

Issue 4 — April 4, 2026

RE:LAX

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Buffalo Bandits Lacrosse

Goodbye, Wings:
Philadelphia announces
they're done after season

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- Bandits can clinch playoffs tonight vs. Warriors

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What's in this issue:

2. 'NLL Madness' semifinals – who goes to title game?

We have reached the semifinals of our “NLL Madness” tournament, and four teams remain: Saskatchewan, Georgia, Colorado and Buffalo. Who pulls it off and reaches the finals?

4. Wings to cease operations, relocation still possible

The Philadelphia Wings have announced they'll cease operations at the end of the season. It's still possible that they could relocate to another city, but the threat of the franchise folding still looms over the City of Brotherly Love.

6. Bandits can clinch playoffs tonight vs. Warriors

For the second straight week, the Bandits will go up against the first-place team in the NLL. With a win and some help out of town, they could lock up a playoff spot on the same day their KeyBank Center roommates ended their record playoff drought.

Front and back cover photos by **MATT VOLZ | Editor in Chief**

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'NLL Madness' semifinals: who goes to title game?

MATT VOLZ
Editor in Chief

Just like in the real NCAA basketball tournaments, the semifinal of our "NLL Madness" tournament is upon us.

We began with 14 teams and have narrowed that down to four candidates, all vying for the championship.

Will we get a rematch of last year's NLL Finals between the Bandits and Rush?

Will individual performances from stars like Andrew Kew or Brett Dobson push their teams over the top?

Let's find out!

#1 Saskatchewan Rush vs. #4 Georgia Swarm

The Rush entered this tournament as the top seed in the league, a spot they've lost over the last couple of weeks.

They've lost four of their last five games after a 10-1 start.

In this bracket, they earned a first-round bye because of their first-place status.

In the second round of NLL Madness, the Rush faced off against the Las Vegas Desert Dogs.

We talked about how the Desert Dogs have some solid scorers in Mitch Jones and Jonathan Donville, but weak goaltending would ultimately be their downfall.

The Rush are faced with a much different opponent this time.

After facing one of the lowest-ranked starting goalies in the league in their Round 2 matchup, they'll now be tasked with beating the best goalie in the league.

As we've discussed several times before, Swarm goalie Brett Dobson has not only been the best goalie in the NLL this season, but he's made a case as the league's best overall player.

If Dobson were to win league MVP, he'd only be the second goalie to win the award in the last 20 years.

Christian Del Bianco was the other, winning the award as a Calgary Roughneck in 2023.

In 15 games for the Swarm this season, Dobson has stopped 84.4% of the shots he's faced.

He's also allowing less than eight goals per game, by far the fewest in the league.

For any team to beat him, they'll need to bring a lethal offense to the table.

Fortunately for the Rush, they have that luxury.

Three Saskatchewan forwards have put up 75 points or more this season, and all three have scored at least 32 goals.

Ryan Keenan leads the team with 34 goals and 84 points.

Robert Church isn't far behind with 33 goals and 80 points, and Zach Manns is right in the mix as well with 32 goals and 75 points.

Don't count out Austin Shanks, though, as he's contributed 26 goals and 62 points to the offense.

Saskatchewan also has a great goalie of their own, as Frank Scigliano is allowing the third fewest goals per game in the league.

Although the Rush may be a better collective team on paper, defense wins championships.

I'd expect this to be a very low-scoring game, but Dobson will put the team on his back and lead the Swarm to the title game.

Prediction: Georgia wins.

#3 Colorado Mammoth vs. #7 Buffalo Bandits

I can't imagine that most NLL fans are thrilled to see the Bandits be the Cinderella team that advances to the semifinal as a lower seed.

The Bandits are in search of their fourth straight NLL Cup this season, and in the semifinal of this hypothetical tournament, they're going up against a team they're quite familiar with seeing in the playoffs.

The Bandits and Mammoth faced each other in the NLL Finals twice in a row, and they split the two championships.

Colorado upset the first-place Bandits in the 2022 NLL Finals, but the Bandits got revenge in 2023, ending their 15-year title drought.

They've faced each other twice this season, splitting those results as well.

On Saturday, Jan. 31 in Colorado, the Mammoth wiped the floor with Buffalo.

Kew played a massive role in the win, scoring seven goals and totaling 11 points.

Matt Vinc played less than half of the game, and the Bandits lost badly, 20-9.

The Mammoth came to Buffalo on Friday, March 13, and it was a much different game the second time around.

Dhane Smith and Josh Byrne each scored four goals to win a game in which Buffalo never trailed, 13-10.

