

NBC Sports Group Media Conference

Friday, September 18, 2020

Mike Emrick
Eddie Olczyk
Brian Boucher
Pierre McGuire
Sam Flood

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, everyone, for joining us today for our conference call to preview Game 1 of the Stanley Cup Final between the Dallas Stars and the Tampa Bay Lightning. Game 1 airs tomorrow night, Saturday, 7:30 p.m. eastern following NBC's coverage of the U.S. Open.

Joining us for our call today is NBC Sports executive producer Sam Flood and our crew, Mike "Doc" Emrick, Eddie Olczyk, Brian Boucher, and Pierre McGuire.

Let's begin with opening remarks from Sam Flood.

SAM FLOOD: Thanks, everyone, for joining us today. We are really excited this Stanley Cup Final is even happening.

After all the craziness and madness of this past year, to have the NHL pull this off and create these two bubbles in Toronto and then in Edmonton and have it all work so seamlessly and have these thousands and thousands of tests with no positives is just a tribute to Gary Bettman, Bill Daly and his leadership team for getting us to this point.

I also think it's remarkable the sacrifice that people in the NHL, the players and the teams, as well as our production and engineering team, who have left their families for these long stretches. Three production people have been there since day one, which is in late July, Steve Greenberg, Jenny Glazer, and James Stewart.

They started in the Toronto bubble and shifted up to the Edmonton bubble, and Pierre has been in Edmonton. I believe he is now paying taxes in Edmonton, and Brian Boucher has doubled up starting in Toronto and he moved up to Edmonton. Again, he's paying taxes in two Canadian cities now.



And then Eddie "short-timer" Olczyk got to Edmonton a little bit later than the rest since he was chasing the horses and some other things along the way. It's remarkable what everyone has been willing to sacrifice for this game, for the NHL to bring some incredible hockey.

The level of hockey has been through the roof, and some on our engineering side have missed their children's first steps, have missed moments in their lives with their families as school in some cases resumes, and that commitment and dedication to be there to bring this product to everyone in this country is a real tip of the cap to them.

I thank them for that commitment, and I also thank Doc Emrick for calling the games at a level that makes it special every time you turn on a game, and last night was no exception, listening to him bring the drama of an overtime thriller once again to homes across the country.

It's just a blast to listen, a blast to watch, and I'm really proud and thankful for all the people that have committed so much to make this such a special Stanley Cup Final, one that will never be forgotten, and it starts tomorrow night with a final and Doc at the helm guiding our team. Doc, take it away.

MIKE EMRICK: I thank all of you and everyone who has made the sacrifice to enable me to have a studio that is a great deal away from where all of this happens and to be able to still be a part of this.

And to still have the excitement that did not enable me to sleep a lot after that overtime win last night, because it was less than 12 hours ago that I got to see and maybe you share with me what makes me so grateful to be around this sport. Because we saw six games and we saw all those blocked shots and fights and misconducts and a suspension, and yet brilliant goaltending, and the last two games that had nearly a combined 250 hits but both needed overtime, and the scores were both 2-1.

And then because of those 100 percent COVID tests in eight weeks of bubble that Sam alluded to, among 24 different teams, and for a week before they even arrived at the bubble they were taking tests every day in their cities and coming and going from their homes, and the tests



were still perfect. So there was nothing to worry about.

When the final goal was scored last night by Anthony Cirelli and then a handshake line was formed and then the sincere congratulations of one team to another after they were in heavy collisions just 90 seconds earlier, it just makes you proud.

I'm honored to be able to watch athletes like this because they're so committed to a team sport, and I know it's almost heresy to say it at this time of year; they've been paid all the money that they get during the course of the season. That's in their regular season -- they've been paid for that.

It's just a small bonus that they're doing all this for. They came from 13 different countries back and entered training camp again for a second time, and they are doing all of this and putting on this marvelous show.

I'm so glad they can. I don't know how they do what they do, but I'm so glad they can and that I can share microphones with people that do understand because they played, too, including for the 14th Stanley Cup Final together with Eddie Olczyk.

Eddie, you go, man.

EDDIE OLCZYK: Thanks. You know, Sam said it absolutely perfectly and echoed by Doc; the incredible leadership by the National Hockey League, commissioner, Mr. Bettman, Bill Daly, the Board of Governors, everybody involved with the ownership group and then the Players' Association, the Return to Play Committee to get to this stage, and then on our side, the leadership of Sam to put everybody in place and to have a plan and to go out and execute and accept the roles given, regardless if it's been people in the bubble, outside the bubble, people joining the bubble, and people making it work.

