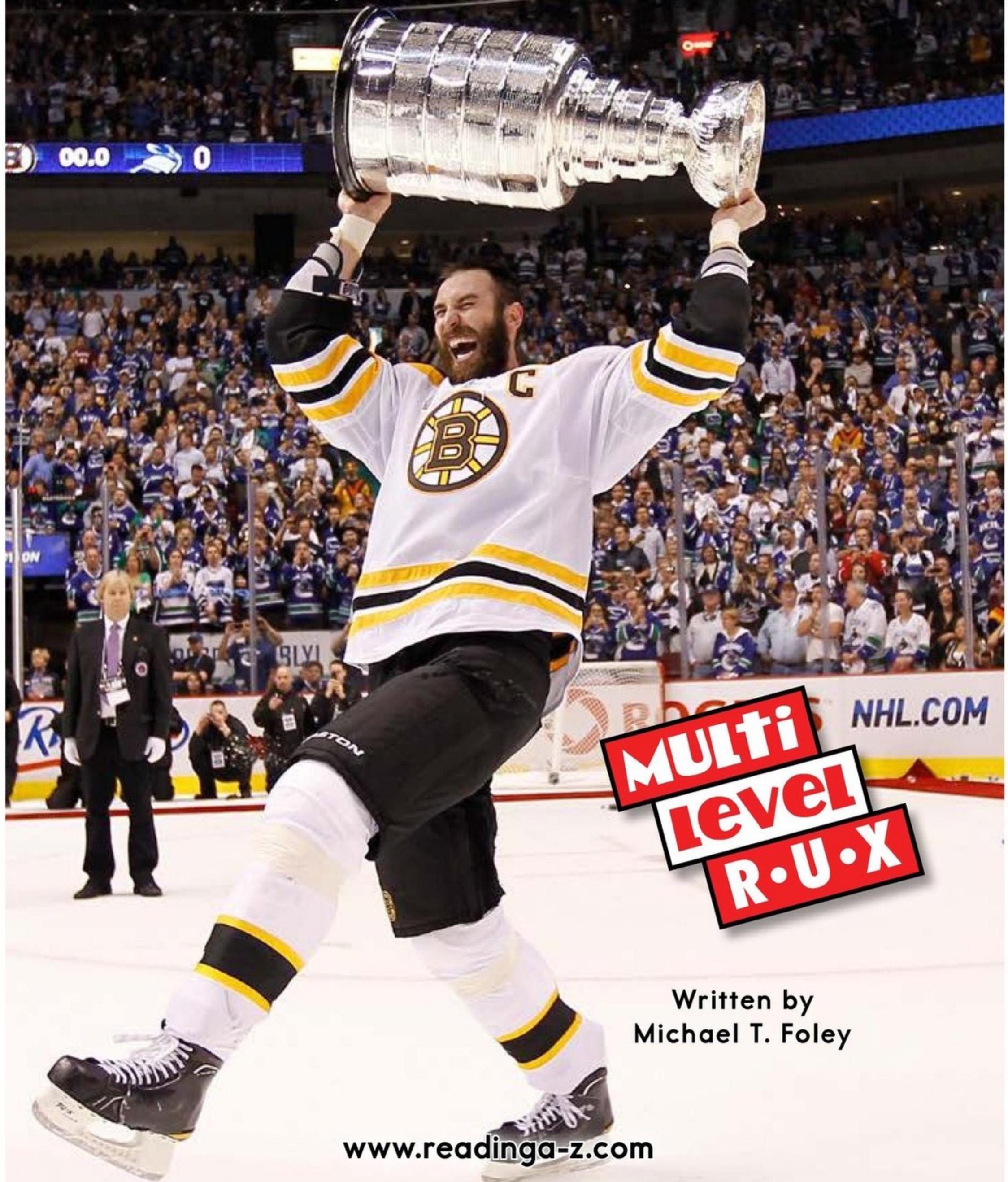


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# The Stanley Cup: Hockey's Greatest Prize



Written by  
Michael T. Foley

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## Table of Contents

Hockey's Greatest Prize .....	4
Lord Stanley's Cup .....	5
The Road to the Stanley Cup .....	7
Notable Moments in Stanley Cup History .....	9
1928—Coach Lester Patrick Replaces Injured Goalie .....	9
1942—Toronto Maples Leafs vs. Detroit Red Wings .....	11
1970—Bobby Orr's Legendary “Diving” Goal .....	12
The Legend of the Octopus .....	13
Stanley Cup Dynasty—Edmonton Oilers .....	14
The Best Game You Can Name .....	15
Glossary .....	16



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 goes on to compete in the National Hockey League (NHL) playoff finals. The game is tied 0-0 in the second **sudden death** overtime period. Tension could not be higher as Detroit captain Steve Yzerman (EYE-zur-mun) picks up the **puck** at center ice, dashes to the blue line, and without warning—*crack!*—blasts a thundering **slap shot** past the St. Louis **goalie**. Suddenly, all the air in Detroit's Joe Louis Arena is sucked out of the building as tens of thousands of Red Wings fans erupt in cheers at one of the most exciting goals in hockey history.

