Neither series in the Western Conference has been what most people expected and the Eastern Conference series are more evenly matched than originally thought as the second round is well underway. As usual, the NHL playoffs are taking a back seat to the NBA playoffs with most fans, but there's still plenty to discuss with the eight teams still playing. So far, there haven't been any on-ice incidents resulting in suspensions, so that's a good thing for the NHL.

However, these series are not without suspension. The Nashville Predators, already down 2-0 in their series with the Phoenix Coyotes, had to suspend forwards Andrei Kostitsyn and Alexander Radulov for violating team rules. Kostitsyn, whose brother Sergei committed a major mistake that directly affected the outcome of Game 1, is one of the more talented players on the team and a key contributor on the powerplay. Radulov, who came over from Russia's Kontinental Hockey League just before the playoffs, has been lazy and was the subject of this epic, and 100% correct, intermission rant from NBC Sports Network's Keith Jones. Opinions seem to be mixed on the Game 3 fallout of the two suspensions. Some argue that not having selfish, lazy players like Radulov and Kostitsyn will help the Predators while others look at the lack of depth options and think the Preds will have an uphill battle.

Here's a breakdown of what's gone on so far in the Western Conference Semis.

#8 Los Angeles Kings lead #2 St. Louis Blues 2-0

In an outcome that very few people expected, the Kings took both games from the Blues in St. Louis, jumping out to a 4-0 lead in the first period of Game 2. Some people weren't sure that four goals combined would be scored in some of the games. The Kings star players have come to the forefront and Jonathan Quick continues to impress. With Quick in net and a two-game lead, the Kings look well on their way to moving on to the Western Conference Final.

One hit that turned the tide of the series went without punishment from the league as LA's Dwight King boarded St. Louis's Alex Pietrangelo in Game 1, causing him to miss Game 2 and leaving his status in doubt for the remainder of the series.

It had a direct impact in Game 2 as, without Pietrangelo, the Blues struggled mightily in their own zone.

#3 Phoenix Coyotes lead #4 Nashville Predators 2-0

Phoenix took advantage of a moronic icing play by Nashville's Sergei Kostitsyn, scoring the game-winning goal on the ensuing faceoff and taking a series lead. They continued to move forward by scoring five goals on Pekka Rinne in Game 2 to home serve on home ice. Rinne, who started 72 games during the regular season, could be showing signs of wear and tear as he creeps up over the 80-game mark in Game 3. The series has been far more wide open than anyone anticipated with 15 goals in the first two games.

Now, the Predators head home without the services of two of their more-gifted offensive players. They'll need to return to their defensive style in order to turn this into a series again.

Over in the Eastern Conference...

#1 New York Rangers tied with #7 Washington Capitals 1-1

Braden Holtby has been excellent again for the Washington Capitals as they and the New York Rangers head to the nation's capital in a deadlocked series. The Rangers looked like the better team in Game 1, playing their style and asserting their will on the Capitals. For their part, the Caps showed a lot of heart in Game 2 to even up the series. It will continue to be a series of which goaltender can outshine the other as the Rangers are struggling with the Capitals' speed and the Capitals are working hard to match the intensity of their opponent.

Much has been made of Alexander Ovechkin's dwindling ice time as coach Dale Hunter sends a message that he does not trust Ovechkin protecting late leads. It'll be interesting to see if that becomes a distraction to the team or if Ovechkin is able to set his feelings aside for the good of the common goal.

#5 Philadelphia Flyers tied with #6 New Jersey Devils 1-1

Ilya Bryzgalov has been the story in this series, playing exceptionally well in the first two games but the Flyers have not generated enough offense to have a 2-0 lead. This has been the most well-played series of the four. The Devils are a well-coached team able to match up with the Flyers, despite a talent mismatch. The Devils have gotten a lot of help this postseason from unlikely names like Adam Henrique and Bryce Salvador who have both scored big goals at times. The series heads back to New Jersey now where the Devils and Martin Brodeur have the chance to take control. Brodeur, for his part, has looked better in this series than he did against the Florida Panthers and that should be a good sign going forward for New Jersey.

One of the interesting things to watch the rest of the way is Ilya Bryzgalov. He has a tendency to let in cheap goals and lose focus. The way that this series has gone, losing focus on just one shot could be the determining factor.

The playoff push continues as teams look to get halfway to their goal of 16 wins, the number it takes to win the Stanley Cup.