It's been an incredible team effort, and to be a very smart part of it is just incredible. And to think about where we are, because there's no greater trophy to win in all of professional sports, and whether it's in late May or early June or in, as oddly as it sounds to say, trying to win a Stanley Cup in late September, the journey, the excitement level is on par.

Just being in the building, understanding it is different, but also understanding that when that puck is in play and there is nothing normal for any of us currently, it seems normal to myself, and that is incredible by these athletes and these teams and the dedication and the understanding of what's going on. It's been just great to be a part of.

On the hockey side, I'm not surprised to see the Dallas

Stars and the Tampa Bay Lightning in a Stanley Cup Final.

The teams that they've played to get to this stage past the pause -- I mean, everybody thought to start, and even at the start of the year and then starting the bubbles because Tampa, Vegas, Colorado, Boston, everybody had those teams at the forefront.

And you look at Dallas, look at who they've had to play to get to this stage. And Tampa, coming off of last season, going up against Columbus right out of the chute, taking on Boston, being able to take care of the Islanders, who just incredibly found ways and played a certain way and was a tough out for Tampa.

So not surprised at all to see these two teams prior to the pause and then after the pause being able to go after the greatest trophy in all of professional sports, and looking forward to doing the game tomorrow night. I get the opportunity instead of passing the puck to Brian Boucher, I'm going to go let a little forehand/backhand to our expert goaltender on our broadcast.

Bouch, take it away.

BRIAN BOUCHER: Thanks, Edzo. Both you guys said it perfectly. For me, I feel incredibly grateful to be a part of this whole historic event, truthfully. I never imagined that we'd ever do this, ever be in a situation like this. I don't hope that we ever have to be in a situation like this ever again, but the fact that I've been able to be here has been -- it's really been humbling, and I'm truly grateful for it.

I'm thankful to the National Hockey League and Gary Bettman and Bill Daly for their leadership with getting this done, the NHLPA, the players, the commitment that they've put forth to provide the excitement that they have to NBC Sports, for giving me the opportunity to do this.

I can't say enough for all of the work that has been put in to make this as smooth as possible. I just feel honored to be here.

From the players' standpoint, I think they deserve a lot of credit for what has taken place. Everybody talks about this asterisk, about winning the Stanley Cup this year, and I just can't understand the logic behind that. I mean, to me it's an exclamation mark.

Fans are so important to the game of hockey, and the fact that there are no fans in the stands is a huge hole. It's a huge void for the players. I know that speaking from experience, the energy that I gathered from whether you're playing on the road or at home, it's such a big part of what playoff hockey is, and the fact that we don't have the fans and the fact that the players have managed to create the



energy on a nightly basis to me is nothing short of remarkable.

These guys, these athletes deserve all the credit in the world for what they have been able to do, and these are two very deserving teams to be in the final. I think Dallas has done a terrific job of finding a way through the adversity of a coaching change during the regular season, to losing their starting goaltender, to maybe a lack of scoring from some of their better players.

To still find themselves in a position to potentially win a Stanley Cup is tremendous.

And for Tampa to finally find a way to battle through a situation where they had to go through a team that put them out of the Playoffs a year ago, and to have the mental strength and fortitude to do that and believe in themselves and finally play to their potential. I think it's going to be a terrific final. I can't wait to start tomorrow night, and I think it's going to bring a lot of drama. So I'm looking forward to it, and I'm thankful to be here.

I'll now try to throw a forehand soft pass over to Pierre McGuire and see if he can catch that pass.

Pierre, take it away.

PIERRE MCGUIRE: Thanks a lot, Brian. Perfect tape to tape. You know, unique time in the world's history and an amazing time for the first National Hockey League in terms of its history. I've been in the bubble here since July 27th in Edmonton, and I can tell you that every single day has been unique and really enlightening, and it makes you very proud to be part of the NHL community, of which I've been part of for 32 years.

To see the exponential growth in some of the younger players, especially on the Dallas Stars when you look at a player like Miro Heiskanen and what he's been able to do over the course of this tournament has been phenomenal. That's not to discount what Shea Theodore did with the Vegas Golden Knights or to see what Nathan MacKinnon did with the Colorado Avalanche.