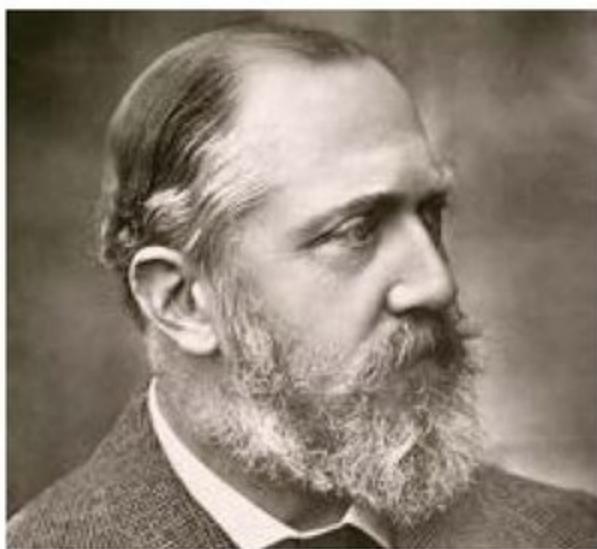
## Lord Stanley's Cup

Every year in October, talented ice warriors lace up their skates with a single goal in mind: winning hockey's greatest prize, the Stanley Cup. By the time the regular season is over in April, the *real* season begins. The Stanley Cup playoff season is the most exciting time of the year for hockey fans as players shoot, save, **check**, and fight for the coveted Stanley Cup.

The Stanley Cup is named after Lord Stanley of Preston, who was the Governor General of Canada from 1888 to 1893. Lord Stanley first saw an ice hockey game played at Montreal's Winter Carnival in 1889 and instantly fell in love with the sport. He decided that there should be a trophy awarded to the top team.

The Cup was commissioned in 1892 as the Dominion Hockey Challenge Cup, and it was awarded to Canada's top-ranking amateur ice hockey club. In 1915, professional hockey organizations called the National Hockey Association (NHA) and the Pacific Coast Hockey Association (PCHA) came to an agreement that the champion team in each of the two leagues would play against each other for the Stanley Cup.

In the following years, new leagues formed, others folded, and still others merged together. In 1926, the name of the Cup changed to the Stanley Presentation Cup. In 1947, it became the Stanley Cup. At that time there were six teams in the NHL, the final remaining league. Those teams (from Toronto, Montreal, Detroit, Chicago, New York, and Boston) still play in the NHL today. Historians call them the “Original Six,” since more teams joined the league in later years.



