

NHL MORNING SKATE: STANLEY CUP FINAL EDITION – JUNE 26, 2022

STANLEY CUP
FINAL
2022

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 **Morning Skate**

Sunday, June 26, 2022

Vasilevskiy strong when series is on the line

Makar having one of best Final performances by a defenseman in decades

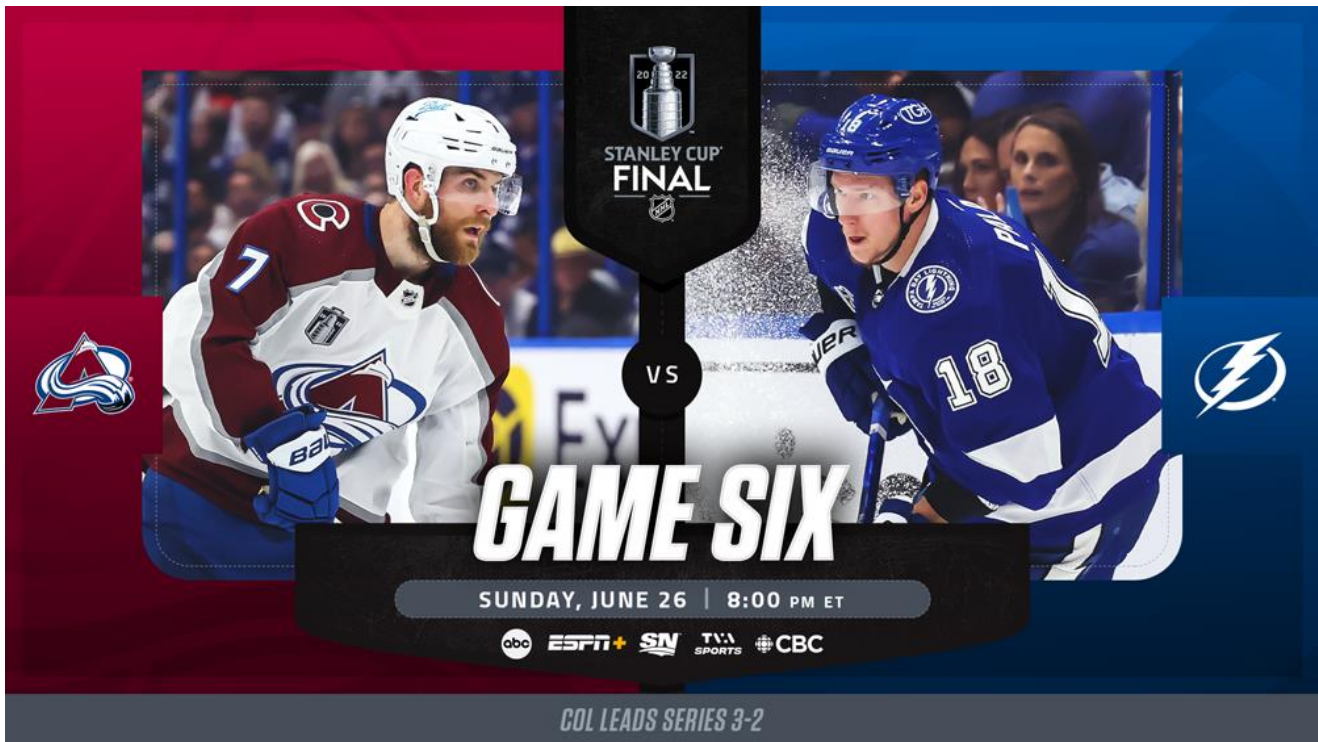
Lightning comfort level at home, Avalanche road success makes for compelling Game 6

* **Andrei Vasilevskiy** has been a force for the Lightning when the series is at stake, holding opponents to two goals or fewer in three of four contests in which the club has faced elimination since 2020.

* **Cale Makar** is having one of best Final performances by a defenseman in decades with a point in each of the past four games, three multi-point outings and seven points over the first five contests.

* What happens when the top team at home meets the top team on the road, with the Stanley Cup in the building? We'll find out Sunday as the Lightning (8-2 at home) will look to force Game 7 against the Avalanche (8-1 on the road).