The entire run to the final here in the west has been phenomenal to witness, and a big part of it is because of the commitment of the players, the professionalism of the coaches, the unbelievable officiating that's gone on here the entire time, and they've been lost in this entire equation.

These men have been so committed to their craft. I've been staying in the same hotel with them, and to see what they do to prepare day in and day out, to provide the very

best opportunity for the players to play at the high level that they do has been phenomenal. It's a tribute to the National Hockey League.

Doc talked about Gary Bettman; Sam talked about Bill Daly; Eddie has talked about all the different people in the National Hockey League; Brian just talked about the honor. Everything they said is true, and the thing to me that blows me away is the spirit of cooperation, the commitment from everybody.

And it's not just here in the community. It's the healthcare professionals. It's the hotel workers. It's the people that work in the restaurants. We've become like a little family here in the Edmonton bubble, and I'm glad that everybody that's here now has had an opportunity to experience it.

But I think this is a chance to be a spectacular Stanley Cup Final. You've got two real deserving teams, and one thing I'd just like to say, and Eddie knows it because he's been part of the Winnipeg Jets organization earlier in his life, when I see Rick Bowness go and stand behind that Dallas Stars bench, and I worked with Rick in Ottawa a long time ago, to see him stand there and the emotion that he has after losing his dear friend Dale Hawerchuk during the course of this tournament, and to see how his players respect him says a lot about what kind of man he is and why and how he's helped steer his team to a Stanley Cup Final.

I just can't wait for this thing to get going.

Q. Thanks for doing this today, and congratulations on all the hard work of getting here to the Stanley Cup Final. My question is for Brian and/or Pierre. I'm wondering if you could maybe pick out one player that has really stood out to you in these Playoffs that has kind of gone above and beyond what you were expecting from him this summer or fall.

BRIAN BOUCHER: Boy, I think to me on the back end, and maybe I shouldn't be surprised by this, but I think Victor Hedman has been phenomenal on the back end for Tampa Bay. We all know that he can skate. We all know that he can defend. He's got a great stick. But nine goals now in the Playoffs for Victor Hedman. I think that -- and there was some question leaving the round-robin. He took a spill in that last game that looked like it was going to be an issue for his ankle and there was some question whether or not he'd play.

But he did, and he's been fantastic, and I don't know why I'm surprised. Maybe I shouldn't be because he truly is -- he's a superstar. Obviously a Norris candidate. But I think he's played exceptional. If he has any dip in his play or

isn't able to provide the offense he's been able to provide, maybe it's a different story for the Tampa Bay Lightning.

As good as he is, I still think he's played above his ceiling, which has been a lot of fun to watch.

PIERRE MCGUIRE: I'm going to go with the goaltender. His name is Anton Khudobin. The Dallas Stars have the second best record of the National Hockey League when it came to team defense over the course of the season, but what Anton has done with Ben Bishop being on the sidelines as the starting goaltender for the Dallas Stars has been phenomenal.

You see how these teammates gravitate to him. You see how he provides them with so much energy. You see some of the huge games that he's helped them win with key saves at unbelievable times. I think he's probably been the biggest surprise of any player here in the Western Conference Playoffs, and without him I don't see how Dallas could be in the Stanley Cup Final.

Q. Eddie, in your experience, how much does coaching ultimately influence a Stanley Cup Final series?

EDDIE OLCZYK: I think it certainly can have an impact at certain times in a game, whether it's a matchup situation -- I know that Pierre and I have talked about it a lot over the years where just that one time or that one stretch where you can get the matchup that's advantageous for your team, that could be the difference, not only in that game but in the series.

Coaches that have the ability and the conviction to maybe play a guy that isn't maybe your go-to guy or if you see a line that is going really well -- the example would be yesterday in Game 6 between Tampa and New York where the third line was really, really good for Tampa. Gourde, Coleman, Goodrow, and John Cooper was double shifting those guys.

Now, again, I understand they only had 11 forwards dressed and there's only so many forwards that you can play, but he was like, Wow, these guys got jump. I'm going to double shift These guys. I think they came out to start the game, and then they came out -- after having won shift off, they came right back with that line and they got two chances in a matter of their first maybe minute and 35 or two minutes of the hockey game.

It definitely is important as far as the schematics or the in-game adjustments. Maybe there is things on specialty teams that you can adjust to, but as far as stylistic play and kind of your DNA, you're going to play the way that got you

to this point. A lot has been talked about Rick Bowness, and rightfully so with all the years and the decades that he's been a part of the greatest league in the world, and him having the relationship with John Cooper for so many years of being an assistant for him, that will certainly take on a life of its own here moving forward when he was in Tampa.