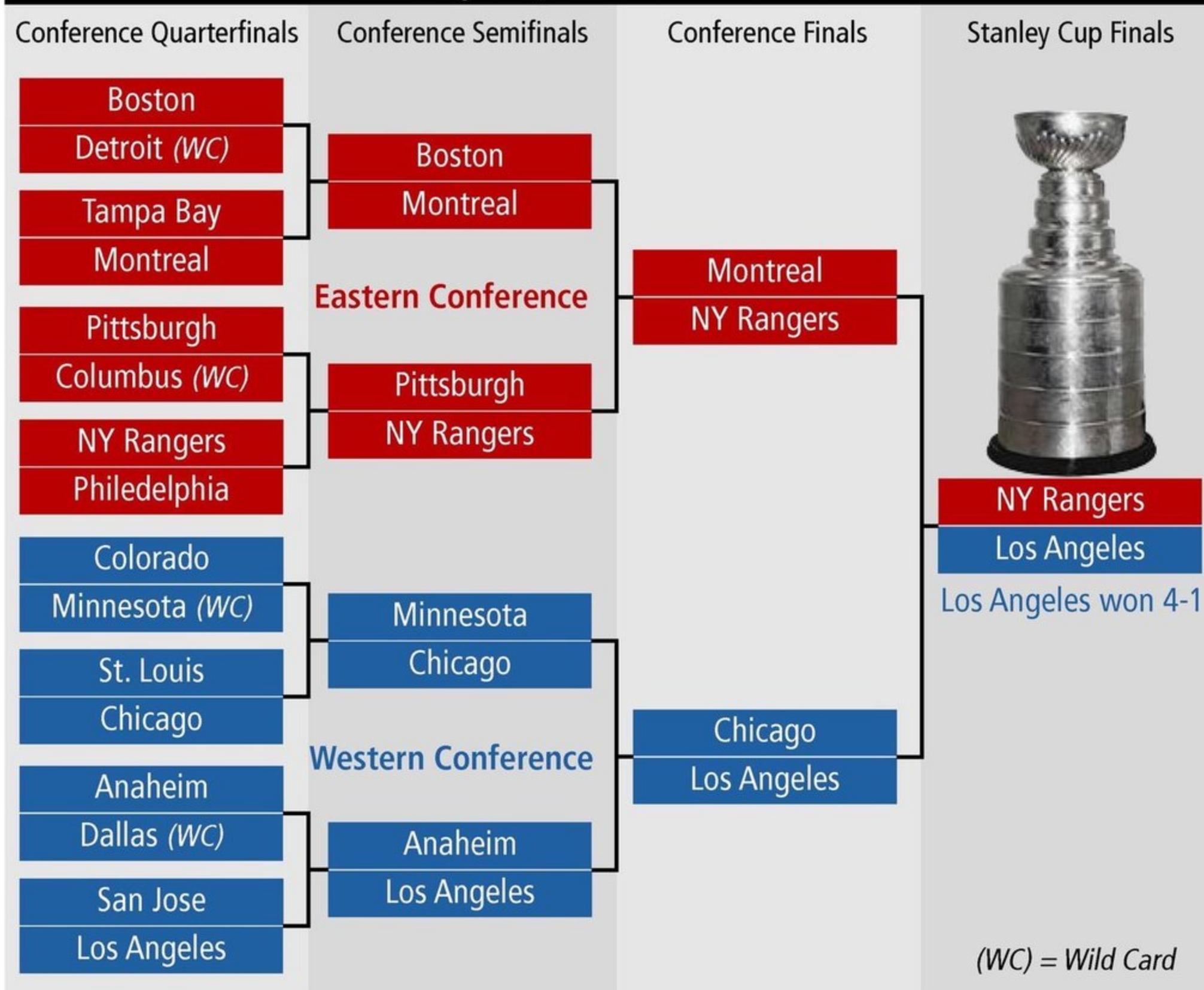
Lord Frederick Arthur Stanley lived from 1841 to 1908.

The original Dominion Cup was silver, 7.2 inches (18.5 cm) tall, and 11.4 inches (29 cm) in diameter. It was placed in the Hall of Fame in 1963 and a “replacement” cup is used today.

Hockey is the only major North American sport that does not create a new trophy each year. The winning team holds onto the Cup until a new champion is named.

The Cup has five bands at its base. The names of the winning team’s players, coaches, and management are inscribed on the bands each year. When the bottom band is full, the top band is removed and sent to the Hall of Fame. Then the remaining four bands shift up, and a new band is put on the bottom, ready for the next winners.

## Stanley Cup Conferences 2014



## 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.

The current thirty NHL teams are split into two conferences, Eastern and Western. The Eastern Conference has the Metropolitan and Atlantic Divisions, while the Western Conference has the Central and Pacific Divisions. The top three teams in each division automatically make the playoffs. The remaining spots are filled by the next two highest-placed teams in each conference.

Once the playoffs begin, teams must go through four best-of-seven rounds in order to win the Cup: the conference **quarterfinals**, the conference **semifinals**, the conference finals, and lastly the Stanley Cup finals, which pit the Eastern Conference champions against the Western Conference champions.



## 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. Some players, called *enforcers* or *goons*, are there to fight and be rough. A 1922 rule change determined 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. They think that a good fight can inspire a team. However, others feel that fighting in the NHL is too violent and should be banned. Whether or not fighting continues in the NHL, it is important that kids and amateur players leave it to the professionals and 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*

The year was 1928, and the New York Rangers and Montreal Maroons were battling it out in Game 2 of the finals. But when New York goalie Lorne Chabot was injured, he had to leave the game. In those days, it was rare to have a backup goalie. Scrambling for a last-minute replacement, Rangers coach Lester Patrick asked the head coach of the Maroons if he could use star Ottawa goaltender Alec Connell, who was watching in the stands. Wanting to keep his team's huge advantage, Maroons coach Eddie Gerard said no. Patrick's players came up with a solution and asked him: "Coach, why don't you go in the net? We'll play extra hard if we know you're in goal."

