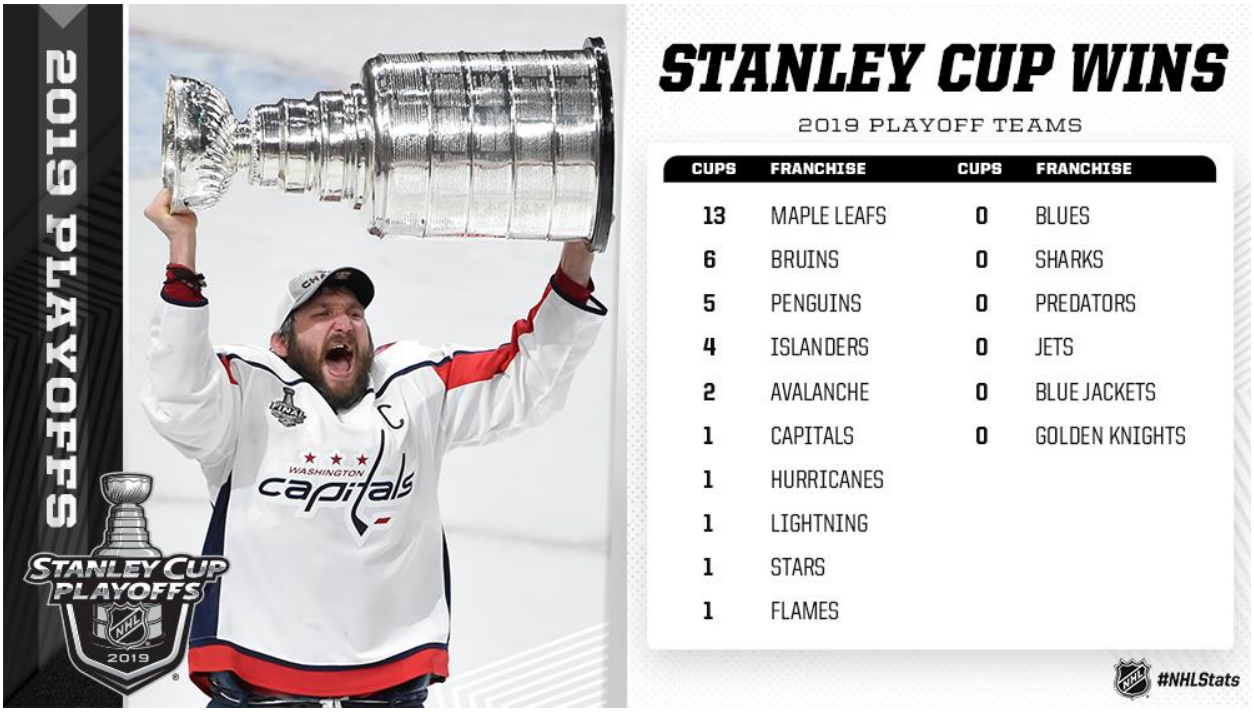


2018-19 REGULAR SEASON RECAP: CHAPTER 3

For a seventh straight year, at least five teams made the playoffs after missing the previous postseason, setting up a 2019 Stanley Cup Playoffs bracket that features six teams in pursuit of their first championship and only three clubs that have won in the past dozen years (Pittsburgh: 3, Washington: 1 and Boston: 1).

* The 2019 bracket features **more teams in search of their first Cup (6) than teams that have won it multiple times (5)**.



* The Capitals aim to join the rival Penguins (2016 and 2017) as the only clubs in the past 20 years to repeat as Stanley Cup champions.

* A common theme for each team over the past five years has been long series, with Pittsburgh requiring at least six games 10 times (13 series) and Washington 9 times (10 series).

* Overall, **71% of all series have extended to six or seven games** since the division-focused format was introduced in 2014 (53 of 75) – up 13% compared to the previous five postseasons (2009-2013: 63%, 47 of 75).

* Since the 2014 Stanley Cup Playoffs, **80% of series *in rounds 2-4*** have been decided in either Game 6 or Game 7 (28 of 35) – by far the highest such percentage of any previous five-year segment. In comparison, the five-year period from 2009-2013 saw only 54% of series last at least six games.