And then Coop has done just a tremendous job in being able to push all the right buttons.

So long-winded. Yeah, I think it is very important, and it's all about feel. It's all about putting those guys in the right situation, and look at -- nobody is healthy at this time. To be able to have extra players and knowing which guys to put in may be one of those guys that you need, and they come in and make the difference, whether it's giving you seven or ten minutes, a guy like Johnny Boychuk did for Tampa the last couple games where it seemed like he played huge minutes on a penalty kill.

You're going to need everybody. But it can -- I believe it can be a difference. You just don't know when that's going to be. And it could go the other way, too, where a coach gets the wrong matchup and he thinks that a guy can do the job or a line can do the job and they don't.

So it could have a positive impact or a negative impact, and you just don't know when that's going to be over the course of a seven-game series.

Q. Eddie, can you think of any reason why the Dallas Stars and Rick Bowness have not moved forward repealing the interim tag off of his title just yet?

EDDIE OLCZYK: Well, I guess if you're Jim Mill you look at recent history. It worked out pretty well for Craig Berube and the St. Louis Blues last year. So maybe, just maybe that's where Jim is looking at.

And look, hey, I know what I would have done, but let's see how this all plays out. I think everything will be great.

Q. Brian, I know Vasilevskiy hasn't had to quote/unquote steal many games in these Playoffs, if you look at the overtime last night they would have won that game without him. What have you noticed, differences in him this run from his previous runs, whether it's played better without low shot volume games or just what have noticed in terms of what he's been able to do, and what you do you like about him as a goaltender?

BRIAN BOUCHER: Yeah, I think he's continued to mature. A ton of talent. Obviously we know his physical ability.

He's big, he's agile, he's flexible, powerful, all of the athletic qualities that you want in a goaltender. But I think you've got to go through some experiences to -- in order to improve. Obviously he took a punch in the gut last year getting swept in Columbus, and the regular seasons were great and all that's fine. We all know that.

But the true test comes playoff time, and when you have the pause and then you have to restart and then face the team that knocked you out the year prior and get through it, to me, that's how you grow as a goaltender.

I think Vasilevskiy has been extremely consistent throughout all of this, and that just shows his maturity. I don't recall a game that has been a stinker yet for him in these Playoffs. He really hasn't had one. I'm sure Tampa Bay hopes he doesn't have one in the Stanley Cup Final.

But his consistency, and the fact that, yes, you're right, there hasn't been a lot of games where he's had a ton of shots where he's had to steal the game, in a lot of cases that's more difficult for that goaltender to remain focused and to remain sharp and not give up a freebie and cost your team a hockey game.

I've been really impressed. He doesn't show any signs of tiring, and I just see a much more mature goaltender now that we knew had physical abilities and all the talent in the world starting to put it all together now.

Q. Sam, with everything being under one centralized bubble, are there any new production tools or cameras or any tech for the Stanley Cup or any changes? And then for Doc and Eddie, you guys have been doing this for 14 Stanley Cups but now Doc you're at home and Eddie you're in Edmonton. How will that affect the chemistry, if any, and how do you make sure you're on the same page with everything kind of in the middle of you two?

SAM FLOOD: Quickly, we've rolled out all the fun and games through the course of this playoff run inside the bubbles, between the JitaCam and the sweeping elements there and incorporating all that Steve Mayer has done for the NHL in terms of the great visuals after a goal is scored, Jamie then pops up on the big monitor in the corner of the ice as we celebrate below his photograph.

Just an incredible incorporation of the stadium and the players and the action on the ice. And that big JitaCam can sweep in. But more importantly, for this conference final into the final, we're rolling out the technology of player and puck tracking, and you're seeing the impact that's having on the ability to identify players.

Eddie is going to be talking about a player before a face-off where we point out to a defenseman before the face-off, we put the pointer in and you know where that guy is on the ice. There's a five-on-three earlier and Steve Greenberg, who's running this technology, popped pointers over the three defenders that were on the ice trying to kill off a critical five-on-three penalty.

It's the kind of access and information that we've never had before in this sport, and what a luxury for the fans to understand what's going on and to enhance the great analysis that Eddie, Bouch, and Pierre all do as the best analysts that have ever been inside a hockey rink.

That's how it's working, and we're very happy with everything that's going on.

