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Citizen reporter predicts NHL Stanley Cup conference finals

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It's finally now down to four team's in this year's NHL playoffs.

All four clubs will be playing their final games of hockey in Edmonton.

Sometimes, you wonder it's crazy how the league got here. The league battles a pandemic, plans hub cities, structures out a new playoff format all in the span of a few months and so far, knock on wood, it has all been successful and every player in the bubble is coronavirus free.

In this year's final four, the Las Vegas Golden Knights will be taking on a tenacious Dallas Stars squad in the west, while the pesky and resilient New York Islanders go up against a stormy Tampa Bay Lightning club, looking to get back into the Stanley Cup finals since 2015.

If you had it scripted any other way then it's not your fault. But two of the favourites are here and two of the non-favourites have it made this far.

Let's take a look at the matchups.

Dallas Stars vs Vegas Golden Knights

Off of the stick of defenceman John Klingberg, the Stars took game one. This club has been itching to get back into the Stanley Cup finals since their infamous victory in 1999 against the Buffalo Sabres.

Now, the Stars have been surging towards another appearance and after falling short of the finals last season, losing to the St. Louis Blues for the western conference title, there's no question Tyler Seguin and captain Jamie Benn want to get in there.

Sophomore defenceman Miro Heiskanen leads the way for the Stars with 21 points; the most among any defencemen.

In front of them, is a Golden Knights team, juggling goaltenders and a mighty offensive prowess at the fore.

Defenceman Shea Theodore leads the way with 17 points and forward Mark Stone isn't behind with 15. The key to this series is going to come down to goaltending. After starting game one, can Marc Andre Fleury and/or Robin Lehner carry Vegas and can Anton Khudobin be consistent for the Stars?

It's a tough pick.

Prediction: Golden Knights in 7.

New York Islanders vs Tampa Bay Lightning

Tampa Bay, the moment is finally here. The Lightning have seemingly dominated the NHL for years and only to fall short of expectations. They can't be proud of that.

What they can be proud of, is an 8-2 victory to open up the series against the Islanders Monday night, chasing Thomas Greiss, who got the go-ahead to start this one.

Brayden Point has amassed 23 points in these playoffs, including a five-point night in game one.

He will look to go head-to-head against Matthew Barzal of the Islanders in an interesting tilt to look out for.

In this series, the Lightning have a few advantages on defence and goaltending. The Islanders don't have a sure-fire number one stud on the back end and the Lightning, have Victor Hedman, Mikhail Sergachev, Ryan McDonagh, Kevin Shattenkirk and Zach Bogosian.

The reigning Vezina Trophy winner in goal, Andrei Vasilevskiy has just three losses in the playoffs.

Although this, is the first time since 1993, the New York Islanders are making it to the conference finals, the Lightning just might be too much to handle.

Prediction: Lightning in six.

All statistics were written as of Tuesday of this week.