* Sunday will be the 89th game of the 2022 Stanley Cup Playoffs, the most in a four-round postseason since 2016 (91). Five playoff years in League history have had [90 or more games](#), excluding 2020 when 130 postseason games were played but only 86 in rounds 1-4.



A TALE AS OLD AS TIME (OR SINCE 2020): VASI UNSTOPPABLE FACING ELIMINATION

Andrei Vasilevskiy, a.k.a. “The Big Cat,” will skate in his fifth game while facing elimination since the start of his first championship run in 2020. Over that span, Vasilevskiy has been unbeatable when Tampa Bay’s season is at stake and nearly perfect when he can clinch a series.

* After [amping up his teammates before Game 5](#), Vasilevskiy proceeded to make 35 saves and boost his stats in “must-win” games over the past three years to include a 1.33 goals-against average, .956 save percentage and one shutout.

* With his timely saves and [laser focus](#), the reigning Conn Smythe Trophy winner has rebounded from losses in each of his first three career elimination games and now owns a 4-3 record in such contests (2.07 GAA, .926 SV%, 1 SO).



 **STATS AND INFORMATION**

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* Vasilevskiy has earned 17 home wins dating to the 2021 playoffs – only five goaltenders in NHL history have earned more victories over a two-year span: **Corey Crawford** (19; 2013-2014), **Grant Fuhr** (19; 1987-88), **Chris Osgood** (18; 2008-09), **Marc-Andre Fleury** (18; 2008-09) and **Ed Belfour** (18; 1999-00).

* Vasilevskiy has faced at least 35 shots in four of five games this round and stopped 35 of 37 shots faced in Friday’s victory. Only three goaltenders (since 1955-56) have made 35 or more saves while facing elimination multiple times in one Stanley Cup Final: **Ed Belfour** (2x w/ 2000 Stars), **Tim Thomas** (2x w/ 2011 Bruins) and **Henrik Lundqvist** (2x w/ 2014 Rangers).

MAKAR AMONG HALL OF FAMERS IN PURSUIT OF FIRST STANLEY CUP

Cale Makar has continued to wow fans with his offensive production throughout the Stanley Cup Final, and dazzles even with his near misses. The 23-year-old has put his name alongside NHL greats like **Paul Coffey**, **Brian Leetch** and **Al MacInnis** – the only defensemen in NHL history with more [points in one playoff year](#) than Makar.

* Makar, who has a point in all but five of 19 playoff contests in 2022, collected his third multi-point showing of the Final in Game 5 and eighth overall this postseason. The only defensemen in NHL history with more [multi-point games in one playoff year](#) are MacInnis (10 in 1989), Leetch (9 in 1994) and Coffey (9 in 1985).

* Makar is the first defenseman with three multi-point games in the Final since Leetch in 1994. A blueliner has never had four such outings in the championship series.

* The third active defenseman to record at least seven points in one Final (3-4—7 in 5 GP) – after **Victor Hedman** (2020) and **Duncan Keith** (2010) – Makar is in position to become the 10th blueliner in NHL history with eight or more points in the series. Among those who have done so, three went on to claim the Conn Smythe Trophy: Leetch (1994), MacInnis (1989) and **Bobby Orr** (1972).



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MOST POINTS BY A DEFENSEMAN IN A STANLEY CUP FINAL

▶ NHL HISTORY

DEFENSEMAN	TEAM	YEAR	POINTS
BRIAN LEETCH	NYR	1994	11
PAUL COFFEY	EDM	1985	11
LARRY MURPHY	PIT	1991	10
DENIS POTVIN	NYI	1980	9
AL MACINNIS	CGY	1989	9
DENIS POTVIN	NYI	1982	9
BOBBY ORR	BOS	1972	8
PIERRE PILOTE	CHI	1961	8
PAT STAPLETON	CHI	1973	8
CALE MAKAR*	COL	2022	7

*8 OTHERS WITH 7 POINTS, INCLUDING VICTOR HEDMAN IN 2020 W/ TBL

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* Makar has amassed 36-79—115 (96 GP) during the regular season and playoffs combined in 2021-22, including 8-21—29 in 19 games this postseason. He now sits five points shy of tying **Joe Sakic's** single postseason [franchise record](#) and four shy of equaling **Connor McDavid** (10-23—33 in 16 GP) for the League lead this playoffs.

