The first two rounds of the finals just finished, meaning that we’re left with just one more monster day – the Grand Finale. While the date is still being decided, the 90 minute session is going to be packed with highlights, tough buckets, and defensive efforts. I already know the tensions and beef between teams are going to be CRAZY high, already this week it’s been wild. The finals have been incredibly exciting, at least for two of the teams. The 5 Musketeers and Wet Willies traded wins, having near identical records (the 5 Musketeers had one more win and one less loss over the four days). The Loose Gooses however were no where to be seen, getting just four wins over the two days. Anyways, here’s the breakdown for each team:

The Wet Willies:  
Over the course of the tournament, it’s been hard to find any faults with the Wet Willies. They’ve dominated for the majority of the tournament, and if it wasn’t for a sloppy week or two, they’d be way ahead of the competition. With GM Rudy Hoschke returning after injury, the Wet Willies have been at full power, winning 60% of their games. They came away with second and first, placing at first place on the ladder, 3 points ahead of second. While you could put the success to Alexander Galt and Rudy Hoschke, their scoring has come from different players entirely. While Alex and Rudy have combined for an extra 2.8 points per game during the finals, Nicholas Szogi (who has the highest increase during the finals at 4.9 ppg) and Clarrie Jones have been the leading scorers, combining for an extra <em>8.8</em> points per game. They’ve combined for 60% of their teams points, making a huge impact as third and fourth man. Clarrie has hit a whopping 4 threes, and Nick has 3. With each game being a best-of-3, the three point shot makes a huge difference, as it means an automatic win. While they’ve been doing the scoring, the success has been a huge team effort, each player contributing in their own ways. Ryan Pattemore has continued his lock down defence (after winning the perimeter defender award), and Willie Weekes (winner of the teammate award) always has his teams back, cheering them up after a loss or celebrating with them after a win, as well as getting some steals and rebounds. The team has led the way all season long, and have backed up their trash talk with their success. My ‘x-factor’ for the Wet Willies is how Clarrie Jones and Alexander Galt play. If they can both be on the top of their game, it’ll be hard to stop a team that has two dominant forwards, and a guard that can shoot. If they play to their best, it’ll take some seriously tough defence to take them down.

The 5 Musketeers:  
The 5 Musketeers are known for being right in the middle. They’ve been in second place nearly the entire tournament, with just two days in first, and two in third. They’re well known for their team chemistry and shot creation, with it seeming like they can get an open shot for anyone. While their GM might not lead them in scoring, Samuel McConaghy has shown he knows the game, often making great reads off screens and creating good looks for Lukas Johnston (the team scoring leader), and Michael Iffland. But they don’t just have one playmaker. Michael Iffland, who won the playmaking (and third man) award, never fails to amaze everyone with his flashy passes. And they’re not just for looks; while the stats don’t track it, there’s little doubt that Michael would have an assist on half of their teams scores. The 5 Musketeers aren’t built around one person like so many good teams are, their entire team contributes to their wins – the main reason behind their consistency. Talking about consistency, the team ALWAYS has all 5 players, with the only exceptions being if someone’s sick or injured. By having all five players day in and day out, their chemistry has gone through the roof, and their playing style shows it. While they’re not the stars on their team, Conor Farrington and Jasper Collier play a solid role in the 5 Musketeers success. Conor and Jasper have averaged 1.5 points per game during the finals, and both have scored a point to win the game. Both players can play quality defence, and know how to space the floor to give the teams scorers (especially Lukas) room for an open shot. With the way they move the ball and work together, each break isn’t reliant on a special someone to perform well, which may be the upper hand to winning the tournament. With each player on the team constantly seeing improvement in their offensive talents, they could have a powerhouse of finishing and shooting come Friday. And if everything clicks, they might be unguardable.

The Loose Gooses:  
Ahh, my own team, the Loose Gooses. I’m going to do my best to take this report with an unbiased view, and see us as anyone else would see us. The Loose Gooses have been known for one thing this season – commitment. As everyone knows, its rare to see the LG’s with more than 4 players, with there being multiple days of only having two. Despite this, the underdogs have fought through every day, and despite being down 7 points after Week 1, saw first place for half a week before slipping into second, and now back into third. While it may seem like they haven’t made any progress all season, the team cut the difference from 7 points to 3.5, even though they never had more than 3 players all of Finals Week. I think it’s fair to say that the team could be the best in the league if it wasn’t for such issues, as the two weeks leading up to the finals (where they often had 4-5 players), they won 4 of the 6 days.

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The team has a wide range of talent, from their GM Angus Walker, who averages 2.2 points per game, averaging 5.5 in the finals, to the deadly mid-range and post scorer William Kim, who averages 1.8 PPG, as well as having the most improved player Chris Tomkinson who is good with quick cuts and defensive efforts. Furthermore, the team has two solid back up guards, being Mitch Yue, known for his agility and stealing the ball off anyone, and Shaun Alexiou, known for his confidence and ability to get an open shot for himself.

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With everyone on the team knowing the date of the Grand Finale, the Loose Gooses have got a great chance of having a full team, something the others aren’t used to. As the GM said himself ‘They’re used to only dealing with three of us. Once we have 5, they won’t have know what to do.’ While we haven’t seen much of the full squad, the stats don’t lie. The Loose Gooses are a winning team when they’ve got everyone. But, you can say the same about every other team. Each team has had their share of being under numbered, so the Loose Gooses aren’t fully alone. Only time will tell.