* Washington is the leader of late specifically regarding Game 7s, contesting more over the past 11 years than 15 active NHL franchises have played *in their history*. The Capitals have reached Game 7 in more than half their series since 2008 (11 of 19).

* Overall, **31% of series have required a Game 7 since 2014** (23 of 75 series), including nearly half of all series played *after the opening round* (43%, 15 of 35 series).

* The extended series have yielded **85% of possible games under the current playoff format** (444 of 525), the highest such percentage under any format in the expansion era.

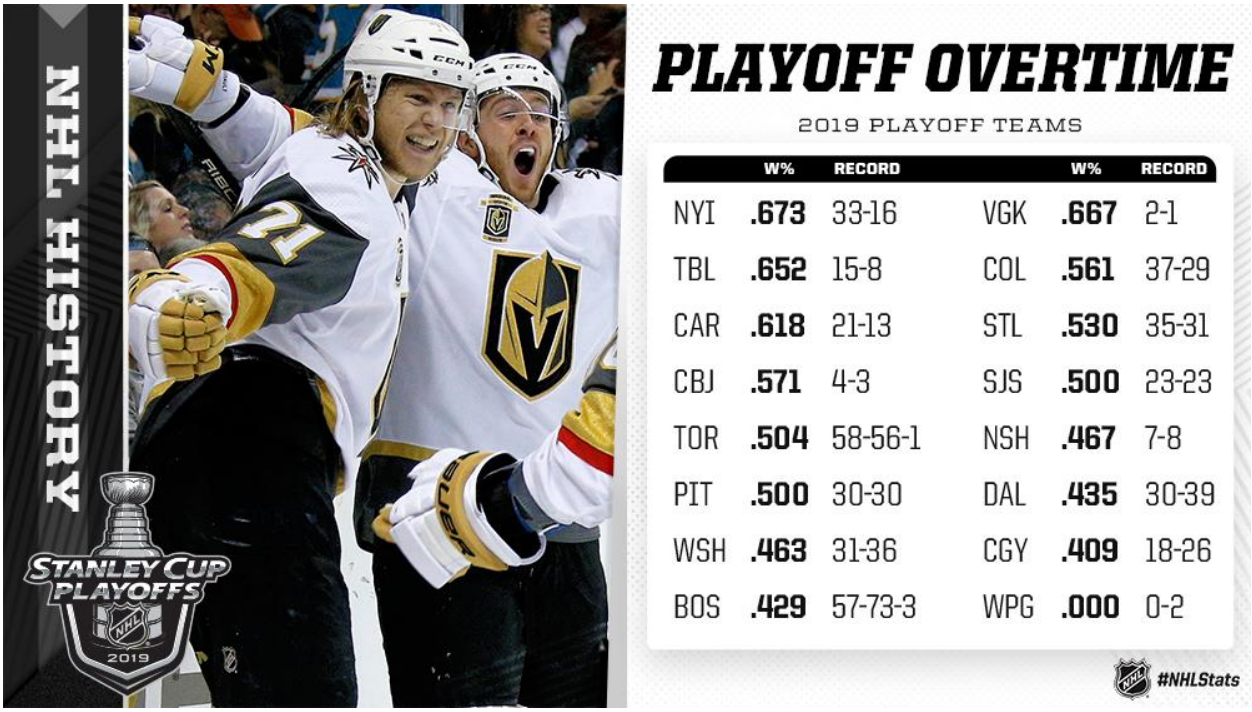
* After starting their improbable run to the Final with a sweep in the 2018 First Round, the Golden Knights return to the playoffs aiming to become the first team since 2009 to win the Stanley Cup the season following a loss in the Final. Pittsburgh lost the 2008 Final before winning in 2009.

* The Golden Knights' sweep was not only the first of its kind for a professional team in its inaugural season, but also a rare feat for any club in the Stanley Cup Playoffs over the past 10 postseasons. Only 12% of series have ended in four games since 2009 (18 of 150 series), including **only seven sweeps since 2014** (9%; 7 of 75 series).