Moments later, Rangers coach Lester Patrick skated onto the ice in full goalie gear. The forty-four-year-old coach was a retired defenseman with very little goaltending experience. However, the Stanley Cup was at stake, and he had no choice. Before hitting the ice, he told his players, “Boys, don’t let an old man down.” Remarkably, Lester Patrick saved nineteen shots while only allowing one goal to help the Rangers win in overtime. New York would go on to win the Stanley Cup, and at the age of forty-four years, three months, and nine days, Lester Patrick became the oldest person ever to play in a Stanley Cup final. His record and the legacy of this game live on today.



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

## 1942—*Toronto Maple Leafs vs. Detroit Red Wings*

It was the first Stanley Cup final of the “Original Six” era, and Toronto faced the ultimate odds after losing the first three games of the series to Detroit. In Game 4, Leafs coach Hap Day had to shake up the team; he **benched** two of his star players and replaced them with rookies to make the team work harder. His plan worked. The Leafs ended up making an amazing comeback and won the next four games. This instance was the first time a team came back from a three-game **deficit** in the Stanley Cup finals. When Leafs player Gaye Stewart was asked about the series, he said, “Only one word comes to mind: phenomenal.”



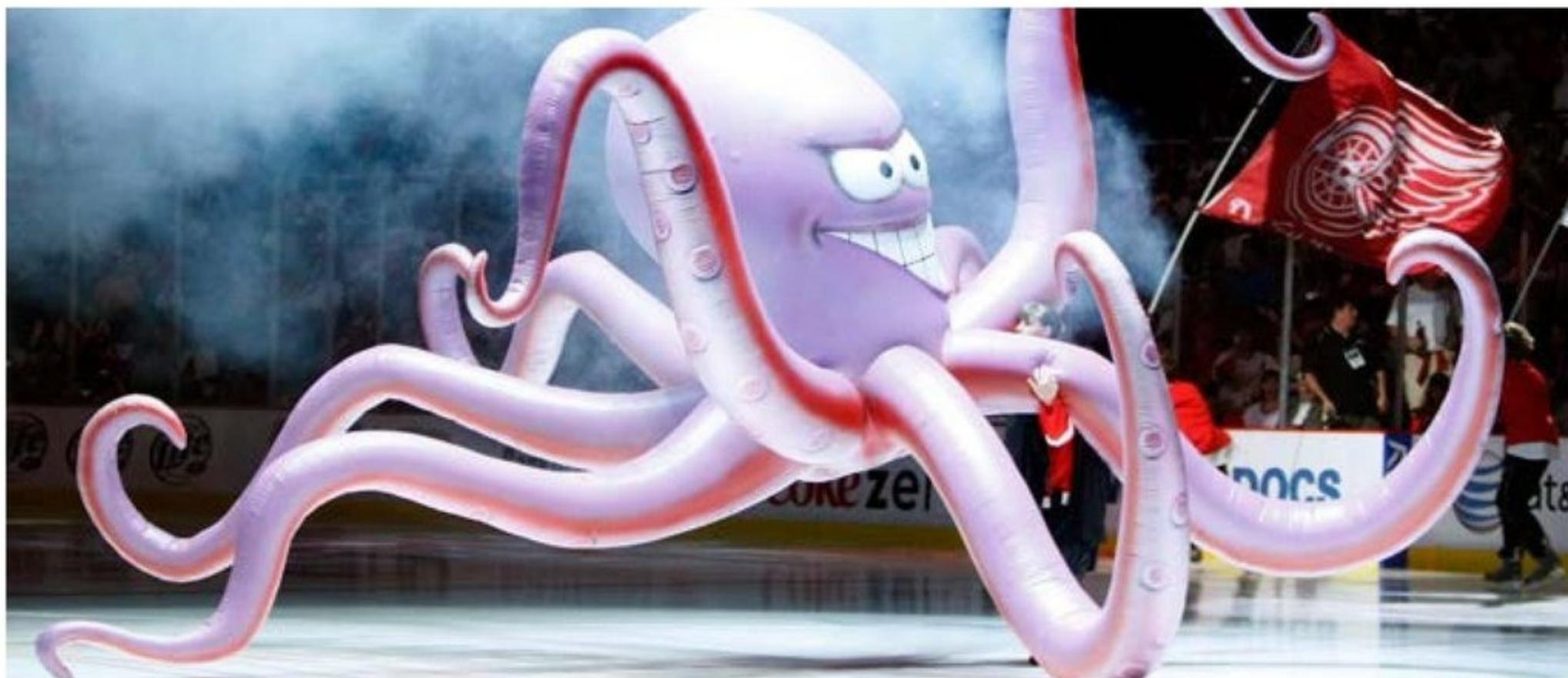
The 1942 victory against the Detroit Red Wings ended a nine-year Stanley Cup drought for the Maple Leafs.