MIKE EMRICK: In answer to your question, you pointed out the 14 years, and I think that's a great advantage that Eddie and I have. There are still occasions when the two of us are sitting next to one another that I will wind up accidentally stepping on him before he has finished explaining something or vice versa. We don't like those occasions when they happen, but we've learned the rhythm back and forth enough over that period of time that those occasions don't happen too often.

But they still do. In the course of anyone standing around talking -- if you and the two of us were talking there might be times when we might interrupt one another, and even though that might be impolite, we don't want to do, it might still happen, and that's the course of what happens in an evening.

But the other side of it is we try to keep those to a minimum. We enjoy one another's company so much, whether it winds up being a couple thousand miles apart or whether it's on the air and in two separate boxes at the start of a show, it makes it just a part of a good life for me; I will tell you that.

And Steve Mayer's name was mentioned. In one of the Dallas games that Eddie and I did this year, and you must recognize that Eddie is a gambler at heart, he lost on a piglet race at the Cotton Bowl. And I don't know if for the final if Steve Mayer has piglet races planned in Edmonton, but if he does, I can bet that Eddie will be down there trying to get even.

EDDIE OLCZYK: Well, just for the record, the only thing I was upset with is that they named all the little piglets after players or whatever, and the one I thought was the most obvious was Roman Hamrlik, and nobody went with that, and that's what I was more upset with, which I think is kind of -- maybe that's a future name.

I don't know. Maybe we can go back to Dallas for another outdoor game, which was terrific in the Cotton Bowl.

I think it is obviously a unique dynamic, but when you're working with the best, you follow Doc's lead as Pierre and Bouch and I have done and will continue to do. There is a cadence that we understand, and I remember for the first time when I sat in that chair after the great John Davidson left for St. Louis to become team president of the St. Louis Blues some 14 plus years ago, and our leader Sam Flood, I remember him vividly saying, you know, late in a game, Okay, guys, this is Doc time, and that's when you pick your spots and you get in and you get out and you give Doc an opportunity to take a breath and we'd go from there.

This is unique, but I feel when I'm in the building, I feel like Doc is right next to me, and I'm hoping that that's the way it comes across on the broadcast. And yeah, there are some obstacles. There are some potholes out there that we're navigating through, but whether Doc is a foot to my left or I'm a foot to his right or he is a couple of thousand miles away, I think the routine and the cadence and the experience that we have with one another, I think people -- it'll feel normal. It feels normal to us, and we're getting a lot of help from our terrific people in the truck with a lot more communicating on that scenario where.

For example, if there's something that is going on and Doc is calling the play-by-play, if there's just something that needs to be said, instead of trying to jump over Doc during play or wanting to get it in because it's important to say, then we can communicate with our truck and just say, Hey, Edzo is going to add something or Bouch is going to add or Pierre is going to add, and then Doc knows when the time presents itself, when he pauses, that's when we can get in and we go -- whether it's a broken stick or I think that puck went off the post or they had too many men on the ice.

There's these -- the team and the teamwork is second to none, and those are things that are going on behind the scenes that people don't know about compared to a normal situation. But as we've all said, what the hell is normal in 2020, and we will figure it out because we're working for and with the best, and we're looking forward to tomorrow night.

Q. This is for anybody who wants to answer it. I'm just wondering what you guys see, those of you who see a difference between the Lightning in 2015 and the Lightning this year. Obviously players are older, they're not all the same players and whatever, but just from kind of the experience that comes from having played at this level before as a young player who was maybe stepping in for an injured goalie and now kind

of being in a totally different situation here, what do you see as the differences in that kind of situation for this team?

BRIAN BOUCHER: I mean, I think, number one, I think when you look back to that 2015 team, they had the triplets line. Tyler Johnson did a great job in the middle of the Kucherov and Palat, but he was injured in the Finals so he was not the same. But when I look at Brayden Point, it's no disrespect to Tyler Johnson, I mean, Tyler Johnson is a good player, but I think Brayden Point is a world-class player.

You've got that line I think is enhanced. I think they've added some grit on this club, the additions of Goodrow and Coleman I think have brought a much-needed element of snarl to their lineup.

Just the overall experience that guys have. Guys like Killorn, Palat who I mentioned earlier. These guys are now five years later into their career, and that experience that I talked about for vas less can I earlier, all that stuff is -- you've got to go through it.

