We've got a rematch in this year's Stanley Cup Finals. The defending Stanley Cup champion Detroit Red Wings will face off with the defending Eastern Conference champion Pittsburgh Penguins. It marks the first time that the same teams have competed for the Cup in back-to-back years since 1982-83 and 83-84, when the New York Islanders and the Edmonton Oilers met for Hockey's Holy Grail in consecutive years. Our resident hockey expert, Adam Burke, checks in to preview the series.

Between the regular season and the postseason, 7,452 goals have been scored among the 30 National Hockey League teams. Now, it comes down to the most important goal in the game of hockey. The one that goes down forever in sporting lore as the one that crowned the 2009 Stanley Cup champion.

Back in 2001, longtime NHL blueliner Ray Bourque popularized the "Mission 16W" mantra by wearing a cap to signify what it takes to become a champion in the National Hockey League. Bourque fulfilled that dream after 22 seasons, 21 of them spent with the Boston Bruins, who graciously sent the Hall of Famer to Colorado to try and get his name on Lord Stanley's Cup.

The only two teams with double digit wins in this year's postseason now square off to see who reaches that 16-win plateau. The defending Stanley Cup champion Detroit Red Wings will face off with the defending Eastern Conference champion Pittsburgh Penguins. It marks the first time that the same teams have competed for the Cup in back-to-back years since 1982-83 and 83-84, when the New York Islanders and the Edmonton Oilers met for Hockey's Holy Grail in consecutive years.

Both teams have endured one seven-game series this postseason and both fought through their marathons in the conference semi-final round before breezing through the conference finals. The Penguins were taken to seven games by the Washington Capitals, the Red Wings by the Anaheim Ducks. Pittsburgh won their game seven on the road in decisive fashion, while the methodical Red Wings got a late game winner from Dan Cleary with exactly three minutes remaining to help them advance.

Though their 2009 playoff résumés are very similar, their regular season roads are not. Following a February 22 loss to Washington, the Penguins were 29-26-5, 10th in the Eastern Conference standings. After that game, the Penguins went 16-2-3 en route to finishing fourth in the Eastern Conference standings. The Red Wings, meanwhile, steadily rolled through the regular season, finishing second behind the San Jose Sharks. If not for the Sharks ridiculous start, jumping out to a 22-3-1 record, the Wings probably would have finished first without much competition.

But, the road there no longer matters. What matters now are these four-to-seven games. Both teams have a lot of the same personnel as last year's Cup final, but the teams are far from carbon copies. The Penguins made two tremendous acquisitions around the trade deadline, picking up Bill Guerin and Chris Kunitz. The Red Wings signed Marian Hossa, one of Pittsburgh's key Cup-run components, in the offseason to a one-year deal. The youngsters for both teams are a year better and a year more experienced in playoff hockey.

Plenty of interesting story lines are attached to this series. Not a whole lot of animosity, but a Kasparovian chess match will take place before, during, and after each and every game in this decisive series.

1. Marc-Andre Fleury v. Tomas Holmstrom

This is the key matchup to this series as far as I'm concerned. Fleury has yet to face anybody willing to pay a price in front of the net like Holmstrom. Fleury's defense and collapsing forwards have allowed him to have a clear look at most of the shots so far in the playoffs. When Holmstrom is on the ice, that job becomes exponentially harder. It forces defensemen to take bad penalties, or be out of position trying to move Holmstrom's big frame. If Holmstrom is effective, the Red Wings can feed off it.

2. Detroit v. The Injury Bug

Niklas Kronwall is expected to be available for Game One following surgery for an appendix flare up. But, Nicklas Lidstrom and Pavel Datsyuk missed Games Four and Five of the Chicago series with injuries. Kris Draper also missed time. They were able to get away with shelving these guys for the Chicago series. That will not be the case for the Pittsburgh series. Pittsburgh, meanwhile, is pretty healthy overall.

3. Dan Bylsma v. Detroit's Depth

Raise your hand if you know who Detroit's leading scorer in the 2009 playoffs is. Raise your hand if you know who leads all players in +/- in the postseason. Raise your hand if you know who leads Detroit in assists this postseason. If your order of answers was Johan Franzen, Dan Cleary, and Valtteri Filppula, congratulations. You win.

Dan Bylsma needs to find an answer for Detroit's depth. Certainly,

players like Datsyuk, Henrik Zetterberg, and Hossa are cause for concern. But, so is pretty much everybody else on Detroit's top three lines. Bylsma will have to play his matchups well.

4. Sidney Crosby v. Nicklas Lidstrom

Arguably, the best v. the best. Not much more be said. If anyone can neutralize The Kid, it's Lidstrom, the perennial Norris Trophy winner. The same can be grouped here for Lidstrom on the ice again Evgeni Malkin.

5. The Battle of Two Failing Economies

No bones about it, the city of Detroit is in a financial tailspin with the Big Three automakers. The steel industry is not at all what it once was in Pittsburgh. Lots of laborers are out of work in these two cities, and other adjacent cities. The economic boom from people being downtown for the games of this series will be great for two struggling local economies. By no means do I like either city, but, like everyone else, I hate to hear about hard times for hard working people. I hope this series is everything and more financially for the two franchises, and furthermore, their fan base and the city.

All of these intangibles are going to help decide the series, and many more situations and matchups will come in to play. For me, Detroit's

depth wins out. They're just too strong. Pittsburgh has not faced a team anywhere near Detroit's caliber to this point. Pittsburgh has beaten a variety of teams. They beat a physical Philadelphia team, an uptempo Washington squad, and a sound, systematic team in Carolina.

Detroit has also played a variety of teams. The physical upstart in Columbus, the mesh of skill and tenacity in Anaheim, and the uptempo skill game of Chicago. They conquered all of those hurdles.

Detroit wins this series in five. At most, it takes six. I like to refer to them as the "Albert Pujols of the NHL". The Penguins are undoubtedly better than last year. But, the Red Wings are as well, and have had the benefit of resting Datsyuk and Lidstrom for two games at the end of the Chicago series. Detroit almost never loses at home in the playoffs and Pittsburgh faces the proposition of being down 2-0 coming home. That's a very difficult mountain to climb.

For what it's worth, my preseason NHL Preview , had the Detroit Red Wings winning the Stanley Cup. I wrote: "
For those who are all about prognostication, put your money on the Detroit Red Wings. I think they're a 55-60 win team (they won 51). The only team that will be able to beat them is themselves. I see them as the Cup winner, over the New York Rangers. The Wings drink from Lord Stanley's Cup again."

So I was way off on the Rangers. But, I doubt I'll be off on the Red Wings.