

NBC Sports Group Media Conference

Monday, July 27, 2020

Eddie Olczyk
Doc Emrick
Patrick Sharp
Brian Boucher
Sam Flood

Press Conference



feed that other broadcasters particularly through the first round will lay their own commentary on top of.

And in Toronto, we've got some NBC producers and directors who will be producing the host feed from there, and back in our Stamford building, we will be adding commentary, graphics and unique elements that make it an NBC show. So we will be doing that to both the feed coming out of Toronto and the host feed coming out of Edmonton.

And then in terms of our announcers, we've got them spread around. We have got talent on site in Toronto, Pierre McGuire about to arrive in Edmonton. Doc Emrick has got the best studio ever created outside Detroit. We can't tell you the exact location; that remains secret. Stamford will have the core of our group, play-by-play and game analysts which will be calling some of the early games from there.

Eventually the majority of the calls will come from inside the buildings. We will have a complete broadcast team in Toronto. We've got Gord Miller on there. John Forslund is on site there. Mike Milbury is traveling in, and he will be on site in Toronto inside the bubble, as will Brian Boucher, and Brian will be inside the glass for a number of games.

We consider it similar to an Olympic experience; that you're all-in. This is a little bit longer than the 17 or 16 days of an Olympics, but the talent group and the production team is ready for an incredible job experience.

Once the second round of the playoffs ends and the entire event moves to Edmonton for the conference finals and finals, we will park a truck from NBC Sports next to the Rogers host feed and supplement that coverage and originate the entire telecast from out of Rogers Centre out there in Edmonton.

I know everyone is going to ask about audio, so I'll get ahead of that. The audio, we will be experimenting as we progress. We think there is incredible sound inside the glass around the boards of a hockey rink. We think there's some colorful language; so the NHL has decided to rightfully put the games on a five-second delay.

But we will be taking advantage of all that incredible audio that comes with hockey. And probably have learned an

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon and thank you for joining us today.

Hockey is back. NBC Sports is thrilled to resume our coverage of the NHL season begins this Saturday. We have more than ten hours of coverage across numerous networks and in a moment, we'll be joined by our NBC Sports NHL commentators for this call, Mike "Doc" Emrick, Eddie Olczyk, Brian Boucher, Patrick Sharp, and the executive producer of NBC Sports, Sam Flood, who will outline some of the unique coverage plans we have for the remainder of the season.

Let's begin with opening remarks. First up, Sam Flood.

SAM FLOOD: We are very excited about this opportunity to cover one of the greatest spectacles in sports, the Stanley Cup Playoffs, and this unique way and the wonderful plan that Gary Bettman and the NHL have put together to allow this season to continue.

The effort that they have put into creating the two bubble cities and creating an opportunity for the season to come to its rightful conclusion with the raising of the Stanley Cup, big tip of the cap to Gary and Bill Daly and the rest of the league leadership. They have done a wonderful job.

Our job now is to tell this great story and to let the world know how much fun it's going to be to have these teams battling it out inside these buildings.

And with the two locations in Toronto and Edmonton, just give you a quick overview of how we are doing this. For the first time ever, there will be a host feed from each building, so in Edmonton, Rogers will produce the host



awful lot watching the Stadium Series and Winter Classic Games with the ice surface isolated from the fans. We realize there's some unique audio we can play with during that, and that gives us a good test of what we can get out of these games.

So it's enhanced audio from inside the glass can be supplemented by some audio EA SPORTSTM has that we will mix in as needed. But we are going to really test and find out what the best balance is and what the best experience is for the viewers as we evolve through this.

Visually, we have got a lot of cameras in these host feeds. There will be up to 30 cameras including a really cool JitaCam that hangs beneath the scoreboard at center ice and gives you a 360-degree view. It can swoop in behind the power play, and there's nothing better than to look at that top of the point position of the power position, and looking in at the goalie, trying to figure out where the puck is going to go in the net. We think that it will be a unique way to look at certain part of the game, and it will also be a fun camera to use in transition.

Sp our directors are excited to have that opportunity to execute with this JitaCam; that along with the audio, and along with what Steve Mayer and the NHL group has done to turn these hockey arenas, which are usually filled with 18- to 20,000 screaming, lunatic passionate hockey fans, they have created a set and a content and a structure that's going to have a feel for each team that's playing in the game.

The audio in terms of PA and in terms of music on goals, the celebrations, will make you feel like you're in the building of a home team that's just scored. So hats off to Steve and his team for making the buildings look remarkable.

And right now, I send it to an undisclosed location, somewhere outside Detroit. Mr. Emrick?