* The Avalanche blueliner, who had five points in a series-clinching Game 4 victory during the Western Conference Final, is within striking distance of becoming the sixth defenseman in the past 60 years to finish as the top scorer in the playoffs (tied or outright). Since 1962, only **Scott Niedermayer** (2003 Devils; tied), Leetch (1994 Rangers), MacInnis (1989 Flames), **Larry Robinson** (1978 Canadiens; tied) and Orr (1972 Bruins; tied) have done so.


LIGHTNING IN SEARCH OF NINTH HOME WIN, SEVENTH GAME IN SERIES

AMALIE Arena has been a comfort zone for the Lightning this postseason as they are 8-2 in Tampa, one shy of the franchise record for [most home wins in one playoff year](#) (9-3 in 2021, 9-4 in 2004). They enter Game 6 having been down this road before, needing a win to force Game 7 of the Stanley Cup Final.

* The club was successful in that endeavor 18 years ago when **Martin St. Louis** scored in double overtime of Game 6 at Pengrowth Saddledome in Calgary to send the 2004 Final back to Tampa, where the hosts ultimately hoisted its first Stanley Cup.


* The Lightning were not so fortunate seven years ago in the 2015 Final when they lost Game 6 on the road against the Blackhawks. **Duncan Keith** scored the Cup-clinching goal that night and claimed the Conn Smythe Trophy. Six players who were in the lineup for that loss remain with the Lightning: **Alex Killorn, Ondrej Palat, Nikita Kucherov, Steven Stamkos, Victor Hedman** and **Andrei Vasilevskiy** (DNP).

* The Lightning became the 10th team to win Game 5 *on the road* while facing a 3-1 series deficit in a Stanley Cup Final. Four of the previous nine clubs then won the next contest at home to force a winner-take-all showdown.



Tampa Bay will aim to become the 7th team in NHL history to force Game 7 after facing a 3-1 series deficit in the Stanley Cup Final. Four of the clubs to do so earned the Game 6 win *at home*: the 2006 Oilers, 1994 Canucks, 1987 Flyers and 1954 Canadiens.

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NOT AT HOME? NOT A PROBLEM FOR THE AVALANCHE

The Avalanche will have their second opportunity to clinch the Stanley Cup, but this time it will be on the road – a place they’ve been comfortable this postseason.

* Colorado is 8-1 as visitors in the 2022 Stanley Cup Playoffs with its only loss coming to Tampa Bay in Game 3. Should the Avalanche reign victorious in Game 6, their nine road wins would set a franchise record for most in a playoff year and finish as the [second-highest total in NHL history](#) behind six clubs with 10 (most recently the 2019 Blues).

* Much of Colorado’s success away from home has been a byproduct of its power play. The Avalanche have scored 11 goals on the man advantage as visitors this postseason and own a road power-play percentage of 44.0% (11-for-25). That is the second highest on record (since 1977-78) within a single postseason ([min. 9 road GP](#)), behind only the 2019 Bruins (44.1%; 15-for-34).

* The Avalanche have earned nine comeback wins this postseason, which trails only the 2009 Penguins (10) for the most in a playoff year in NHL history. Colorado has had a come-from-behind victory to close out each of its previous three series in the 2022 Stanley Cup Playoffs and were close to another in Game 5 after notching two tying goals.



MOST SERIES-CLINCHING COMEBACK WINS IN ONE YEAR

▶ STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS HISTORY

TEAM	YEAR	WINS
COLORADO AVALANCHE	2022	3
DALLAS STARS	2020	3
LOS ANGELES KINGS	2014	3
CAROLINA HURRICANES	2006	3
ANAHEIM DUCKS	2003	3
NEW JERSEY DEVILS	1995	3
MONTREAL CANADIENS	1989	3
NEW YORK ISLANDERS	1980	3
MONTREAL CANADIENS	1971	3
BOSTON BRUINS	1970	3

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QUICK CLICKS

- * [Lightning resolute facing elimination again in Game 6 of Cup Final](#)
- * [Avalanche confident hitting road for chance to win Stanley Cup in Game 6](#)
- * [Luca Del Bel Belluz aiming to perfect two-way game heading into 2022 NHL Draft](#)
- * [Rod Gilbert NFT patches to benefit Rangers' Garden of Dreams Foundation](#)
- * [Mikhail Sergachev stepping up for Lightning at perfect time in Cup Final](#)