Four teams remain in the NHL Stanley Cup playoffs and two of them, both of the representatives from the Western Conference, have never lifted the silver.

Tampa Bay won their only Stanley Cup in 2004 and Boston won their last Cup in 1972. Vancouver has appeared in one Stanley Cup final, losing in 1994 to the New York Rangers. The Sharks have never made the Cup finals in their 20-year history.

The Eastern Conference Semifinals were surprisingly anti-climactic for the most part. Both series were done in four and the lower-seeded team advanced. Boston swept the Philadelphia Flyers in very convincing fashion and Tampa Bay shocked the Washington Capitals by winning the series in four. As a result, Boston has not played since May 6 and Tampa has not played since May 4. No advantage to either team in that scenario, though Tampa Bay is riding a seven-game win streak.

The Western Conference Semifinals lived up to their pre-tournament expectations. Every year, the playoff chase in the West is crazy and the high-octane action rolls straight through until the end of May. The Canucks dispatched of the Nashville Predators in six games, with five of the six being one-goal decisions. Game Four was essentially a one-goal game because Vancouver added an empty netter late.

Meanwhile, Detroit roared back from a 3-0 series deficit to force Game Seven. The veteran Red Wings shook off an injury to Johan Franzen and assorted injuries to Pavel Datsyuk and Henrik Zetterberg throughout the series. The deciding game went back and forth and saw Detroit lose two of their regular forwards and have to roll with 10 forwards for about half of the game. Nevertheless, Game Seven was incredible and the Sharks prevailed thanks to their key players stepping up in the series finale, mainly, Joe Thornton.

Eastern Conference

#3 Boston Bruins v. #5 Tampa Bay Lightning

Two 35+ goaltenders will battle for the chance to represent the Eastern Conference in the Stanley Cup finals. Tim Thomas and Dwayne Roloson have been absolutely brilliant over the last eight games and have been further proof that a team can ride a hot goaltender. In more ways than one, goaltenders can dictate a series. Big saves create momentum shifts. They allow for a riskier gameplan or the opportunity to get the defensemen involved in the play.

Both teams have shown tremendous offensive prowess while their netminders have been terrific. Boston scored five goals twice, seven goals once, and three goals in their series with Philadelphia. Tampa Bay averaged four goals per game in their sweep of Washington.

Cup heroes Vincent Lecavalier and Martin St. Louis are at the top of their games right now and Boston is getting scoring from anywhere and everywhere. These two teams are peaking at the right time and should make for an exciting series with lots of talent and good goaltending.

Prediction: Boston in 7. I have not been a believer of Tampa Bay yet, and I have plenty of crow to eat. That said, Boston is a better team. Regardless of how they have played in the playoffs, Tampa Bay still allowed the fifth most goals in the Eastern Conference. Goals will be at

a premium for Tampa Bay because Boston is playing phenomenal team defense and Tim Thomas has been a brick wall. Tampa will likely have to hold Boston to two goals or less in four of the seven games to win this series, and that's if they score enough.

It'll be a long exciting series, one that could feature a few overtime games, but at the end of the day, give me the better defensive team.

Western Conference

#1 Vancouver Canucks v. #2 San Jose Sharks

The Vancouver Canucks have embraced two very different styles thrown at them. Chicago played with high-speed transition and lots of stretch passes to open up the ice. They beat them. Nashville played a tough defensive game along the boards and kept every game close and tight-checking. They beat them. Now, they face a combination of the two in the San Jose Sharks.

The Sharks are capable of playing a fast, uptempo game or a grind it out style, though they excel more at a skill game. They have a tremendous amount of talent up front and a solid, but unspectacular defensive core. No knock on those guys, but very few of them are household names. In any event, the Sharks are a good matchup for the Canucks.

Travel will not be an issue now in this series like it would have if Detroit had won. No time zone changes and a short flight will help the quick pace of the series. Both teams are capable of a 7-5 final or a 2-1 final. There's no telling how the games will go in this series except that there will not be any blowouts.

Prediction: Vancouver in 7. Honestly, this series is a complete toss-up in my mind. Both

teams are very solid, well-coached, fundamentally sound, and full of talent. Roberto Luongo has a monkey on his back that he's never won a big playoff series. Antti Niemi is the unheralded Stanley Cup champion goaltender from 2010. Niemi was great in the Detroit series and will have to continue to be.

At the end of the day, without flipping a coin, I will take Vancouver with home ice. The matchup advantage and the faceoff advantage is huge. Ryan Kesler will be the best player in this series, like he has been for Vancouver all playoffs long. I'll take the Canucks, but I would not be surprised either way.

Both series begin this weekend with Boston/Tampa on Saturday and Vancouver/San Jose on Sunday.