MIKE "DOC" EMRICK: Thank you, Sam. I know that you don't often want to hear praise heaped on executives or entities, but this is a great step, commitment from NBC to me, and I'm excited at the possibility of working on these thrilling games ahead from this location. It is greatly appreciated, and I really appreciate the dedication that they have made to me myself.

But for myself as well as hockey fans, the sun has finally burst through and we've got finalized plans to return to play and skates hitting the ice and athletic heroes in uniforms after we have waited, and applaud the gallant people who have kept us going through this absence and continue to keep us going through a very difficult time.

Seasons in jeopardy because of injury have now changed. Full recovery has enable some athletes to return to their teams and contribute toward going to the Stanley Cup. Jake Guentzel comes to mind. Tarasenko in St. Louis; Rampton in Colorado.

This time some things have changed, not only the time of year, but now 24 teams have a shot, and we have experts on the line to join myself, but it's a dice roll I think with all of those series. The most ever teams in history; they do so in two locations, and try to pick a winner in all of this; I challenge you to do that.

But the great admiration I have is for the players who made this commitment and have all gotten into the bubble and are ready to put on this wonderful show. And you consider the sacrifice that they always make at this time of year, but the additional sacrifices that they are making and the commitment that the league has made to them to cover them, not only them, but their families at this time. That has got to be somewhat difficult, but has enabled them to focus and make this commitment that we are going to be thrilled to Doc.

With that, I will pass it on across the turf and across the ice to Mr. O.

EDDIE OLCZYK: Thank you very much, Doc. Great to be with everybody. Thank you for joining us.

Well, here we go. Hard to believe that the puck's going to drop for real here this coming Saturday. And really looking forward to wearing a couple of different hats for our great team at NBC, whether it be in studio working in the studio or calling games from the studio and then myself, working my way to one of the bubbles.

I'm really looking forward to getting back and seeing some familiar faces, masked up hopefully, and looking forward to calling the greatest game in the world -- by the league, the leadership of the Commissioner, Mr. Bettman, Bill Daly the deputy commissioner, the Board of Governors, the Players Association -- inaudible -- not just our leadership, but by our boss, Sam Flood at NBC, to be a part of this.

And I'm sure it will be documented hopefully here once we get into this thing of really what this thing is entailed, and just seeing a little bit and talking to a few people of what they have got going on in Edmonton and Toronto; I will say historic to get to this stage and get to this and get the Stanley Cup presented in September or early October, which doesn't roll off the tongue like normal, but what is normal about what we are all going through here in 2020.



So just an amazing job by many, many men and women, both in front of the camera and behind the scenes. It's going to be a pretty incredible, enjoyable time to see NHL hockey.

Interesting thing for me, two things that come to mind is -- and I just relate it to when I was a player, and that was a very, very long time ago. I played in an era where there were best-of-fives in the NHL playoffs, and the one thing I remember vividly is an 18-year-old or a 19-year-old playing in those five-game series, and that's what we have in the qualifying rounds.

We will have eight series where Game 1 -- I'm not going to say it's a must, but I'm going to say it's an m-u-s, and I'm getting ready to cross the t. Game 1 will be absolutely pivotal in those play-ins to try to get to the first round of this tournament. We haven't had competitive hockey in a long time. We understand that. Everybody is playing from the same deck.

But I think it's going to be just incredible to watch how those things develop and how these series develop.

The players, I think it will be entertaining. Doc mentioned it. He kind of touched on it, being a handicapper for our horse racing team at NBC in the Kentucky Derby right around the corner on the first Saturday in September, it is wide open.

Look, if you can get -- Doc, as we talk about all the time, if you have goaltending, you've got a shot. If you get goaltending, if you can stay hockey healthy, and obviously the most important thing is stay away from the virus; you've got a shot. And I think that teams and managers and organizations that I've spoken with feel, "Why not us?" Like, "Why not us?"

What team, who does it favor? I don't know. I don't know if Sharpy or Bouch has an opinion on who he thinks it favors more, but it's unknown and I think that's why it's going to be the best reality TV that you could possibly ask for coming up here in this Saturday when we drop the puck for real.

So I think the five-game series is going to be just incredible theatre, and we will see who gets off to a good start, and plenty of storylines, and I'm just looking forward to being a very small part of our great team at NBC.

From my basement in Chicago to the bubble, I believe, if I'm allowed to disclose that, you know what, Bouch, I already did. How you doing, buddy?

BRIAN BOUCHER: I'm doing great, buddy, thank you,

although I am inside the bubble here in Toronto. I'm at the Royal York Fairmont. The accommodations are nice. It's been a bit more busy since the team showed up yesterday and there seems to be some life. There seems to be some energy around the hotel.

