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The Blackhawks proved that it truly does not matter who is in net for them to win games.

Corey Crawford started the game Thursday night in St. Louis but did not finish it. After making six saves in the first period, Crawford did not return for the second period and was instead replaced by backup goaltender Ray Emery. The reason for Crawford's departure was unknown but it's possible that it could have been related to an injury that kept him out of four games earlier in the season.

Emery made 15 saves in the final two periods for the combined shutout.

Saves were not the only thing that helped extend the Blackhawks' NHL-record opening points streak to 20 games. 12 seconds into the game, Blackhawks Captain Jonathan Toews tapped in a pass from rookie forward Brandon Saad for the 1-0 lead.

After a scoreless second period, the Blackhawks added two goals to their lead in the third period. Forward Andrew Shaw knocked in a one-timer in the slot off a Bryan Bickell pass at 2:11, then Toews added his second goal of the night off a rebound from Blues goaltender Jaroslav Halak at 6:56.

The Blues seemed outmatched most of the evening, being outshot 23-21 with most of the play in the Blackhawks' offensive zone This was the Blues' first game without top forwards Alex Steen and Andy McDonald, who were both injured in practice Tuesday morning. The team has also been playing without rookie sensation Vladimir Tarasenko, who was injured after a hit in last Wednesday's 1-0 overtime loss to the Colorado Avalanche.

Halak made 20 saves on 23 shots. This was the first regulation loss of the season for Halak, who was playing in his third game since coming back from a lower body injury.

This was the second time the Blues were shutout this season. They will finish their three-game home-stand tomorrow night against the Edmonton Oilers.

Game notes: The Blackhawks improve to 17-0-3 on the season (37 points), distancing themselves from the rest of the Central Division. The second place Nashville Predators are 9-7-5 (23 points), 14 points behind the Blackhawks… The Blues had a scary moment at the 3:39 mark of the second period when Captain David Backes collided with Saad, needing to be helped off by Roman Polak and trainer Ray Barile. He returned to the bench later in the period… Barret Jackman was honored before the game as he became the defenseman to play in the most games in a Blues uniform in team history. He was joined at center ice by Al MacInnis, Helen Plager, Bob Plager Chris Pronger and Jonathan Toews for a ceremonial puck drop.