to the north. The distance between Dallas and Vegas is about the same at 1,200 miles. So no matter how you slice this, Dallas is going to be a team with a bit of travel within their division.

## Proposed Division No. 7

Calgary Flames, Edmonton Oilers, Vancouver Canucks, Winnipeg Jets

This is one configuration that is going to generate a lot of discussion. It's an all-Canadian division, that lumps Winnipeg into the mix with its Western Canadian counterparts. And yes, it's a long haul from Winnipeg to Vancouver. But it's pretty much the exact distance the Jets travel when they head to Dallas to face the Stars for Central Division matchups right now. These four teams were all together in the Smythe Division back in the day, so it seems fitting to give Winnipeg some natural rivals.

## Proposed Division No. 8

Anaheim Ducks, Los Angeles Kings, San Jose Sharks, Seattle Kraken

## Clarkson

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finished second-worst in the same statistic. Teams acquiring Clarkson will be hoping that he's the shooter he showed he was for his previous four seasons in Utah.

That being said, Clarkson's passing has risen to much higher heights as his game has matured, looking to set up teammates more than ever before.

"This was the most I've ever had to make plays. I had to kind of get off the ball a lot this year, just because how the team was, how Will has changed things," Clarkson explained. He averaged five assists per game for the first time this year.

Hardy, the Jazz's head coach, said that his priority for Clarkson this offseason is to continue to develop that playmaking skill.

Jordan's playmaking got better over the last two years and I do think that it's going to need to improve even more because we need we need more playmakers. We need more players that are

passing the ball early," Hardy said. He went on to reference the Jazz's New Year's Day 37-point win against Dallas, in which Clarkson played the role of an 11-assist playmaker.

In that game, Clarkson also scored 33 points and pulled down 10 boards — making it the first regular-season triple-double for the Jazz in 14 years.

If that was his last truly shining moment in a Jazz uniform, it was a more than solid enough way to go out. And while he might be remembered for that, Clarkson had a different answer for when asked about his legacy in Utah.

"Not a knock on Thuri, but best sixth man ever to wear a Jazz uniform," referencing Jazz broadcaster and former sixth man Thuri Bassey. Clarkson continued: "Just a legacy of showing love, embracing people, this community. I think that's my legacy, just showing love, and then coming off the bench and winning the 6th man of the year. I'm just a man of the people, period."

Jazz fans and the people of Utah would likely concur.

Utah Jazz forward John Collins (20) slips hands with guard Jordan Clarkson after Clarkson hits a 3-pointer late in a March win over the Washington Wizards.

RICK EGAN

In order to put Winnipeg at this division above, we had to split apart Seattle and Vancouver. And maybe that will be a non-starter for a lot of fans who want to see that geographic rivalry blossom. But in order to make this all work out, there are a couple of little sacrifices to be made and splitting up the Kraken and Canucks is one of them. Considering the Kraken have only played two seasons, it's not like we're detonating decades of a heated and bitter rivalry. And as you read below, there is a workaround solution that will still allow the Kraken and Canucks to meet up for four times each regular season. The three California teams are a natural fit together and now that Arizona is out of the picture, it's tricky to find a fourth team to fit with them. But staying on the Pacific coast seems like the best option.

## Schedule format

Fans will want to know how the regular season schedule could play out under this type of divisional format. And the good news is this is a pretty easy formula, keeping the 82-game season intact.

To put this in the simplest terms: ► You play teams within your own division six times (three home, three road).

► You will face every other opponent in the league at least twice (one home, one road).

The fact every team in the NHL plays each other at home and on the road seems convenient, ensuring fans the opportunity to see Connor Bedard, Connor McDavid or Auston Matthews in their home city every year.

If fans would like a more detailed version of how the schedule could play out, let's use the New York Islanders as our example team.

► New York would play the three teams in its own division six times each (three home, three road).

► They would play one other Eastern Conference Division team four times each (16 games total — two home, two road).

► They would play the remaining six divisions in the league two times each (48 games total — once home, once road).

And just like the NFL does with out-of-conference games, the NHL can employ a three-year rotation for which division you play the extra games against. For the Islanders, it would shake out like this:

► Year 1: Islanders play four games each against the Buffalo/Montreal/Ottawa/Toronto division.

► Year 2: Islanders play four games each against the Columbus/Philadelphia/Pittsburgh/Washington division.

► Year 3: Islanders play four games each against the Carolina/Florida/

Nashville/Tampa division.

If you don't love this idea, there is a slight variation where you could also permanently "attach" teams to historical rivals who fall out side their divisions to guarantee four games against them.

So for example, Montreal and Boston — who would no longer be in the same division — could be guaranteed four games every season. (That's the same number of games the Canadiens and Bruins played against each other this season, while they were both in the Atlantic Division.) The same could be true for rivalries like the Kraken-Canucks, Rangers-Flyers or any other matchup you feel is being slighted under this proposed format. There is a path to still having them meet four times in the regular season.

## Playoff format

Realistically, we can be as creative as we want with the playoff format.

All eight division winners would automatically receive a playoff berth. The next four teams in each conference in each conference can also qualify. In the end, the teams would be seeded from 1-16 from the entire league and play in that format. But since that seems like a non-starter for the NHL, at least a reduction to 1-8 in each conference could be a nice alternative.

If we want to get really fun and creative we could go with this option: The top two teams in each of the eight divisions advance to the playoffs. And we could add one small caveat, where if the third-place team is within five points of the second-place team at the end of the regular season, they will have a mini play-in series to determine who gets the final playoff spot.

Under this scenario, each team would start the season with a 50% chance of nabbing one of those two playoff spots in their four-team divisions. The 18 regular-season games within your division would take on an added significance and hopefully fuel rivalries — both old and new.

Essentially, that's the realignment in broad strokes. We put the teams into eight divisions, they still play 82 games and when it comes to the playoffs, it's four teams a little flexibility on the format. And we can at least stick with this format until the NHL decides to expand again in a few years, maybe re-adding Phoenix and Atlanta to the fold.

When that happens, maybe we'll have to go back to the drawing board, because a 34-team league would be a recipe for trouble when it comes to balanced alignment within the divisions.