I made a visit to the arena the other day before the team showed up. Looked like there was a lot of energy there. A lot of moving parts, and I tell you, the work that has been done by the National Hockey League to pull this off, it's nothing short of a miracle.

I will say, it's been a difficult four-plus months for everybody. I can speak for myself; it's been hard. Mostly mentally. I've been healthy physically but just emotionally and mentally, it's been a real grind, and I can say that I'm really grateful and I'm really thankful to be here today, and I'm so excited to be here for the next two months to be talking about hockey.

You know, I'm so tired of talking about what's going on in the news that I just look forward to focusing on the teams, the players, the game and seeing this season -- seeing it finish out, and that to me is what's really exciting. I think it's going to be a unique challenge, no doubt. Winning the Stanley Cup this year, I think is going to be the hardest of any year. I don't know how you start from zero and go to 60 like this. We've seen some evidence of it in the past where we've had World Cups of Hockey and Canada Cups and some of those tournaments have provided some of the greatest drama we've had in our game.

So I'm confident that these players will be able to rise to the occasion. But it's going to be -- it's going to be interesting to see how it does play out, and to answer maybe one of the questions that you posed -- because I've thought about this: Who has the advantage and who is going to be in it?

I think the goaltenders are going to have a tough time at the start, and the reason why I say that is because I can think back to when I was getting back on the ice as a player in late July, early August, and how much of a struggle it was and how much of an advantage I felt like the shooters had over me, and the timing and fighting through traffic.

You get into practices and yet in those practices or skates with your teammates, it was never about playing defense. It was about just trying to score goals. I found as a goaltender, it was a frustrating time of year.

Not until did we get to November or December when teams started to buy into paying defense, did I start to find enjoyment in playing, because finally you felt like teams



were -- your teammates were buying into defending and it was less about scoring goals and more about trying to find ways to win.

So I think initially, it's going to be hard on the goaltenders, and I think the teams that have the young, offensive talent, I think that will be the first to come back more than anything. It will come back quicker than it will for the goaltenders, which might make for some great drama. We might have a lot of goals scored. We might have a lot of chances just because defensive assignments are missed, but I think it will be exciting.

But I think eventually these guys will buckle down, they will find a way to defend and they will find a way to get in shooting lanes, even if it does hurt because they know there's a lot on the line.

And I think the other thing that will be interesting in these playoffs, because you talked about the health. I think the length of those rosters this year, you're going to have more guys that are going to play a role in helping their team win a Stanley Cup this year than we would have seen in years past, whether it's from physical injury or perhaps God forbid catching the virus. I just feel like there's going to be more players with the length of the rosters that are going to have an opportunity to contribute and really be a part of winning the Stanley Cup.

Whereas before, maybe if you were on the outside looking in on the practice squad, you were part of it, but you didn't really feel like you were part of it.

I feel like this year it's going to be a lot different and I look forward to these next two months, seeing the drama unfold, and I'm just so grateful and thankful that I can be a part of it.

So that's all I have to say. I'll pass it on to Patrick Sharp. I don't know where he's at. He's got about 15 different homes, so I don't know where he's at those days. Sharpy, take it away.

PATRICK SHARP: All right, I appreciate that, thank you. I'm on the East Coast myself. State of Connecticut with the family on lockdown.

And Bouch, it was interesting to hear you talk about the goaltenders timing being off and how some guys might struggle early on. That's what you looked like when I was shooting at you over the years. Your timing just didn't keep up to my shot.

As far as the league starting up, I'm jacked and pumped to get out of the house. I know my wife is excited that I can

direct my energy back toward the sport of hockey instead of rearranging the furniture in each and every room in the house and annoying her in different ways.

My hockey helmet -- as my guy Ed Ville (ph) likes to say to the League, the leadership of the NHLPA for getting together, not only the logistics of this tournament put together, but hammering out a few more years of that CBA on both sides, and I just can't explain how excited I am to be back in the studio covering some hockey.

As far as what we are going to see, I'm like everybody else. I've got my opinions and my guesses, but nobody really knows. I favor teams that have youth, that have speed that play wide open hockey and put an emphasis on speed and skill. I think they are going to be tough to keep up with in these early qualifying rounds.

But at the same time I look at certain teams with coaches that get the most out of their players; that their details will be on point right from the start, will be good defensively. Those will be teams that are tough to play against. We'll see how much the physicality comes into play.

I look back at the last playoff games I saw, and it was St. Louis, Boston and the Stanley Cup final and that was as physical and as fast and as angry and highly skilled hockey as I've seen.

