

HOCKEY BLAST “Tournament of Champions”

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I wanted to replay the six Stanley Cup Finals from 2010 through 2015, and happily discovered that I could do that while also playing Original Six-style playoffs (four teams) this way:

2010: Chicago vs. Philadelphia

2011: Boston vs. Vancouver

2012: Los Angeles vs. New Jersey

2013: Chicago vs. Boston

2014: Los Angeles vs. New York

2015: Chicago vs. Tampa Bay

Note that while Chicago (3), LA (2) and Boston (2) have seven of the 12 entries, each two-year period has no overlap of teams. That permitted a comfortable “Super Final” between the winners of the season replays.

It turned out to be a 52-game project.

2010

Actual: Chicago in 6

Replay: Chicago in 4

Though it was a sweep, each game was close. The Flyers seized a 2-0 lead in Game 1 on first-period goals by Asham and Carter. The Hawks applied relentless pressure after that. Chicago answered with a second-period goal by Toews, but it took a final-minute goal by Byfuglien with a pulled goalie to tie it. In the fourth minute of OT, Keith sent the home crowd home happy.

1* Keith: GWG

2* Toews: G, A, constant pressure

3* Leighton: Philly’s goalie kept the Flyers in the game while having a scoring-chance deficit of 20-12

Game 2: Chicago wins 2-0 on a first-period goal by Brouwer and third-period goal by Hjalmarsson.

1* Hjalmarsson

2* Niemi

3* Leighton

Game 3: Kane’s goal midway through the second period broke a 2-2 tie for the final score of the game.

1* Kane: GWG

2* Kopecky: G put CHI ahead 2-0

3* Timonen: G

Game 4: Kane and Hossa's goals gave Chicago a 2-0 lead until the final two minutes. Briere's goal with the goalie pulled was too little, too late. Chicago: 2-1.

2011

Actual: Boston in 7

Replay: Vancouver in 6

An upset? Not really – Vancouver was the President's Cup winner with 117 points, while seven teams had as many or more points as Boston's 103. Boston won the first two in Vancouver then won three one-goal games before breaking loose in Game 6 with four goals in the third period to win 5-2 after trailing 2-0 after one period and 2-1 after two.

Game 1: Boston wins 4-3 when Ryder and Bergeron score in the final four minutes and Thomas makes a Spectacular Save on Daniel Sedin in the final minute.

1* Thomas: 2 Spectacular Saves, including the finale

2* Ryder: 2G

3* Edler: Canuck defenseman had game's first goal, had 4 other scoring chances

Game 2: Boston scores once in each period and Thomas richly deserves the 3-0 shutout with three Spectacular Saves.

1* Thomas

2* Chara: dominant D

3* Marchand: G, strong penalty-killing

Game 3: Thomas makes two more Spectacular Saves, but Daniel Sedin's goal in the final two minutes is the only tally. Vancouver's comeback begins with a 1-0 win in Boston.

1* Luongo: SHO

2* D Sedin: only G

3* Thomas

Game 4: Goalies dominate again – it's 0-0 with three minutes to play, but each team scores once (Bergeron and Henrik Sedin) and then Thomas had to stop Samuelsson on a final-minute penalty shot to force OT. It ends up going three OTs. The first ends when Thomas makes a Spectacular Save on Kesler and stops Torres on yet another penalty shot in the final four minutes. The second ends when Luongo makes a final-minute Spectacular Save on Bergeron. Finally, in the fourth minute of the third OT, Kesler scores when, this time, Thomas could not come up with the Spectacular Save.

1* Kesler: GWG

2* Thomas: Stopped 2 penalty shots, made another Spectacular Save

3* Luongo

Game 5: Kesler and Burrows give Vancouver a 2-0 lead. Boston can't score until Luongo is injured early in the third period and Horton converts a power play on the first scoring chance against Schneider. But the Vancouver D and Schneider close the door the rest of the way.

1* Kesler

2* Burrows

3* Luongo

Game 6: With backs to the wall on home ice, the Bruins hold a 2-0 lead 37 minutes into the game thanks to first-period goals by Kampfner and Seguin. Samuelsson cuts the lead in half before the second intermission. Then, the turning point in the series: Lucic takes a 5-minute penalty four minutes into the third period and Vancouver finds the net three times in the next four minutes. Samuelsson's empty-netter seals the 5-2 win and claims the Cup.

- 1* Kesler: G, 3A
- 2* Samuelsson: 2G, A
- 3* Edler: G, A, good D

2010/2011 "Super Finals"

Chicago over Vancouver in 7

A classic series features three overtime games.

Game 1: Vancouver's Hansen and Samuelsson break a 0-0 tie with third-period goals as Niemi could not come up with Spectacular Saves to stop them. Vancouver, 2-0.

- 1* Hansen
- 2* Luongo: SHO
- 3* Samuelsson

Game 2: Kane's power-play goal early in OT gives Chicago a 3-2 win

- 1* Kane
- 2* Keith: 3 A
- 3* Hossa: GTG

Game 3: Daniel Sedin scores 4 goals, the last in OT, for a 6-5 win. Chicago, down 4-2 after two, unleashed a three-goal barrage to take the lead in the third before Burrows' final-minute goal on a Spectacular Save chance

- 1* D Sedin: 4G
- 2* Burrows: GTG, 3A
- 3* Sharp: 2G

Game 4: Again Chicago rallies in the third period, but can't hold the late lead. Again Vancouver wins in OT – 4-3 on Ehrhoff's goal in the final minute. Vancouver leads 3 games to 1.

- 1* Ehrhoff
- 2* D Sedin: GTG in last 2 minutes of 3rd
- 3* Toews: go-ahead goal late in 3rd

Game 5: Hossa's empty-net goal complete his hat trick and Chicago's three-goal third period in 5-2 win.