It was relatively smooth for the Bandits, which has not been the case recently despite still putting wins on the board.

The Bandits' offense has developed a knack for coming out of nowhere to steal games, and that's exactly what they've done over the last two weeks.

They might want to avoid that against Dillon Ward, though.

The Mammoth goalie has stopped 81% of opposing shots, good for third in the league behind only Dobson and Del Bianco.

Buffalo would have to strike early and often in this hypothetical game.

Both teams have playoff experience, but the Bandits have more, and I think that gives them an edge in this one.

As I said in last week's issue, Vinc is not going away easily, and this may be his last shot at a title run before retirement.

I'm going with the team that is seemingly made to play in the postseason.

Prediction: Buffalo wins.

Stats for this story were provided by nllstats.com, a league-wide database run by NLL writer Graeme Perrow.

Check out his commentary on nllchatter.com as well as his updates on X (@GraemePerrow).

Wings to cease operations, relocation still possible

MATT VOLZ
Editor in Chief

A dismal season for the Philadelphia Wings just got even worse.

The organization posted on social media this morning that at the end of this season, they will “cease operations” as part of the Comcast Spectacor portfolio.

Comcast Spectacor is a Philadelphia-based media organization who has owned the team since they were brought back as an expansion franchise for the 2019 season.

The second iteration of the Wings took the floor nearly five years after the original franchise of the same name left for New England to become the Black Wolves after the 2014 season.

After eight seasons, it appears this version of the Wings is done in Philadelphia, too.

In the league’s early years, the original Wings were the organization to beat.

Across the first 16 seasons of the franchise’s history, the Wings missed the playoffs just once.

They won six championships in that span, including two separate repeats in 1989 and 1990 and again in 1994 and 1995.

The Wings, along with the Bandits, essentially ran the league in the mid-90s.

They faced each other in the championship game four times in five years, including each of the first three years of Buffalo’s existence from 1992 to 1994.

The Bandits won back to back in 1992 and 1993, before the Wings got revenge in 1994.

The Bandits would ultimately get the last laugh, however, beating the Wings for the championship in their last game at The Aud in 1996.

But after winning their sixth championship in 2001, Philadelphia’s success faded.

Over the next 13 seasons from 2002 through 2014, the Wings reached the playoffs just four times.

They never won another playoff game after that 2001 championship.

After a 6-12 season in 2014, the organization packed their bags and headed to Connecticut to become the Black Wolves.

It wasn’t uncommon to see the team relocate, and it’s not uncommon anymore, either.

But seeing an organization that used to dominate the league depart from the city where the league is headquartered was significant.

Philadelphia fans watched their old team make a run to the playoffs in 2016, where the Black Wolves came up short in the Eastern Division Finals against the Bandits.

It was only a few years, though, before the Wings were back.

In 2019, the new Wings began their journey as an expansion franchise, and their first game was a matchup against an old nemesis — the Bandits.



Following the 2025–2026 season, we have made the decision to cease operations of the Philadelphia Wings franchise under the Comcast Spectacor portfolio. This was not an easy conclusion to reach, and it is one we considered with great care.

Since the Wings’ re-establishment in 2017 and return to the turf in 2018, the team has proudly carried on Philadelphia’s rich lacrosse tradition at the highest level. We hope you will join us in continuing to root for our players as they pursue new opportunities throughout the league.

On behalf of our leadership team, players, and the countless others who have been impacted by the Wings franchise over the years, thank you. We truly could not have built this community without you.

We recognize that this news may come as a disappointment, and we want to express how grateful we are for your steadfast dedication to the team. Your support has been central to the identity of the Wings, and it has meant more than we can express.

Thank you, sincerely, for your passion, your commitment, and the community you helped build around Wings lacrosse.



The team’s official statement on social media, Monday, March 30, 2026.
Image via @NLLWings on X.

Buffalo rudely greeted the new expansion team with two goals in the first two minutes of the game, a game that ended with a 17-15 win for the Bandits.

The Wings dropped each of their first six games of the season, but four of their losses were by two goals or less.

Philadelphia finally brought home a win in their seventh game of the season on Feb. 1, defeating Rochester in overtime in front of a home crowd of over 10,000 fans.

They finished the season at 4-14, concluding the first season of their return as the worst team in the league.

The following season, they showed early signs of promise. The Wings were 7-3 through the first 10 games of the 2020 season, and it looked like they’d be in line for a return to the playoffs.