Now the buildings were both rocking at that point. Playoff hockey was going nuts. I'm excited to see how quick the players can get to that level of intensity with all that they are going through off the ice.

So I'm excited to be a part of it. NBC has been huge in my life. It's been a new team for me to join since retiring from the National Hockey League. It's my second go-round with the Stanley Cup Playoffs, and I couldn't be more happy to get things underway.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you to the team there. Great opening remarks. Now we will open it up for questions from the press.

MIKE "DOC" EMRICK: You can tell four and a half months have passed. Our opening remarks were really long, weren't they. We're cranked up. We want to get at it.

Q. Do you know in what round you will start being on site and in the meantime, what do you look for from the challenge both logistically and in terms of the energy level of calling games from a studio by yourself?

MIKE "DOC" EMRICK: I actually practiced some this

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

morning with the group in Stamford, and they felt it was comparable to what we had. We practice in Game 7 of last year's Stanley Cup Final.

I think the access to information and all else will be similar to what they have in Stamford. The monitor size, etc., I think is going to be the same, if not comparable, and so I've been set up really well.

I've not looked that far into the future just now. I'm looking at day-to-day and I'm going to do a practice period tomorrow during Pittsburgh-Philadelphia and then my first game is Islanders-Rangers on Wednesday, the exhibition game.

So all of this exciting. I have done monitor-only games before, so that is not new. It's just something that hasn't happened in recent years. Pierre and I did a game that involved the Los Angeles Kings in Sweden, one of those early-season games that was done from Europe. We did that in Stamford working off a table and a couple of monitors then.

There is an adjustment to it, but it is the same game and we are seeing it on really clear screens. So we'll just do our best to bring the game to people.

It will be exciting and I'm sure I'll be jazzed up about bringing emotion to it. I think just watching the game will do that. Otherwise, I can't predict how all of that will be, but I'm pretty excited about the possibility, I'll tell you that.

Q. Just to be clear, is the plan for you to be in Edmonton for the final?

MIKE "DOC" EMRICK: I don't know. A lot of this is just right now. I'll let Sam address that as time passes here. Right now I'm just going from this to see how things work out right now.

Q. I know you talked about the one camera doing for scoreboard, any other angles that had been new in Toronto and Edmonton? I think on the NHL presentation there was talk about a JitaCam in the stands?

SAM FLOOD: The JitaCam is the one that we are talking about. That's the jib that hangs below the scoreboard. That's the big Detroit -- we have all the robotic cameras we need, some in new positions, just experimenting how down low you can cut the game a little differently.

As we all know in the game of hockey, it's not where the puck is, but it's where it can go next just so we make sure we don't lose perspective for the audience.

Q. Is this almost like sports nirvana for you the next couple of months with the amount of summer races and now the hockey playoffs going on?

EDDIE OLCYZK: Well, it's going to be hot and heavy, I know that. It's going to be more pucks than ponies for the next five weeks, and hopefully if we can pull it off, I think still to be determined what my role will be with our horse racing team at NBC for the first Saturday in September for the run for the roses at Churchill Downs in Louisville on that first Saturday.

At this time of year, look, when you have hockey and horse racing going on, I'm a happy human. It's going to be a lot of fun. As I think you can tell, and I think Doc touched on it, too, there, but in Sharpy's voice and Bruce's voice and Sam and hopefully in mine is, I think we all know what is going on in the real world. Like we understand what the real world is.

But we have an opportunity here to entertain, to tell people what we see, whether it's in Doc's undisclosed location outside of Detroit, or me in-studio from a smaller studio calling a game there with Doc, or standing next to Sharpy in the studio, we're hopefully going to be there to entertain, do what we love to do, hopefully we do it really well, and just really looking forward to seeing some familiar faces here in the next couple of days.

I know there's going to be great energy and a lot of excitement, but I'm just looking forward to being part of it and then hopefully get a chance to be part of our Derby coverage come early September.

Q. A goalie question for Brian. Brian touched on it a little bit, about the pressure on a goalie coming back after a layoff. Curious, how does that change in this specific time, goalies not seeing pucks in a lot of cases for several months and then having to come back and see them in the heat of the playoffs, and then you're in the bubble, I don't know how much you've walked around or been able to see but what does it look like from a goalie's perspective? Usually you're expecting to see fans and such. How do you see goalies adjusting to the new look of the arena inside?

BRIAN BOUCHER: I'll answer the second part first. The NHL has done a great job of taking the empty seats away; so it gives you a different deal when you're inside the arena. I always felt it was different as a goaltender when you went to the big arenas and had your morning skate. Nobody was in the building.