* Close games have been a mainstay in the Blue Jackets' playoff history, with more than half their playoff games decided by a one-goal margin (12 of 21). Overall, 50% of all playoff games since 2014 have been decided by one goal (221 of 444), the highest percentage of any format.

* The Presidents' Trophy-winning Lightning own a .652 winning percentage in 23 playoff overtime games, the second-highest such percentage in NHL history behind the Islanders (.673; 22-16 in 49 GP).

* **23% of playoff games since 2014 have required overtime** (102 of 444 GP), the highest percentage of any playoff format. Four of the past five postseasons have featured 19 or more overtime games: 26 in 2014, 19 in 2015, 20 in 2016, 27 in 2017 and 10 in 2018.



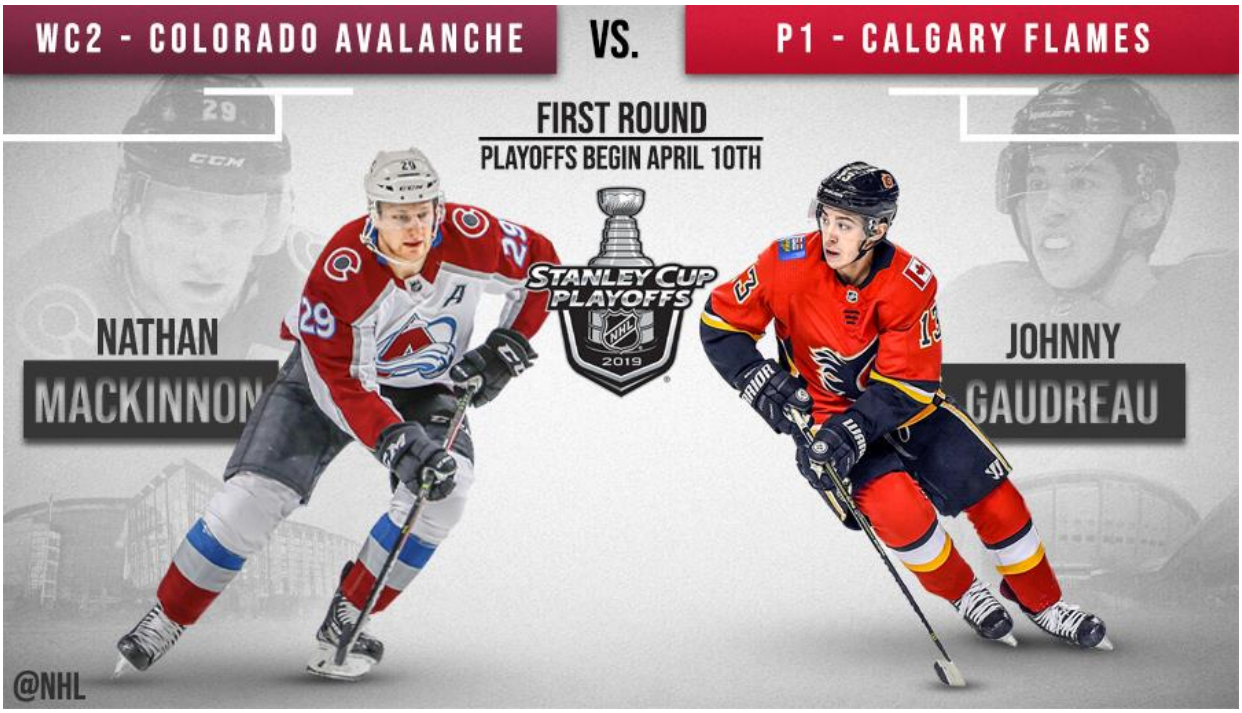
* After matching the NHL single-season wins record in 2018-19, the Lightning now aim to become the ninth team to claim the Presidents' Trophy en route to hoisting the Stanley Cup. It has happened only twice in the past 15 years: the 2007-08 Red Wings and 2012-13 Blackhawks.

* Contrarily, a team ranking outside the top three in its conference has won the Stanley Cup 10 times in 43 seasons since conferences were introduced in 1974-75. Four of those instances have come in the past decade, including two since 2013-14 (2014 Kings and 2015 Blackhawks).