Despite a three-game losing streak in late February and early March, Philadelphia rebounded with a 12-11 win at Georgia on March 8.

That’s when fate struck their promising season down. COVID-19 shut down the NLL and everything else in the world, and no games were played until the start of the 2022 season.

National Lacrosse League Begins Strategic Transition to Position Wings' Franchise for Long-Term Growth

The National Lacrosse League (NLL) today announced that Comcast Spectacor will transition out of ownership of the Philadelphia Wings franchise following the 2025-2026 season. The League has already initiated a comprehensive process to identify the next ownership group and evaluate the strongest long-term market opportunity for the franchise.

This transition represents a strategic step in aligning the club with an ownership group and operating environment positioned to maximize its future potential. As part of this evolution, the League is prioritizing markets and venues that offer enhanced flexibility, fan engagement opportunities, and long-term growth alignment with the NLL's broader business trajectory.



The NLL's official statement on social media, Monday, March 30, 2026.
Image via @NLL on X.

The 2022 season brought several changes. The league's experiment with three divisions was over, and it was back to just the East and West Divisions.

The original Wings also moved a second time, leaving New England for Albany to become the FireWolves.

The season also saw Philadelphia's return to the postseason.

Despite a fifth-place finish in the East Division, they had a better record than the Rush, who finished fourth in the West.

So, in a weird twist, the Wings took Saskatchewan's spot and headed to San Diego for the opening round of the playoffs.

They nearly pulled off an upset against the top-seeded Seals, but ultimately fell, 9-8.

Despite showing promise in 2022, the Wings haven't returned to the playoffs since.

Now, they may never get another chance.

At this point, it is unclear what exactly will happen with the organization.

While the team's statement said that the organization will cease operations, the NLL released a statement that described the move as a "transition out of ownership" for Comcast Spectacor.

"The League has already initiated a comprehensive process to identify the next ownership group and evaluate the strongest long-term market opportunity for the franchise," the statement read.

Fans remain hopeful for a sale, but the possibility of the franchise folding altogether still exists.

The Texas-based Panther City Lacrosse Club endured a similar experience two years ago, folding after a 2024 season in which they made the playoffs.

If the Wings do collapse, the league's next step would likely follow the same steps as Panther City's termination two years ago.

In that scenario, the league held a dispersal draft to send Panther City's top players to other teams.

Some other teams received significant boosts, as Will Malcom returned to Colorado while Las Vegas picked up Jonathan Donville.

In a cruel twist of fate, goalie Nick Damude may be faced with *deja vu*.

He was Panther City's goalie when the organization folded in 2024, and he's now the goalie for the Wings as they face this crisis.

If the team folds, he'll be up for grabs yet again, alongside young star Brennan O'Neill and other solid contributors.

"Our priority is to position this franchise for sustained success and long-term value creation," commissioner Brett Frod said in a statement. "The League's momentum continues to build, and we are confident this transition will lead to an exciting new chapter for the franchise and its players."

The Wings have two games left, and it appears that the franchise's final game in Philadelphia will be Saturday, April 11 against the Las Vegas Desert Dogs.

Stats for this story were provided by nllstats.com, a league-wide database run by NLL writer Graeme Perrow.

Check out his commentary on nllchatter.com as well as his updates on X (@GraemePerrow).



Our priority is to position this franchise for sustained success and long-term value creation. We are actively engaging with prospective ownership groups who share our vision for growth, community impact, and competitive excellence. The League's momentum continues to build, and we are confident this transition will lead to an exciting new chapter for the franchise and its players.

Brett Frod
NLL Commissioner



Commissioner Brett Frod's official statement, Monday, March 30, 2026.
Image via @NLL on X.

Bandits look to clinch playoffs tonight vs. Vancouver

MATT VOLZ
Editor in Chief

After back-to-back come-from-behind thrillers on the road, the Bandits are back at home tonight in search of their sixth straight win.

Two weeks ago in San Diego, Buffalo mustered just three goals across the first 50 minutes of play.

They scored five in the final nine minutes and six seconds, including two with under 1:30 left, to force overtime.

In overtime, Dhane Smith was the hero, capping off an unlikely comeback to keep the team's win streak alive.

Last Saturday in Saskatchewan, the first three quarters played out in a very similar way.

Frank Scigliano was a brick wall in net for the Rush, holding the Bandits to just four goals until halfway through the fourth quarter.

As was the case in San Diego, the Bandits struggled with lengthy goal droughts.

Buffalo had two separate stretches of over 15 minutes played without scoring.

Fortunately for them, Matt Vinc was also stonewalling Saskatchewan's offense.