Just had a different feeling in there and then when the fans

were in the building, it felt like it was tighter. It felt like there was obviously the energy. But the one thing that I'm a little curious about is they have got these LED screens that are behind the benches, probably about 20, 25 rows up, I would say, and plus there's a stage over there. You know, what type of lighting will be there and will that -- will this be manage that the goaltenders have to get used to or will it not be displaying anything while play is going on. I think it will be a little bit of a unique challenge for the goaltenders, different sight lines. I'm not saying it's going to throw guys in games off, but it's going to take a little bit of an adjustment.

And it sounds to me like the exhibition games may not have everything that we are going to see from what I'm understanding, not everything that we are going to see on August 1, but maybe enough to give these goaltenders a look-see into what it's going to be like.

Because keep in mind, they are not doing any morning skates at this building and they are doing them all at the Ford Performance Centre, the first time they see this building is when they step on the ice for warmup in that exhibition game.

As far as the goaltenders and the challenges right now, the difference is, when you come back in August, and you start skating and you get to camp in September, just the level of urgency and the importance of the games, you just know it's not the same. It's not a playoff game. And this right here, the guys -- inaudible -- he's been a part of playing for team Finland in the past, maybe anybody that's been a part of the World Cup, they can really lean on that experience of having to get to some pretty intense hockey right away.

This is hard for goaltenders. It's not about taking shots and down the wing. It's about having to fight through traffic. Having to kill penalties at key parts of the game. That takes some reps to get into it.

So it's going to be a challenge for these guys. And the other thing, too, is what do the coaches do if they feel their goaltender is not on their A Game in a best-of-five series. The hook may be there a lot quicker than it typically would be because the coaches simply have to find a guy that can do the job.

I think there's a lot of pressure on those goaltenders right off the hop. I'm so curious to see which are the ones, which are the guys that can rise to the occasion.

Q. The Lightning have knocking on the door for a number of years. From your perspective, what would be an aspect of their game that would be important for the Lightning if they want to make that run to get over

the hump this year in these playoffs?

EDDIE OLCYZK: You know, I think for Tampa, I mean, they are a team, at least when I look at them, incredible goaltending. A little bit of everything on the back end there from size and mobility and experience, and then when you look up front, I mean, a lot of depth. They have got some guys that have some size, and I think they have got some -- I think they have got some bite.

I like the addition of Coleman because he brings a lot of speed and he's got a little bit of bite to his game and he can finish.

But at the end of the day, you've got to find a way and you've got to be able to overcome adversity, when you're down in a game or down in a series; are you a favorite to pull it off and they are certainly good enough.

I can't speak for Bouch or Sharpy, but certainly they are good enough to get it done, and they need their big guys to step it the forefront. I know Stamkos there was banged up a little bit there, but looks like he's going to be a goal.

They have an opportunity to play a couple of seeding games here to get situated and get their timing back and everything else and be interesting to see if a lot of those coaches, if everybody plays in all three of those seeding games.

And is it importantly important to be the No. 1 seed? Look, I don't know, this year is so unpredictable, but you might have an opportunity where maybe you do rest a guy maybe one or two of the games. If I was a player, I certainly with want to play in all three to get my timing up to speed.

But for me I think it comes down to the big guys stepping to the forefront and doing what they are expected to do, whether it's Stamkos or Kucherov and a guy like Victor Hedman.

For me, Tampa, I would be surprised if they were not around towards the end of the bubble in Toronto and working their way to Edmonton? I certainly would be surprised if they are not, but that's how close it is and the parity in the League. To me you've just got to get it done. Enough talking, and you've got to figure it out.

BRIAN BOUCHER: I look at who is going to be successful coming out of this break and there's a couple things that need to happen in these playoff rounds.

One, your goaltender needs to be good. They have arguably the best goaltender in the league in Vasilevskiy. I

love how he competes and gives his team a chance to win.

Power plays are going to be real important in the playoffs. We hear that every playoff season, how important special teams are. Tampa has a pretty dangerous power play. And the last one is the coaching, the details, the physicality. Are these guys going to bring the heat right from the start of the playoffs, and I think they will, because of what happened last year.

If we go back to March, and I know we can't really look at the last 70 games of regular season hockey. It is a new season going into these playoffs, but I do feel like there is something to prove in Tampa Bay. They have guts down the middle. They have got three nice defensive pairing units. They have star power that should be motivated. I think they are definitely a dangerous team to watch in the Eastern Conference.

PATRICK SHARP: Going along with what I said in my opening remark, teams with offense and skill are going to be the ones that get off to good starts, and this is a team that I'm referring to in Tampa.