* This marks the fourth time in NHL history that at least five first-round matchups will be between clubs meeting for the first time - it also happened in 1980 (6), 1982 (6) and 2000 (5).

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: 2019 FIRST ROUND MATCHUPS

Quick hits on the 16 teams competing in the First Round of the 2019 Stanley Cup Playoffs:



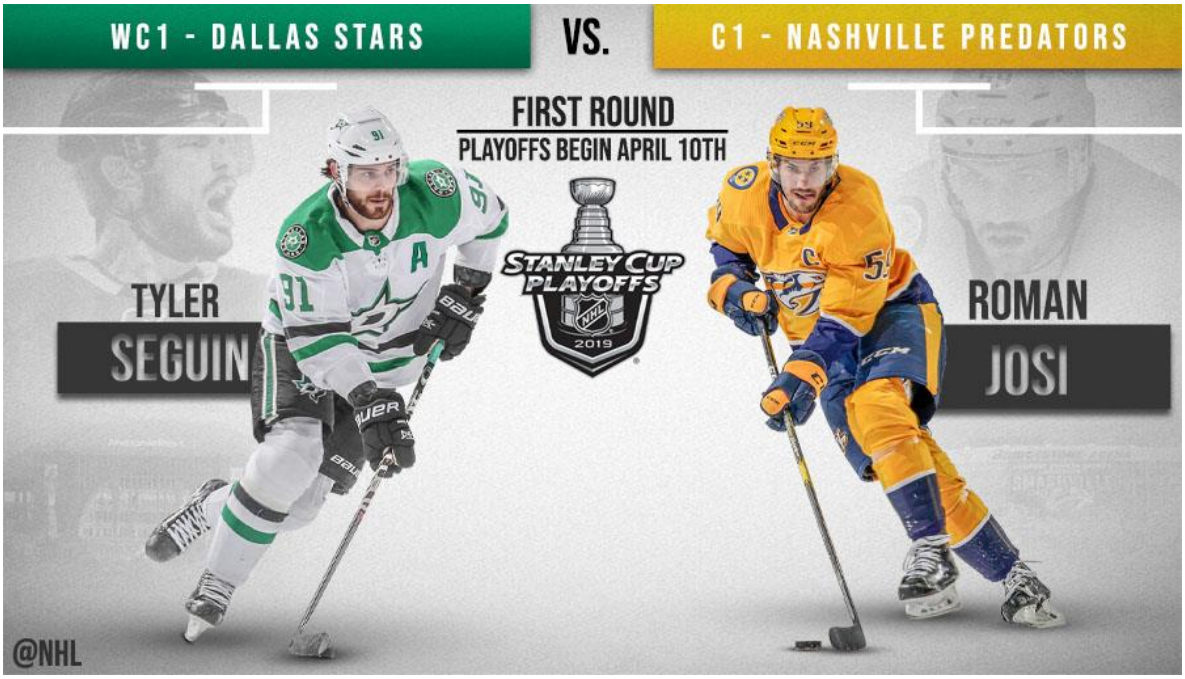
* The Flames (50-25-7, 107 points), who registered the best record in the Western Conference, put up the second-best regular season in franchise history trailing only their Stanley Cup-winning 1988-89 campaign (54-17-9, 117 points). Calgary, who were led in points by **Johnny Gaudreau** (36-63—99) for the fourth consecutive season, had five players reach the 70-point mark for the first time since 1993-94.

* The Avalanche franchise has made the playoffs in consecutive seasons for the first time since an 11-year run from 1994-95 through 2005-06. Ten of those 11 playoff appearances came with the club based in Colorado, twice ending with a Stanley Cup (1996 and 2001). **Nathan MacKinnon** (5-11—16 in 13 GP; 1.23 P/GP) is one of six players in franchise history to average at least a point per game through 13 or more career playoff games all with the franchise. The others: **Peter Stastny** (1.27 in 64 GP), **Peter Forsberg** (1.14 in 140 GP), **Joe Sakic** (1.09 in 172 GP) and **John Ogrodnick** (1.00 in 13 GP).