Even though you have all the talent in the world, sometimes just having to go through situations and get hardened, that's very important. And the additions on the back end now that they have, like McDonagh. This guy is a leader. This guy is a guy that's played in some big hockey games before.

Even a guy like Bogosian. I think you can't get lost in this. This is his first go-around at the Playoffs and how excited he is to be here. And as I said before with Vasilevskiy, he was the backup before, thrust into a tough situation when Ben Bishop went down, and this is a world-class goalie. This guy is one of the best that we're going to see for a long time in goal just because of his size and athleticism and now the experience that he has.

So I think overall this is a much more complete team, much more experienced team, and they've had some disappointments, and those disappointments sometimes you've got to take a step back to take two steps forward, and I think that's why this team is in a lot of ways better than the 2015 team that lost to Chicago.

PIERRE McGUIRE: They're the perfect example of a general manager and an ownership group that didn't bury their head in the sands and fall in love with all the article written about the Presidents Trophy champion, the number one power play team in the league, number one penalty kill in the league. Oh, and then they got swept by Columbus.

Rather than say, It's a one off, stuff is going to happen in



... when all is said, we're done.®

the Playoffs, we ran into a hot goalie who ran into emotional coach in John Tortorella. They didn't bury their heads in the sand. They said, You know what we're not good enough going forward.

So they go out and add Blake Coleman, they add a Pat Maroon and bring a Stanley Cup ring in from the St. Louis Blues. They move Gourde from the wing to center. They create this line with Goodrow, Coleman, and Gourde that's become an effective weapon for them.

They go out and add two jumbos on the back end in Luke Schenn and Zach Bogosian, two guys that have never won, so they bring instantaneous motivation into their dressing room.

This is a perfect example of progressive ownership and really smart management, and they deserve a ton of credit, because a lot of teams in this league would have buried their head in the sand and said, We've got a ton of prospects coming; we're the No. 1 team in the league; it was just a one-off. And they chose not to do that, and they're to be saluted for that.

Q. We see two former Sharks players, one on each roster, Joe Dubowski with Dallas and Barclay Goodrow with Tampa. Question for Eddie: What did you think of those deals when those teams went out and got those players, when Joe Dubowski signed a three-year \$21 million deal with Dallas and Tampa expended a first-round pick to get Goodrow? What did you think of those deals at the time? Did you think it was a bit of an overpay?

EDDIE OLCZYK: Well, yeah, I thought Goodrow certainly was, but to get as much as they did was certainly an interesting dynamic at the time. And look at Tampa. You pretty much showed your hand. Like we're in. We know what we need. We're going to go get it. Doesn't matter what it is, whether it's getting Blake Coleman or Barclay Goodrow and giving up first-round picks. You know what, this is what we need, and we do this and we know we've got a chance to win a Stanley Cup.

So Pierre's point, and well-noted, that that sends a message, and it sends a message to the guys inside that room.

Look, no disrespect to future draft picks, but the players inside the locker room don't really care about what picks you're trading. Just look at we've got a chance to win, we're going all in.

So I did, I thought it was a lot for Barclay Goodrow, but he has played extremely well. Again, that line came together

in the bubble in Toronto, and Coop has stayed with it, about Gourde and Coleman and Goodrow.

And talk about Joe Pavelski he's been a winner his whole life, and that was one of the reasons that I liked Dallas so much to come out of the Western Conference. To bring in a guy like that, the experience, the big time contributions in all parts of the game, face-offs, scoring big goals.

Look at Joe -- I can relate. I was never an overly quick player in my 16 years in the league, but Joe Pavelski, very similar, but he thinks the game where he can offset maybe the lack of foot speed or the quickness because his hockey IQ is absolutely off the charts.

When you're bringing a guy like that and he's gone to the Stanley Cup Final, again, it sends another message inside that locker room.

My biggest concern was could Dallas score enough, and they've been able to do it, and they've gotten contributions from a lot of different players in the bubble, and that has been a big reason why.

And then they went out and got Corey Perry, another experienced guy, another guy that has won and has won a Stanley Cup and been so effective for many, many years.

But I think when you look at in particular asking about the impact these two guys have had, would these two teams be in the Stanley Cup Final without the additions of Goodrow and Pavelski? Maybe. But probably a better chance of getting here with these guys than without them because of the impact that they've had, and I don't think anybody could argue what these guys have done for these teams.

Now, Pavelski obviously they're a lot longer, you talk about the long-term deal or three-year deal, but Goodrow has come in and especially at the most crucial time has stepped up in a crucial way and by the way he had the primary assist last night on the series clinching goal.

Lots to like from two former Sharks, and they've had a big impact to get to this stage in the season.

Q. This is for Sam. You've had a go without Mike Mill Bury for a while. I wanted to ask about his comments and within a day or so him leaving the bubble. How hard was that decision and how much did you scramble and what's the future for Mike at NBC Sports?

SAM FLOOD: I'm not going to get into that right now. I'm going to talk about the people who are working the Stanley

Cup Final, and I'll say Patrick Sharp has stepped up; Anson Carter is doing an incredible job, and Keith Jones continues to be the standard bearer for us. That's our focus right now. Thanks.

Q. Eddie, I know we don't know if Stamkos will play in the final, he may not, but I'm just wondering, how -- if he does, how that might change the dynamic of the series, and what is reasonable to expect from even a really good player after not playing for six and a half months to jump right in?

EDDIE OLCZYK: Yeah, that would be an awful big ask. I think it's been over 200 days that we've seen Steven Stamkos. Yeah, not being able to be around practice, here in the bubble you see a little bit of clips here and there, but don't know the competitive ice time that he has had.

Again, look, if you're asking me am I expecting to see him? Look, it was great to see him a part of what was going on last night postgame, and it would be a surprise to me, but that would just be pure speculation on that part of it.

Look, if they feel he's ready to go, you know what you're going to get, but again, the timing aspect of it, are where are you going to slide him in, is he going to be okay with going out there and only playing eight or nine minutes, could you use him on a second power play.

So I'm sure there would be lots of opportunity or lots of options for Coop. But for me, am I prepping for him to be ready to go in these Finals? I guess seeing him last night certainly got my attention a little bit more. But it would be a surprise to me.

But again, we just don't know as far as the seat that I'm sitting in if he's going to be able to be a part of the final.

Q. I'm just wondering what you guys saw. You mentioned a question from a couple months ago about what Pavelski has added to the Stars. Just kind of the progression of their year, I thought they had a great off-season with signing Pavelski and Perry, and then obviously you hit a road bump when your coach changes mid season, and kind of what you saw of their season as a whole to get to this point.

PIERRE MCGUIRE: I think Rick has come in and obviously was already a coach on the staff along with Todd Nelson and Derek Laxdal, so they had continuity with the staff. Obviously what happened with Jim Montgomery, you know nobody wants to see that happen. Jim has gone about doing his chores away from the rink and now has been rehired by the St. Louis Blues, so he gets another opportunity in the National Hockey League. So that did

lead to a little bit of disjointedness.

But that being said, they didn't go into the pause playing particularly well. I think everybody knows that. They were struggling. But I think this is a team that really did utilize the pause. Eddie talked about some of the gray beards that are there, Joe Pavelski, Corey Perry, Jamie Benn, all the players that have come in, Andrej Sekera has played fantastically well.

But I think some of those older players they maybe used the pause to get healthy, maybe get a little more fit and I think that's really worked out for them. But I think the biggest thing that was a constant from the start of the year to the end of the year with Dallas. The influence of Johnny Stevens as an assistant coach that works with their defense and their penalty killing in particular. Their penalty killing has been outstanding. Their defense has been outstanding. He was an assistant coach in 2012 and 2014 when LA won the Cup.

This team reminds me so much of the LA Kings in terms of how they approach things, and I think that's the one thing that's been constant about them. They've always been really tough to play against defensively and they don't give you a lot. And when they do, they either had Ben Bishop there or during this playoff run Anton Khudobin, who's just been phenomenal the entire playoffs, Anton Khudobin.

EDDIE OLCZYK: I just want to add one more thing. Just kind of thinking while Pierre was speaking there, in mentioning Joe Pavelski a little bit earlier, with him being a free agent in San Jose and then choosing not to bring him back, my recollection was the final two teams he was deciding on were the Dallas Stars and the Tampa Bay Lightning, which I think is an interesting dynamic when you really think about it.

I guess Joe Pavelski must have known something and he's in the Stanley Cup Final.

Q. This question is for Doc. I was wondering if -- there was a piece in Newsday recently about the changes to your home setup where the delay was minimized between the video you were watching and what was actually being shown on the screen. I was wondering if you could go into the detail on how your setup has improved since the restart began, and I was also wondering if you think that maybe down the line, who knows when, we'll be able to get back to a normal situation, what kind of changes can be done in the future to minimize the, let's say, difference between doing it remotely and doing it in the arena?

MIKE EMRICK: I'm afraid that's out of my technical

knowledge. I will say this, that there was a considerable equipment adjustment made at our truck in Edmonton, because I was routed through Stamford for the earlier games, and then for the conference final and also for the Stanley Cup Final it was done directly to the truck in Edmonton because they were all going to be there.

But I am not a technically aware person, so I'm afraid I can't answer the question for you that way.

When I was calling a game at home, not only in the first couple of rounds but also in these, I was calling off a screen, and as far as I knew there was no delay for me whatsoever. What was happening elsewhere, I did not know. It was going fine for me at my end, and if there were other issues elsewhere at the time that I was doing it, I was not aware of it.

Sam, I'm sorry that I have to toss this to you to an extent because you knew something about the adjustment in equipment for the later rounds, and I did not know the specifics of that. But in gratitude to you for making adjustments, maybe this is also out of your technical knowledge, but it certainly is out of mine.

SAM FLOOD: It was two tin cans, we stretched the string between it, and that sped up the process. Alexander Graham Bell was an analyst for us and helped us through, and Mr. Bell said if you go a shorter distance, which is from where you are outside Detroit to Edmonton, the sound and pictures will travel quicker, and that's what we did and miraculously it worked. So the shorter distance sped us up.

MIKE EMRICK: Well, the bottom line is it seemed to work much better, and I'm not sure exactly how it all came about because I am able to operate a cell phone and I am able to text, but there's not a whole lot more technologically that I know.

SAM FLOOD: Big shout out to our tech team and how they executed and looked for solutions to make us better, led by the head of the whole group, David Mazza. It's just a remarkable group that puts on all the Olympics and all the events for us, and for them to focus on making this the best possible execution for Doc is just another tip of the cap to that group.

Q. Sam, will this be more of an NBC independent production for the Cup versus CBC's world feed? And then for Pierre and Brian, you've spent a lot of time in the bubble; can you talk about life the past two months? Was that life what you anticipated? And how do you reflect on those sacrifices you made as we approach the end of this run?

SAM FLOOD: Well, we shifted essentially to our own production by Game 2 of the conference finals, so we wheeled our own truck in there. The production that was creating the world feed in Toronto moved on up to Edmonton, and they are executing -- obviously sharing cameras and equipment with our friends at Rogers, but we're producing an entirely independent feed with our own replays, everything is executed within that truck with Matt Marvin, Chuck Dammeyer, Jenny Glazer, and Steve Greenberg, the four production people are in the house making it happen. And that's how it's working.

PIERRE McGUIRE: First of all, this has been an amazing opportunity to learn a lot about a lot of different people in the National Hockey League, whether it be referees, coaches, players. The Edmonton bubble has been really cool to be a part of because you get to see people away from the rink, not just at the rink all the time, so I've enjoyed that part of it. Really grateful for the healthcare professionals and the hotel staffing in particular. They've gone the extra mile. The bedside manner of the healthcare professionals every day you go for your COVID test, nobody is sullen, nobody is sour, everybody is smiling, they're all saying hey, good morning or good afternoon to you, and it just makes the whole process a lot easier.

But I think the biggest thing when I think about this experience more than anything else is that it shows that the league came together to do something right, and this has gone unbelievably right. The players, the coaches, the trainers, the upper management of all these teams and in particular the upper management of the National Hockey League and the people at NBC, by the way, it's been an amazing endeavor and I'm really proud to say that I was part of it.

BRIAN BOUCHER: Ditto to what Pierre said. Well said. On my end, I've been fortunate to be a part of three bubbles. I started at Royal York, moved to the Hotel X, and now to Edmonton. So I've had the unique opportunity to see three different spots. I agree with Pierre, the staff at every single hotel has been fantastic.

You know, I said that this whole thing was like being at the greatest youth hockey tournament you could ever imagine, minus the parents, and it's been a lot of fun. It's been great to see the players away from the rink and how professional they've been and how polite they've been just with guys like us.

They don't always want to see media types around, but they've been great to deal with, and on a personal level they've been great.

The whole thing has been -- I know it sounds crazy to say, but it's been a lot of fun. Just being around the game, seeing the game and the quality of play that we've had, I just can't say enough for everybody that's made this a reality, and it's been a unique experience, and I'm so grateful to have been a part of it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, everyone, for joining. Fantastic call to get us started for the 2020 Stanley Cup Final.

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