I agree; Vasilevskiy just may be the best goaltender in the National Hockey League. I think this team has everything it needs. They added the grit that's needed in Coleman and Maroon in the off-season, also Goudre. These are important decisions to their club, and I think makes them more playoff ready and I think they have a chip on their shoulder from last year.

The other thing, too, is that they don't have a Columbus Blue Jackets that are preparing for them for a playoff series right now like last year. They are in a Round Robin. Nobody knows who is going to get the Tampa Bay Lightning when the dust settles here in a week.

But one thing that's for sure: If what I say, that offense is going to reign supreme to start, this team has it all but they have also added the pieces that's needed to give them playoff success and a top-notch goaltender. I think this has got to be the favorite to come out of the Eastern Conference.

EDDIE OLCYZK: One more thing if I could to piggyback, I think for the whole tournament, is the coaches that have the conviction to play the guys that are going, now, you may have an Anthony Cirelli or a Maroon that are really going, and maybe the big guys, it's taken them awhile.

But you know what, like you can't have any lips on the ice. Like you've got to tighten up your belt and you've got to be ready to go when your coach taps you on the shoulder. That goes right across. It's the coaches that can have the

feel of who is going, in these series, and the qualifier and into the round one, because look, you're going to need, we know, you need many players and you're going to need guys that step up.

But what coaches see and feel when you have got third-line guys or fourth-line guys that are going and maybe you give them a little bit more ice time. You can't have your star players or the guys that you lean on all of a sudden be looking over their shoulder -- like enough. It's got to be all-in and if you play 12 minutes or 18 or 35, that's what your coach is asking to you do and he's going to have to answer for it if you are playing this player more than that guy or whatever.

If he's going, you've got to play him because it's -- and especially in those qualifies rounds and I know Tampa is not in that, but I think you understand where I'm going with this is that this is new, it's not normal, but this is the new normal to start the playoffs.

And if you have got guys that are going and playing that aren't the big guys, you know what, get going and you'll be out there. So I think that's something to keep an eye on. Coaches can see that, feel that and have the conviction to go ahead and play those guys a little bit more than maybe most people think they think should.

But you know what, at the end of the day, it's only about one thing: Winning or losing, and that's the only thing. And we'll see who steps up when it comes to that part of the game.

Nice to speak to you in witness protection.

MIKE "DOC" EMRICK: Oh, you did research my pat.

Q. I'd like to you describe the Doc Emrick bubble; can you describe a little bit physically the layout that you're going to be working in to do these games?

MIKE "DOC" EMRICK: The chair I'm sitting at has a table on the front. Monitors on the left and right. I would guess that they are about 30 inches diagonal and the one on the left is the one that I'll be receiving the game from. The one on the right will be for occasional isolations of my broadcast partners.

So I'll be able to see them rather than -- normally we will be getting -- we will signal each other if I am sitting next to Eddie after 14 years, we kind of learned body language signals to each other when one needs to get in. But I may have isolations of them, as well as replays that will show coming back from commercial just like they would if I were in the arena or if I were in Stamford where some of the

other announcers would be.

Directly in front of me is a small iPad which also doubles as the camera for any brief on-cameras as a laptop, and on the laptop they are able to show me graphics or cards that I would read that are promotional announcements, etc.

So there's a small audio mixer that would have my headset, microphone patched into it, as well as a mic that pins to my blazer. So I would have two different folk mines in case one went down and the microphone pinned to the blazer is for the on-camera and the headset mic is for broadcasting the game.

So it's very compact. It is very comfortable. I've had some practice with it. We'll do some more practice tomorrow. And currently, they are on one big monitor, they are showing, again, the first period of Game 7 of the Bruins and Blues from last year. I'm able to watch all of the games on that monitor, too, in case I get an urge to practice some more.

Q. Sounds like more technology than you had with the Port Huron flags.

MIKE "DOC" EMRICK: Yes, they are trying to forget those days here.

Q. The technology that you're introducing, it's obviously going to provide viewers with an entirely new look at hockey. We will have never seen anything like this. When hockey returns to its conventional fashion, when we start filling arenas again and fans are actually packing in, how much of this technology are you able to keep and how much is a one-off because you have empty buildings to work in? Can you keep some of the technology and bring it forward?

SAM FLOOD: We are cautiously optimistic that we can keep the new toys, particularly the JitaCam. The league is going to get comfortable with it in play and since it's beneath the scoreboard, I don't think it will be a distraction to the fans because it will never block the puck on the ice.

So over time, we think it's something that could evolve. Obviously there's a cost involved, but for big series like the Stanley Cup Final, it might be something you incorporate in shows like that.