* The Sharks are headed to the playoffs for the 21st time in 27 seasons since joining the League in 1991-92. Only two franchises have clinched as many playoff berths in that span: Detroit (23) and Pittsburgh (22). **Joe Thornton** (413-1,065—1,478 in 1,566 GP), who leads all active players in career assists and points, is in search of his first career Stanley Cup while skating in his 21st NHL season. He can join **Ray Bourque** (1,612 GP) and **Dave Andreychuk** (1,597 GP) as the third player to win his first Stanley Cup after skating in 1,500 regular-season games.

* The Golden Knights embark on another playoff run as they look to improve upon their unforgettable postseason journey in 2018 that saw them sweep their way through the first playoff series in franchise history, claim three series-clinching victories on the road and become the third NHL team to reach the Stanley Cup Final in their first trip to the postseason. Vegas goaltender **Marc-Andre Fleury** has appeared in the Final in each of the past three years and five times overall. Only seven goaltenders in NHL history have reached the Final in at least four straight years: **Jacques Plante** (8), **Billy Smith** (5), **Roland Melanson** (4), **Ken Dryden** (4), **Michel Larocque** (4), **Gump Worsley** (4) and **Gerry McNeil** (4).



* The Predators are making their fifth consecutive trip to the Stanley Cup Playoffs, the longest active streak among Western Conference clubs. Nashville has played in 55 postseason contests over those four appearances, the highest total of any Western Conference team. They have advanced past the first round in each of the last three postseasons including a trip to the Stanley Cup Final in 2017.

* The Stars, who return to the playoffs for the first time since 2016, have played in at least six games in each of their past seven playoff series dating to 2007. Dallas allowed the fewest goals against of any Western Conference club this season (202), and the second-fewest in the entire League behind only the NY Islanders (196).



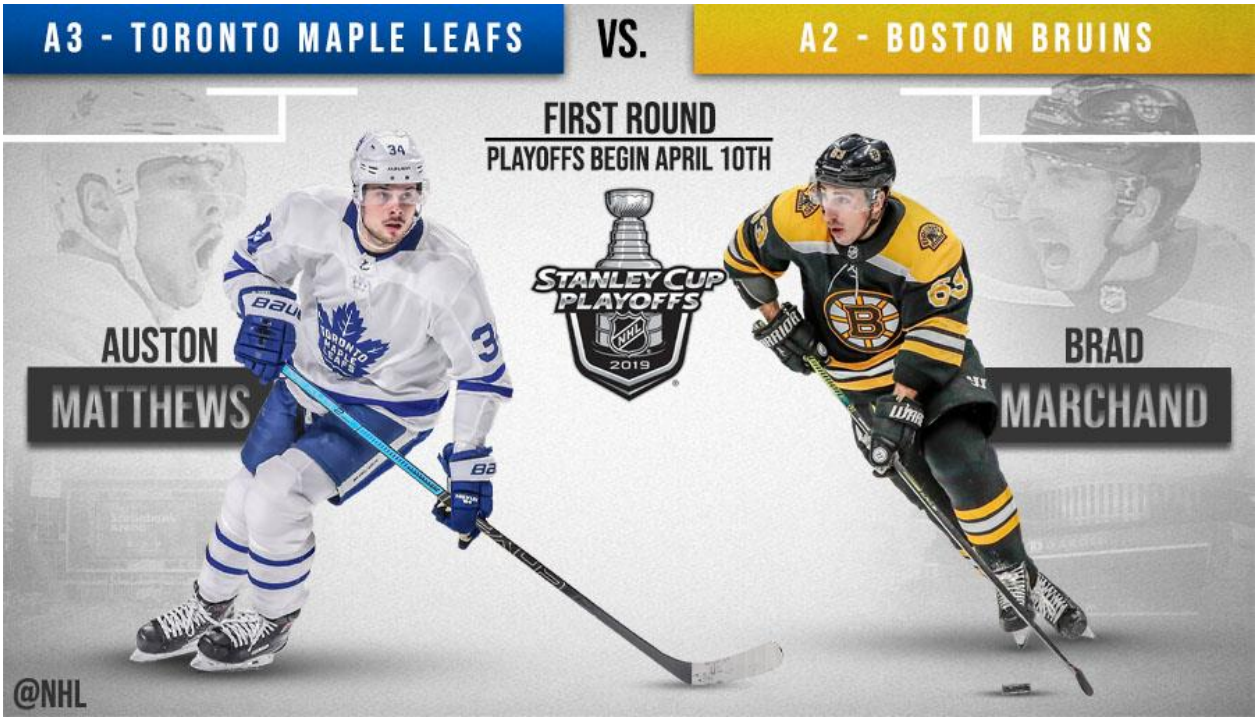
* After nearly 30,000 fans packed the arena and streets for each home game last postseason, the Jets aim to build on a historic 2018 playoff run that saw them win a playoff game for the first time and earn the first two series victories in franchise history. Jets forward **Mark Scheifele**, who ranked second behind **Alex Ovechkin** (15) in goals during the 2018 postseason, used last season's playoff run to set new career highs for goals and points in 2018-19 (38-46—84).