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 win against the St. Louis Blues 4-0. Bruins captain Bobby Orr found himself in front of the St. Louis net after passing the puck to teammate Derek Sanderson, who then passed it right back. Orr took a shot at the loose puck, and just as he watched the puck cross the goal line, he was tripped by a St. Louis defenseman. The combination of being tripped and Orr's excitement caused him to fly into the air like a superhero. Photographer Ray Lussier snapped what many people consider to be the most famous photo in hockey history as Orr flew through the air with his arms extended in celebration of winning the Cup.



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

## The Legend of the Octopus

Hockey is known for having some really weird traditions. None are as weird as the Legend of the Octopus. The legend began in Detroit on April 15, 1952, during the Red Wings' Stanley Cup playoff run. In those days, there were only six teams. In order 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 an octopus from a seafood shop onto the ice—eight legs for eight needed wins. Detroit ended up winning that year, and the octopus was considered good luck. This strange Detroit tradition continued for years. In one 1995 game, fans threw thirty-six octopuses onto the ice. In yet another 1995 playoff game, two fans tossed a 38-pound (17.2 kg) octopus onto the ice. The next year, a 50-pound (22.7 kg) octopus was thrown onto the ice. This crazy tradition continues today!



Wayne Gretzky played in the NHL for twenty years.

## Stanley Cup Dynasty—Edmonton Oilers

The Edmonton Oilers could have been mistaken for an All-Star Team from 1983 to 1990. Led by “The Great One,” Wayne Gretzky (GRET-ski), the team won five Stanley Cups during those years. Gretzky was so dominant that Boston Bruins coach Terry O'Reilly once 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 era were also inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame. Years later, the team was officially awarded **Dynasty** status by the Hockey Hall of Fame for its long string of wins in relatively few years.

## The Best Game You Can Name

Every year, hockey fans from around the world drool over the idea of their favorite NHL team winning the Stanley Cup. For more than a century, players have skated, scored, saved, checked, and fought for the chance to drink from hockey's greatest prize. You never know what will happen in the Stanley Cup playoffs. No matter which team ends up winning the Cup, the true winners are the hockey fans around the world.



Dallas Stars fans cheer on their team at a 2011 game against the Toronto Maple Leafs.

## If Only the Cup Could Talk . . .

The Stanley Cup playoffs are some of the most competitive playoffs in all of sports. It's no wonder that when the winning players finally get their hands on the Cup, they can get awfully excited and silly. In the hundred-plus years of its history, the Stanley Cup has gone through a lot of wacky adventures:

- 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

<b>benched</b> (v.)	kept from playing in a game (p. 11)
<b>check</b> (v.)	to stop or take a hockey puck away from the player in control of it (p. 5)
<b>conference</b> (n.)	a group of sports teams that compete against each other as part of a larger league or group (p. 4)
<b>deficit</b> (n.)	a shortage of something, especially money (p. 11)
<b>dynasty</b> (n.)	a team or family that is successful or influential for a long time (p. 14)
<b>goalie</b> (n.)	a defensive player whose job is to keep the ball or puck from entering his or her team's goal (p. 4)
<b>playoff</b> (n.)	a series of games played after the end of the regular season to determine a champion (p. 4)
<b>puck</b> (n.)	a hard rubber disk in hockey (p. 4)
<b>quarterfinals</b> (n.)	four games in which eight teams compete and the four winners advance to the next stage of a series (p. 8)
<b>semifinals</b> (n.)	two games in which four teams compete and the two winners advance to the next stage of a series (p. 8)
<b>slap shot</b> (n.)	in hockey, a swinging stroke used to hit the puck with a lot of force (p. 4)
<b>sudden death</b> (n.)	an extra period of play added as a tiebreaker after regular play ends, where the first team to score wins (p. 4)

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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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