In terms of the audio, being on a five-second delay and putting microphones on players and inside the glass area, you'll get some pretty unique sounds, but we do know there will be some words that Doc knows not to use on television.

Q. How much has the network's Olympic history and pedigree helped you in spinning this up and feeling like you can do it? I mean, doing remote shows like this has been part of the Olympics for a while. Did that help you in anyway for making this feel like something you guys could accomplish?

SAM FLOOD: Hundred percent, our Olympic structure and system and leadership both in the production and technical side has given us a roadmap on how to execute here. There are lessons that we've learned through the years.

Things have evolved, like what we are doing now, graphics no longer traveling to a lot of our hockey games, that execution was already in place.

So as we had new ways to be efficient and also to be smart about how we allocate our resources, we are able to execute at new levels, and thankfully the Olympic Team has broken a lot of barriers there. Going all the way back to 1996 when the tape room for the Olympics was at 30 Rockefeller Plaza, and the control room for those Olympics was in Atlanta, Georgia.

It's just so forward thinking, Dave and his team, they get you way ahead of the game and now Tommy and his team have helped put everything in place for this series.

Q. What do you think of Philadelphia's chances they were arguably the best team in the NHL the stoppage occurred, so what do you think of Philly's chances and what do you think their strengths and weaknesses are as this tournament begins?

PATRICK SHARP: I'm excited about Philly's chances. They are a team that, boy, were they clicking on all cylinders going back to February and March, hottest team in the National Hockey League, well-deserved bye in the first round if we want to call it that.

I think Oskar is going to give them a little bit of inspiration, the three-year contract, him being around the guys again. That's been an inspiring story for everybody across hockey, and it's a matter of recapturing that hunger, to me. They are a team that when I watched them play, their bottom six forwards really had an impact on the game. Interchanged six to eight guys on that bottom group, but every night it was one of those guys chipping in with the goal, it was being tenacious on the forecheck. It was being good on the penalty kill with final minutes to play. Takes a lot of pressure off the big boys in Philadelphia and we know who they are.

Philly is a dangerous team, but I need to preface that by saying: I don't know what's going to happen coming out of

this thing. It's a whole new season. These guys have been off for a long time. Some of these young kids in the League can change their bodies over four and half months. They can gain confidence. They can come back as new players, and having said that, I'm just really excited to see how it all plays out.

BRIAN BOUCHER: I think the addition of Kevin Hayes has been huge for this club. He's a guy that plays on both sides, and I think that's important. Beg down the middle but with contribute offensively.

I think he's been maybe better than what people would have anticipated. Maybe the length of his deal a little long. There's not doubt about that, but that doesn't matter for this year's playoffs. He's been great for this team and I think his energy in the room has helped.

The additions of Niskanen, Braun in the back end have solidified their back end. That's important. Sharpy talked about the bottom six. I think a guy like Scott who is a former first round pick, he's a guy who is starting to find a role on this team and really being a big part of it, and he's a big part of that bottom six.

To me, you talk about the stars of the team, Giroux and Voracek, they have been here a long time, but the emerging star on this team is Sean Couturier on that top line. He's been fantastic and a big reason why they have had success. Don't discredit Alain Vigneault and what he's been able to do, accountability is huge. Respect in that room is huge. I'm not so sure that it was there with the prior staff, and I think Alain Vigneault comes in, I think guys respect him and know he's been in the League a long time. He's been to the Stanley Cup finals a couple of times, and guys know that, okay, this is a guy that means business. He holds them accountable. That's important.

The big question mark for me, and he's got a bright future, but he's going to turn 22 here in August. Carter Hart is going to be a great goaltender in the National Hockey League. The question will be can he perform, right here, right now, and if he can, there's no reason why Philly can't feel like they should be a team that could do it. They could have a chance to be the team.

But to me, it a question mark. It's a fair question mark. I think he's going to be a great goaltender. It's just that he's 21, 22 years old and we'll have to see how it plays out. They should feel just as confident as any team in the East.

EDDIE OLCYZK: Regardless if this was April or August, a very dangerous team, again, the unknown of coming off the four-month pause. But both Sharpy and Bouch touched on all the important parts of this team.

But I really think getting, bringing in Braun and Niskanen really helped solidify this back end here, I really do. I think it's taken some pressure off, especially a guy like Provorov who had a tough time last season, and then those guys show up and obviously year before that, he was sensational.

I think I said that I think at one time during one of the broadcasts they did a couple Flyer games in a short period of time. You know, this guy is moving and playing like a Norris Trophy winner here. That's how good Provorov was two seasons ago and last year -- again, it happens. Young players.