* The Blues, who ranked last in the overall NHL standings on Jan. 2 (15-18-4, 34 points in 37 GP), became the seventh team in the NHL's expansion era to make the playoffs after ranking last overall at any point after New Year's Day (min. 20 GP). The team's rise up the standings came in line with the emergence of goaltender **Jordan Binnington**, who burst onto the scene with a shutout in his first career start on Jan. 7 and went on to set the franchise mark for wins by a rookie goaltender (24-5-1 w/ 1.89 GAA, .927 SV%, 5 SO).



*** Nikita Kucherov** (29-30—59 in 62 GP), who led the Lightning to their fifth appearance in the Stanley Cup Playoffs since 2014, is nine postseason points shy of matching **Martin St. Louis** (33-35—68 in 63 GP) for the most in franchise history. **Steven Stamkos** (22-29—51 in 66 GP), **Tyler Johnson** (24-26—50 in 64 GP) and **Victor Hedman** (7-41—48 in 82 GP) also rank among the top six on Tampa Bay's all-time playoff points list, behind St. Louis, Kucherov and **Vincent Lecavalier** (24-28—52 in 63 GP).

* Columbus is in search of its first playoff series victory, returning to the postseason for the third consecutive year and fifth time in franchise history. The Blue Jackets will aim to become the third NHL franchise in the past two seasons to earn its first series victory, with the Golden Knights and Jets each doing so during the 2018 Stanley Cup Playoffs en route to a showdown in the Western Conference Final.