At the start of the fourth quarter, the Rush had only scored five goals and led by just one.

They also hadn't scored since the second quarter, a goal drought that ended up surpassing 21 minutes of game time.

A double-minor penalty to Paul Dawson gave the Rush an opportunity, and they took full advantage with goals from Austin Shanks and Robert Church.

The Bandits responded quickly, though, with two quick goals from Kyle Buchanan and Smith.

It shouldn't come as much of a surprise that the game was close, as it almost always is between the Bandits and Rush.

Aside from Game 3 of last year's NLL Finals where Buffalo shut out Saskatchewan in the second half, every game between these two teams since before the pandemic has been decided by two goals or less.

That was the case again last week, as both goalies played at the top of their game.

With just over two minutes left, Dylan Robinson found Josh Byrne in transition, and he ripped a shot past Scigliano to tie the game for the first time since the first quarter.

It seemed destined for overtime, but Buffalo's hometown hero had other plans.

Hamburg native Joe Resetarits hasn't been an offensive star for Buffalo since being traded from Philadelphia earlier this season, but he picked an excellent time to bury a shot.

With 46 seconds remaining, Resetarits put Buffalo in front for the first time since the game's first few minutes.

Despite a game in which the Bandits offense again struggled to score, they somehow came away with another comeback win.

Buffalo has won five in a row and six of their last seven entering tonight's game against Vancouver.

HOW TO TUNE IN:

TV: CW23
(Buffalo market only)

STREAM: ESPN+

RADIO:
WBEN 930 AM

For the second time in as many weeks, the Bandits will face the team in first place in the NLL.

It's impossible to talk about Vancouver without mentioning their two star players, Keegan Bal and Christian Del Bianco.

Bal is Vancouver's unquestioned offensive leader, and he's taken that to an entirely new level in 2026.

Bal leads the league in assists and points, with 71 and 107 respectively.

He's already surpassed his personal best in single-season assists, and he's on pace to crush his points record.

That's pretty impressive for a guy who recorded 69 assists and 112 points last season.

Vancouver has also had the benefit of excellent goaltending this season, with Del Bianco slamming the door on opposing offenses every week.

Del Bianco is stopping nearly 82% of the shots he's facing, and he's allowing just over 9 goals per game.

Both of those marks put him second in the league, behind only Brett Dobson's MVP-caliber season he's putting together in Georgia.

If the Bandits want a chance at coming away with a win tonight, they'll need to limit Bal's offense and pepper Del Bianco with shots.

But even if Buffalo succeeds at both of those tasks, they'll need to be aware of Vancouver's other forwards.

Curtis Dickson has sniped 38 goals this season, a mark that leads the team and ties him for fourth in the league.

CLINCHING SCENARIOS:

– BUF def. VAN

OR

– HFX def. ROC

It's the first time in 15 years that the Sabres have made the playoffs, ending the NHL's longest-ever playoff drought.

KeyBank Center will be rocking with playoff hockey this spring, and it's been a long time coming for Buffalo fans.

Tonight also provides the Bandits with an opportunity to clinch a playoff spot of their own, but they'll need some help on the out-of-town scoreboard.

If the Bandits beat Vancouver and Rochester loses to Halifax, the Bandits will lock up a playoff spot for the sixth straight season and the 27th time in the team's 34-year history.

There's a lot of work left to be done if the Bandits want to earn themselves a home game in the first round, but they're right in the mix for it.

Buffalo currently sits in fifth place in the NLL, and the top four teams earn home games to start the postseason.

But they're only two games back of the Warriors for first place, and they can shrink that gap tonight.

This is undoubtedly the toughest test Buffalo will face in the rest of the regular season, as their last two games are against teams who are not currently in playoff spots.

It'll probably be a low-scoring game, but the Bandits are on enough of a roll that they can get the job done tonight.

Downtown Buffalo will be rocking tonight, and when that's the case, the Bandits usually come out on top.

Matt's pick: Buffalo 9, Vancouver 8

Fans in the Buffalo market can catch tonight's game on the CW23 or listen live on WBEN 930 AM.

The game will also be viewable on ESPN+.

Faceoff for tonight's game is set for 7 p.m.

Stats for this story were provided by nllstats.com, a league-wide database run by NLL writer Graeme Perrow.

Check out his commentary on nllchatter.com as well as his updates on X (@GraemePerrow).

VANCOUVER (11-4)

AT

BUFFALO (9-6)

KeyBank  Center

**PLAYOFF
BOUND**