But Chuck and his staff, Chuck Fletcher, they brought in some veteran guys there and I don't think you can underestimate enough that staff that they had behind the bench with the experience.

The one thing with Alain Vigneault is his teams in my opinion, for the most part, have always over-achieved, and I think there's something to that, and consistency when you look at -- and Sharpy played against those teams in Vancouver forever. They were always prepared and seemed to play a little bit better or maybe a little higher on the totem pole than maybe people thought that they could and I think it starts with AV there.

So really interesting to see them, and I think they are a dangerous team. They were a dangerous team for me in March, and in April, and that's not going to change here. So it will be interesting to see how they do in the seeding games and go from there.

Q. After all the years doing this, I feel there's this body and mind rhythm of covering a season, and I'm really feeling that's disrupted now. So I'm wondering if you guys feel it, and if so, do you think the players will feel it? And lastly, do you think the viewers are also going to be, lack of a better word, challenged to deal with hockey in July and August and in September?

EDDIE OLCYZK: I don't think viewers will be at all.

MIKE "DOC" EMRICK: I don't think Eddie and I will be challenged that much. If there's any kind of rust at all, it will probably rub off pretty quickly with all the games that we are going to be exposed to, either as viewers ourselves or as participants.

The fans have gotten into other competitions in the middle of the summer, international series of various kinds. And the one that stand out in my mind a lot is the one of '96, which had a fanatical following, too. But I think this is --

Patrick Kane's quote, "This is March Madness."

And I think that the commitment that the athletes are making and the competition that we are going to see is going to wind up involving people just like the Stanley Cup would in the springtime.

Yes, there are people that are going to have other things to do, but I think that the word-of-mouth and the social media are going to spread rather quickly with the intensity of the performances that we are going to see.

I don't think Eddie and I are going to miss a whole lot. He's probably going to give me a hard time about the Pirates, and I'm going to give him a hard time about some of his picks when the Derby comes around in September.

EDDIE OLCYZK: I think that it's up to us to sell and engage our fans, and the fans of the National Hockey League, to understand that, look, this is -- I talked about the unknown of the qualifying round. To me, like it really is.

Like this is -- it's up for grabs because players and teams and coaches will react differently, and you know, I just really believe that our fans are just absolutely, you know, just wanting to see hockey again. We're going to give it to them, and it's up for us, whether it's inside the bubble as Bouch is right there now, and eventually I'll get there, or calling a game from a monitor and working with Doc.

Look, we're going to work it out. We've worked long enough together where I think I really believe that we'll be able to have the same cadence and symmetry once we get through a game or two and I think it will just be like we're sitting right -- I don't think anybody will notice, really, to be honest with you.

Now, for us, it's a little different viewing, selfishly, as you know, being in the buildings and the garden where you have -- you're sitting up top in the press box and you're able to see and you see things developed and what have you.

We're going to be following the puck when we are calling it off the monitor, so I mean, that's going to be challenging at times, but you know, that will be my job to pick up things that are behind the play or to draw attention to.

But I think for us, that's just going to be the adrenaline and energy of calling the greatest game in the world and working for the team that we do at NBC is just going to be a lot of fun to entertain people. There's challenges, but that's -- we know what's going on in the real world and we're going to try to entertain the hockey fans, and to know that we are going to be on all day, as Patrick Kane said, it's

going to be up and down. We're going to have games going on.

The logistics part of it, there are going to be some games where you could have multi overtime games going on during the course of the day, and when you're expecting to drop the puck at a certain time, that may be a little bit later than normal because there's only one ice sheet, and you might be following a double or triple overtime game. Your game may start three or four hours later.

It's the hand that everybody's been dealt and we'll be calling it, whether it's at noon Eastern or maybe at midnight we'll be there, and we'll be calling it and looking forward to the challenge and bringing the greatest game in the world to the fans, and that will be a lot of fun and hopefully take people away from the real world for a period of time.

MIKE "DOC" EMRICK: Who knows, up in New England, you may have a Stanley Cup race with a goaltender that started with a fractured finger in the playoffs.

They were experimenting with officials having whistles with no "t" inside the whistle. I don't know what that will sound like, but that's one of the things I'm going to listen to to see whether they actually use those or not. Coaches wearing masks; how many are going to do that? Will they all do it? The Hurricanes had a team picture where everybody in the team picture this year was wearing a mask. Ian Cole started his playoff beard in October. If Colorado wins, it will be a year old. I wonder if it will be down to his waist by then.

These are the questions that America might be asking as we get further along, and then again, they may not care at all. It's all the fun of getting into this.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much. That wraps up our call today.

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