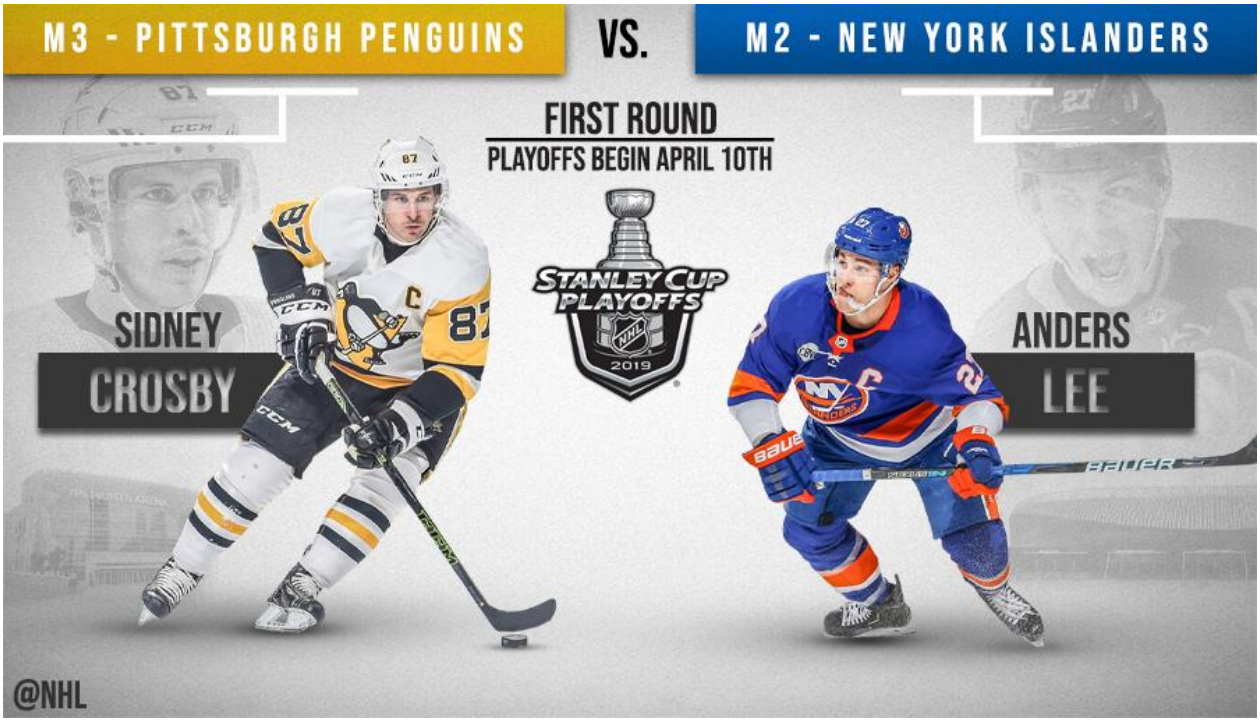
* **Brad Marchand**'s career-high 100 points in the regular season helped Boston reach the Stanley Cup Playoffs for the 72nd time in franchise history, second in NHL history behind Montreal (83). Marchand is one of five players who won the Stanley Cup with Boston in 2011 still with the team (also **Patrice Bergeron**, **Zdeno Chara**, **David Krejci** and **Tuukka Rask**).

* Toronto is making its third consecutive postseason appearance, a first since a run of six straight playoff berths from 1998-99 to 2003-04. **Patrick Marleau** has scored 72 career goals in the Stanley Cup Playoffs (72-53—125 in 184 GP) – tops among active players – and is one goal shy of trying **Dino Ciccarelli** (73) for 13th place on the NHL's all-time list; his 16 career game-winning goals in the postseason are tied with **Jaromir Jagr** for 10th in League history and are one back of matching **Mike Bossy**, **Chris Drury** and **Glenn Anderson** for the sixth-most all-time.



*** Alex Ovechkin**, captain of the defending Stanley Cup-champion Capitals, has scored 61 career goals in the postseason (61-56—117 in 121 GP). His career goals-per-game average of 0.50 in the Stanley Cup Playoffs is the ninth-highest in NHL history (min. 100 GP), behind only **Mario Lemieux** (0.71), **Mike Bossy** (0.66), **Maurice Richard** (0.62), **Wayne Gretzky** (0.59), **Jari Kurri** (0.53), **Bobby Hull** (0.52), **Dino Ciccarelli** (0.52) and **Brett Hull** (0.51).

* The Hurricanes return to the Stanley Cup Playoffs for the first time in a decade after advancing to the 2009 Eastern Conference Final. Carolina has reached at least the Conference Finals in each of its last three postseason appearances (also 2002 and 2006).



* Under new head coach **Barry Trotz**, the Islanders reached the Stanley Cup Playoffs for the first time since 2016 – securing home ice advantage in the process. Trotz can become the second head coach in NHL history to capture the Stanley Cup in back-to-back years *with a different team in each instance*; he would join **Tommy Gorman**, who won the Stanley Cup with the Chicago Black Hawks in 1934 and Montreal Maroons in 1935.

* The Penguins return to the postseason for the 13th consecutive season since 2006-07, the longest active streak in the NHL. **Sidney Crosby** has recorded 185 career points in the Stanley Cup Playoffs (66-119—185 in 160 GP), tied with **Steve Yzerman** (70-115—185 in 196 GP) for 10th place in NHL history (every player ahead of Crosby – other than **Jaromir Jagr**, who is not yet eligible – has been inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame).