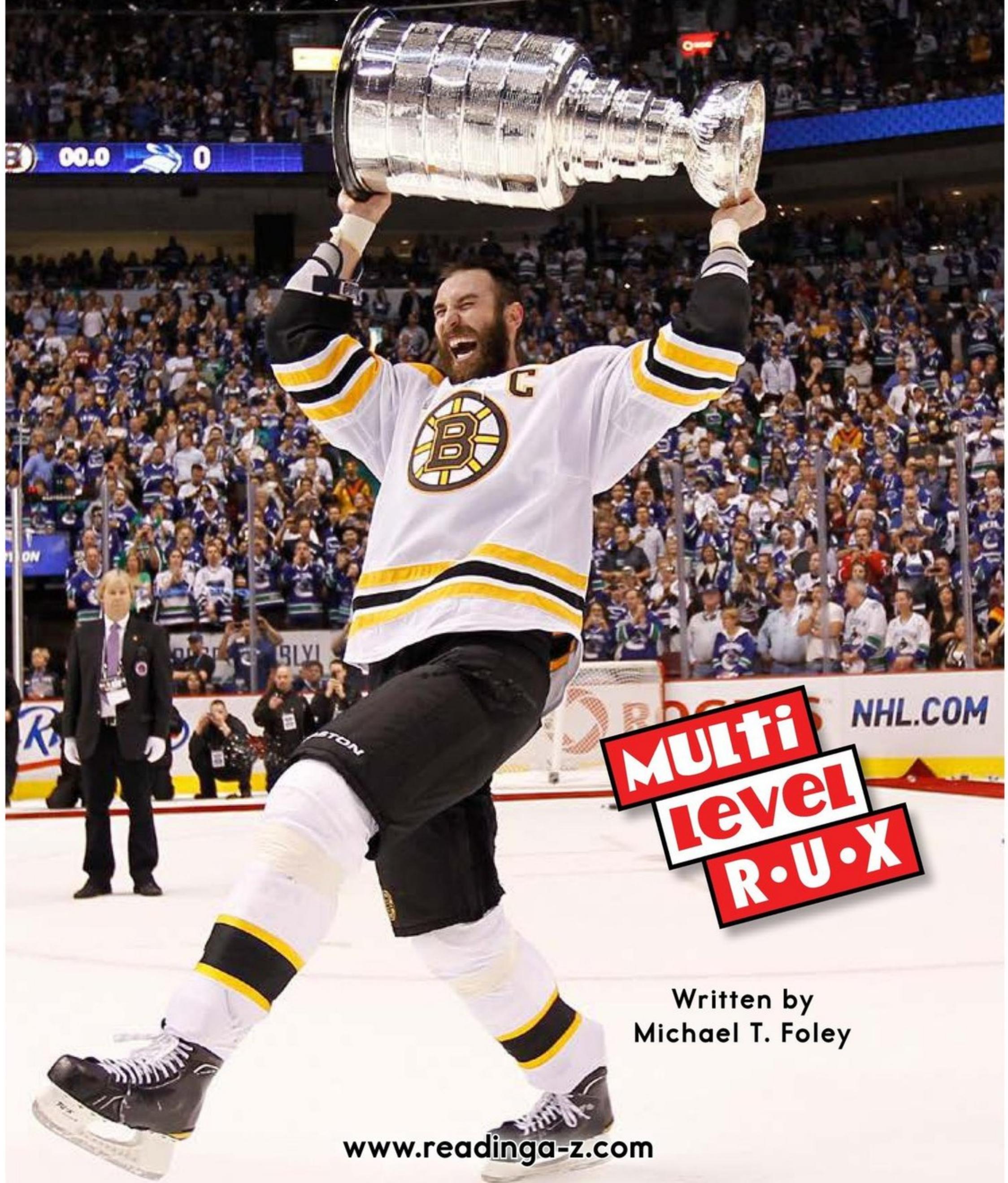


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The Stanley Cup: Hockey's Greatest Prize



Written by
Michael T. Foley

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Red Wings' player Dino Ciccarelli (22) is pushed into the Blues' goalie John Casey during Game 7 of the Western Conference finals in 1996.

Hockey's Greatest Prize

It's Game 7 of the 1996 Western Conference finals between the Detroit Red Wings and the St. Louis Blues. The winner will play in the National Hockey League (NHL) **playoff** finals. The game is tied 0-0 in the second overtime period. Everyone is excited as Detroit captain Steve Yzerman (EYE-zur-mun) grabs the puck. He dashes to the blue line and without warning—*crack!*—blasts the puck into the net. Suddenly, the building starts shaking as thousands of fans cheer at one of the most exciting goals in hockey history.

Lord Stanley's Cup



Lord Frederick Arthur Stanley lived from 1841 to 1908.

Every **season**, players have one goal in mind: winning the Stanley Cup. Once the regular season is over, the real season begins. The playoff season is the most exciting time of the year.

The Stanley Cup was named after Lord Stanley of Preston, the Governor General of Canada from 1888 to 1893. Lord Stanley first saw a hockey game in 1889 and fell in love. He decided to build a trophy that could be awarded to the top team. The Cup was made in 1892. It was the prize for the best hockey team in Canada. In 1915, two hockey leagues agreed to play for the Cup. Later, those leagues would join some others, and new leagues would form.

In 1926, the NHL became the only league to compete for the Cup. Its name changed to the Stanley Presentation Cup. In 1947, it became the Stanley Cup.

At that time there were only six teams in the NHL. They were from Toronto, Montreal, Detroit, Chicago, New York, and Boston. Those teams still play in the NHL today. People call them the “Original Six.”

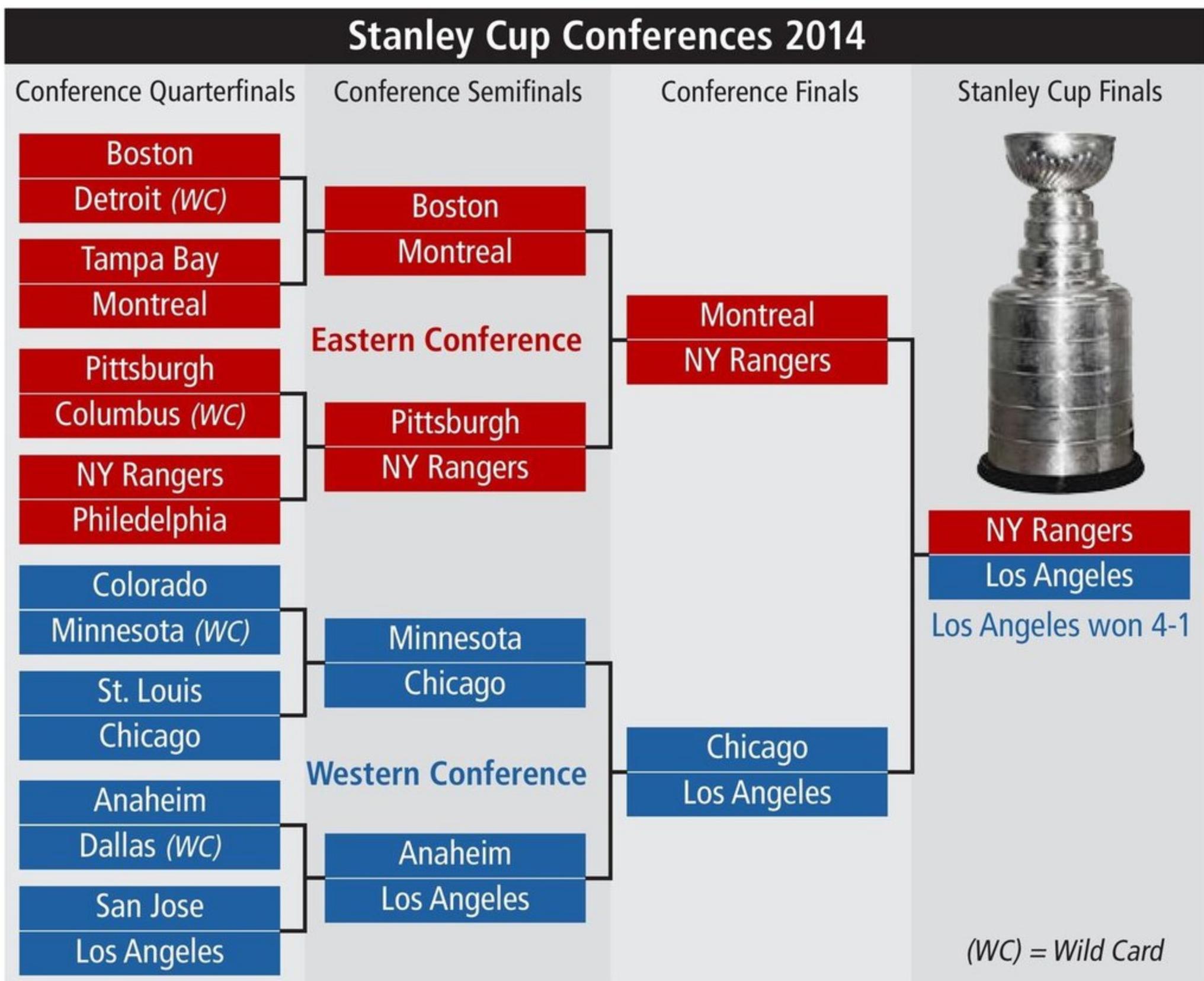
The original Cup was made out of silver. It was 7.2 inches (18.5 cm) tall and 11.4 inches (29 cm) wide. The first one was placed in the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1963. A new Cup is used today.

Hockey is the only major sport in North America that uses the same trophy every year.

The Cup has five bands at the bottom. The names of the winners are carved into the bands. When the bands are full, they are placed in the Hockey Hall of Fame. Then new bands are put on the Cup.



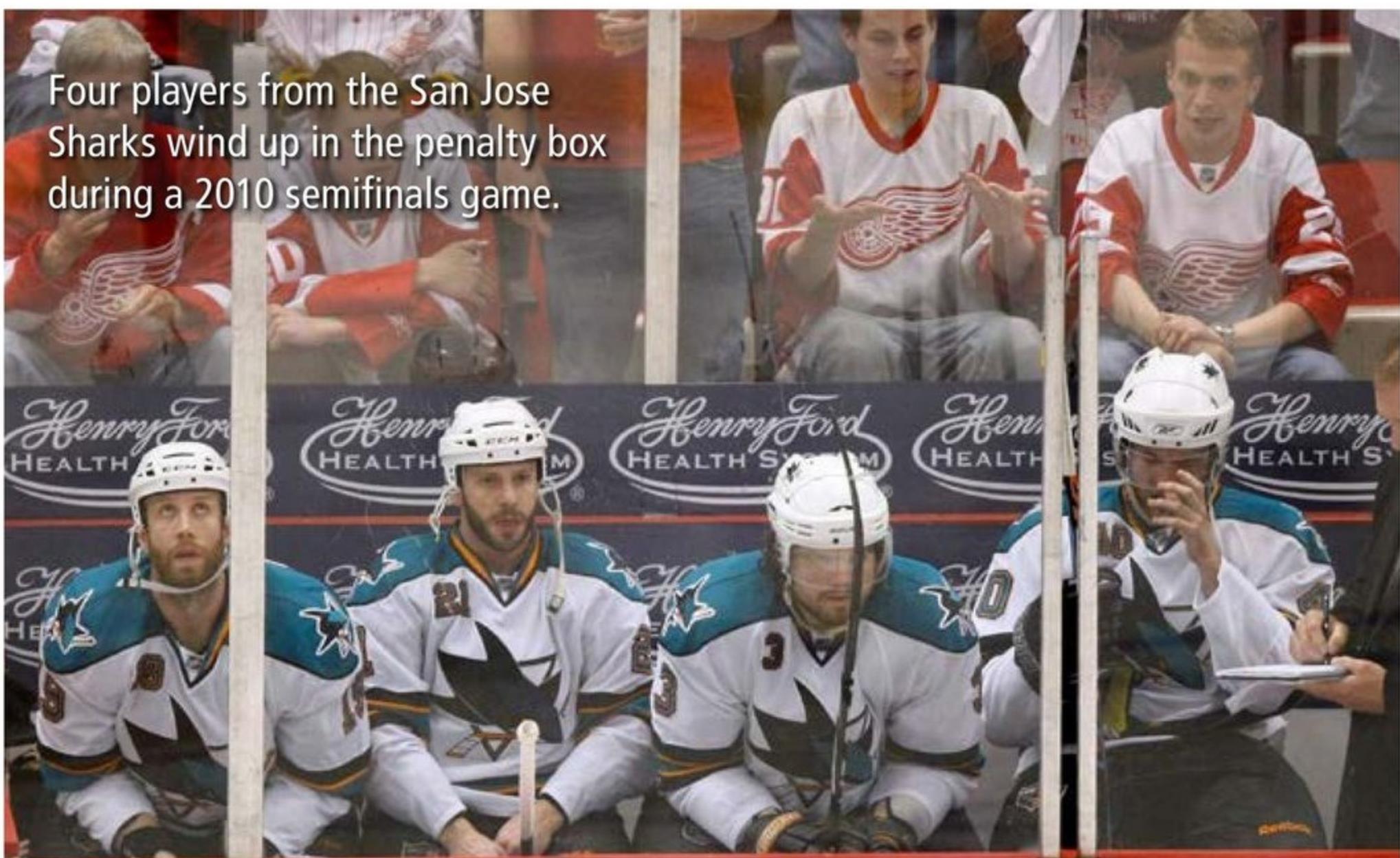
The Stanley Cup with all five bands is 35.25 inches (89.54 cm) tall.



The Road to the Stanley Cup

The road to the Stanley Cup is long and difficult, but hockey fans wouldn't want it any other way. Thirty teams are split into two conferences. The Eastern Conference has the Metropolitan and the Atlantic Divisions. The Western Conference has the Central and the Pacific Divisions. Only sixteen of thirty teams make the playoffs. The top three teams in each division make the playoffs. The remaining spots are filled by the next two highest-placed teams in each conference.

Once the playoffs begin, teams go through four best-of-seven rounds in order to win. They play in conference **quarterfinals**, conference **semifinals**, conference finals, and the Stanley Cup finals. The Stanley Cup finals pit the Eastern Conference champions against the Western Conference champions. It may be the most thrilling playoff series in all of sports!



Fighting in Hockey

Hockey is known for being fast, exciting, and rough. In fact, hockey is the only North American sport that allows players to fight. A 1922 rule change decided that fighting players would receive a five-minute penalty. Some people think fighting helps stop players from taking cheap shots and using their sticks as weapons. However, others feel that fighting in the NHL is too violent and should be banned. It is important that kids and amateur players never fight.



New York Mayor Jimmy Walker presented the Stanley Cup to the 1928 champions, the New York Rangers.

Notable Moments in Stanley Cup History

1928—*Coach Lester Patrick Replaces Injured Goalie*

In 1928, Game 2 between the New York Rangers and the Montreal Maroons was put on hold. The New York **goalie** got hurt and had to leave the game. Back then, teams only had one goalie. Coach Lester Patrick asked if he could use Ottawa's goaltender, who was watching in the stands. Wanting his team to win, the Maroons' coach said no. Patrick's players asked him to play and promised they would play extra hard.



Lester Patrick (9) played for nine different teams in his twenty-four-year career, including the New York Rangers.

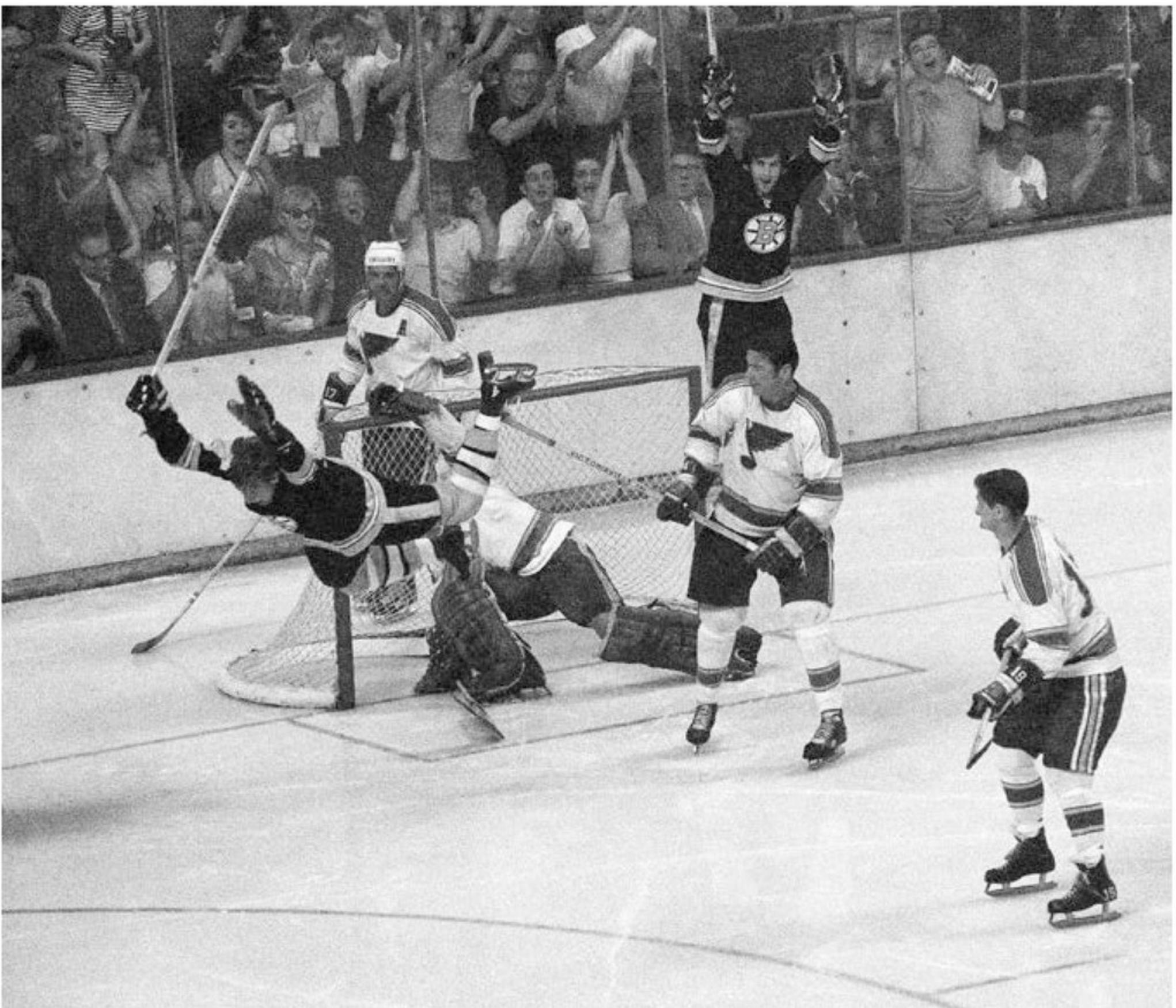
Minutes later, Patrick skated onto the ice in full goalie gear. He had played **defense** but hadn't played goalie very much. However, the Stanley Cup was at stake. Before hitting the ice, he told his players not to let him down. He ended up allowing only one goal. New York would go on to win the Stanley Cup. At forty-four, Patrick became the oldest player in a Stanley Cup final. His record lives on today.



The 1942 victory against the Detroit Red Wings ended a nine-year Stanley Cup drought for the Maple Leafs

1942—Toronto Maple Leafs vs. Detroit Red Wings

In the 1942 Stanley Cup finals, Toronto was losing the series 3-0. In Game 4, the Maple Leafs' coach took a risk. He replaced two of his star players with two of his newer players. He wanted to make the team work harder. His plan worked. The Maple Leafs made an amazing comeback and won the next four games.



The Bruins' win against the Blues brought the Cup back to Boston after a twenty-nine-year absence.

1970—Bobby Orr's Legendary “Diving” Goal

In overtime of Game 4 of the 1970 Stanley Cup finals, the Boston Bruins were trying to beat the St. Louis Blues 4-0. Bruins captain Bobby Orr was in front of the St. Louis net when another player passed him the puck. Just as Orr shot the puck past the goalie, another player tripped him. He flew through the air like a superhero. Many people believe that photo is the most famous one in hockey history.



In 2008, the Detroit Red Wings began using a giant inflatable octopus to kick off their games.

The Legend of the Octopus

Many strange things have happened at hockey games, and the Story of the Octopus is the strangest. It began in Detroit in 1952. To win the Cup, a team had to win two best-of-seven series (eight games in total). During one game, two Detroit fans threw the body of a dead octopus onto the ice—eight legs for eight needed wins. Detroit ended up winning that year, and the octopus was seen as good luck. In one 1995 game, fans threw thirty-six of the animals onto the ice.



Wayne Gretzky played in the NHL for twenty years.

Stanley Cup Dynasty—Edmonton Oilers

The Edmonton Oilers were an All-Star Team in the 1980s. Led by Wayne Gretzky (GRET-ski), they won five Stanley Cups in seven years. Gretzky was so good that Boston coach Terry O'Reilly said, "He's the best. There should be a league rule that he has to be passed around from team to team every year." Gretzky wasn't the only Oilers star, however. Six other Oilers players from that time also became members of the Hockey Hall of Fame.

The Best Game You Can Name

Every year, hockey fans dream of their favorite team winning the Stanley Cup. For more than a century, players have skated, scored, and saved for the chance to drink from this great prize. You never know what will happen in the Stanley Cup playoffs. No matter which team wins, the true winners are hockey fans around the world.



If Only the Cup Could Talk . . .

The Stanley Cup playoffs are among the most difficult in sports. It's no wonder that when the winning players finally get their hands on the Cup, they can get excited and silly.

- Clark Gillies of the New York Islanders let his dog eat out of the Stanley Cup.
- Tampa Bay's André Roy used the Stanley Cup as an engagement ring bearer.
- Three different teams have thrown the Stanley Cup into a swimming pool to see if it floats. It does not.

Glossary

conference (<i>n.</i>)	a group of sports teams that compete against each other as part of a larger league or group (p. 4)
defense (<i>n.</i>)	the action of attempting to keep an opposing team from scoring (p. 10)
goalie (<i>n.</i>)	a defensive player whose job is to keep the ball or puck from entering his or her team's goal (p. 9)
period (<i>n.</i>)	one of a set of equal amounts of playing time that a sports game is broken into (p. 4)
playoff (<i>n.</i>)	a series of games played after the end of the regular season to determine a champion (p. 4)
puck (<i>n.</i>)	a hard rubber disk used in hockey (p. 4)
quarterfinals (<i>n.</i>)	four matches or games in which eight teams compete and the four winners advance to the next stage of a playoff series (p. 8)
season (<i>n.</i>)	a certain time of year when something usually happens, such as a sport being played (p. 4)
semifinals (<i>n.</i>)	two matches or games in which four teams compete and the two winners advance to the next stage of a playoff series (p. 8)

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Front cover: Zdeno Chara of the Boston Bruins celebrates winning the Stanley Cup in 2011.

Back cover: In the last twenty-four years, more than one thousand names have been added to the Cup.

Title page: The Stanley Cup wears its seatbelt when it rides in a car.

Page 3: In 2012, Jordan Nolan of the Los Angeles Kings kissed the Stanley Cup in his hometown of Sault Ste. Marie in Ontario, Canada.

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