- 1* Hossa: 3G, A
- 2* Toews: G, 2A
- 3* Keith: 2A

Game 6: Tension as Chicago faces elimination on the road: 1-1 after one period and few scoring chances after that until the Hawks finish with a flourish in OT. Luongo cannot come up with the Spectacular Save on Byfuglien's chance midway in OT.

- 1* Byfuglien
- 2* Niemi
- 3* Luongo

Game 7: Hawks and Canucks leave everything on the ice in the finale: 37 scoring chances and only 16 lulls. Toews' second goal of the game, a power-play number early in the third period, gives Chicago a 3-1 lead, then Hossa adds an empty-netter. Niemi defeats 19 Vancouver scoring chances in the 4-1 win.

- 1* Niemi
- 2* Toews: 2G
- 3* Kane: G, A

2012

Actual: LA in 6

Replay: LA in 6

Game 1: Heavily favored Kings breakout with three goals in first period, secure 4-2 win.

- 1* Kopitar: 2G, A
- 2* Williams: G, 2A
- 3* Quick: stops 15 scoring chances, 1 Spectacular Save

Game 2: Devils fire on all cylinders at home, leading 5-0 on 24 scoring chances and winning 5-2.

- 1* Elias: G, 3A
- 2* Kovalchuk: 2G
- 3: Brodeur

Game 3: Parise's hat trick gives Devils surprise 4-2 win at LA, 2-1 lead in series.

- 1* Parise
- 2* Henrique: 3A
- 3* Brodeur

Game 4: THIS is why the Kings are heavily favored: A 9-1 win at home – the most goals I've ever had by one team.

- 1* Doughty: 2G, A
- 2* Kopitar: 3A
- 3* Gagne: 2G, A

Game 5: It's all Kings again: 5-0 after a three-goal first period.

- 1* Gagne: G, 2A
- 2* Quick: SHO
- 3* Brown: 2A

Game 6: Jersey tightens up and it's 1-1 after two periods. But Richards, Voynov and Doughty break it open with third-period goals and LA wins 4-2 to hoist the Cup.

1* Richards: GWG

2* Quick: Thwarts 16 of 18 scoring chances

3* Doughty: G, A

2013

Actual: Chicago in 6

Replay: Chicago in 6

When the Bruins score more than one goal, they win. But they did it only twice.

Game 1: Marchand scores twice, the winner in the final minute of the second period.

1* Marchand

2* Rask: 3 Spectacular Saves

3* Crawford

Game 2: Three unanswered goals allow Chicago to tie the series, 3-1.

1* Crawford

2* Kruger: GWG

3* Toews: G, all-around play

Game 3: On home ice, Bruins take 4-0 lead before Stalberg spoils rarely tested Rask's shutout in final minute.

1* Chara: G, great D

2* Peverly: first 2G of game

3* Jagr: 2A, both allowing Peverly to score

Game 4: Chicago evens the series with another 3-1 win.

1* Hossa: 1st and 3rd goals, A

2* Rask

3* Crawford

Game 5: Boston can't solve Crawford. Hawks seal 3-0 win on ENG.

1* Crawford

2* Keith: 3A

3* Rask: Stops 18 scoring chances, has 2 Spectacular Saves

Game 6:

Hawks win Cup 1-0 on Crawford's second straight shutout, Bolland's second-period goal.

1* Bolland

2* Crawford

3* Rask

2012/2013 "Super Finals"

Chicago over LA in 5

Game 1: In a game with 45 combined scoring chances, 4-goal second propels Chicago to 7-2 win at home.

1* Seabrook: 2G, A
2* Sharp: 2G
3* Kane: 3A
HM: Crawford: stopped 20 scoring chances

Game 2: Hawks dominate again, 4-1. Kings have only five scoring chances.

1* Toews: G, A, all-around play
2* Sharp: G, A
3* Seabrook: A, strong play

Game 3: Hawks just too strong, 4-0

1* Crawford: SHO
2* Sharp: G, A
3* Keith: G, great D

Game 4: Kings salvage pride at home with 4-3 OT win after blowing 3-1 lead in third. Brown's game-winner in the second minute of OT is his third rebound goal of the game.

1* Brown
2* Kopitar: G, 3A
3* Kane: 2G, A

Game 5: Toews' goal midway in 3rd gives Chicago 2-1 win and the championship.

1* Crawford: Stops 20 scoring chances
2* Toews: GWG, A
3* Kopitar: tying goal in 2nd

2014

Actual: LA in 5

Replay: LA in 5

Game 1: Rangers take 2-0 lead, Kings tie with 2 in 2nd; Rangers win with 2 in 3rd – 4-2.

1* St. Louis: 2G, A
2* Lundqvist: 2 Spectacular Saves
3* Carter: G, 4 scoring chances

Game 2: Kings even series at home, 5-1

1* Carter: 2G
2* Regeher: G, A
3* Quick

Game 3: Kings embarrass Rangers at Madison Square Garden, 7-0, with seven different goal scorers. Rangers have only four scoring chances in 32-lull game.

1* M Richards: 3A
2* Gaborik: G, A
3* Quick: SHO

Game 4: Kings continue to outclass, 5-1. Rangers now outscored 12-1 at home.

1* Brown: 2G

2* Gaborik: 3A

3* Quick

Game 5: Quick's second Spectacular Save – on the final play of the game – preserves 2-1 win to secure the Cup. He stopped 16 of 17 scoring chances, while Lundqvist stopped only five of seven. Kopitar scored in first period, set up Brown in third. Zuccarello's breakaway goal in final three minutes gave New York a comeback chance, but Quick ended that hope on Brad Richards' threat.

1* Quick

2* Kopitar

3* Zuccarello

2015

Actual: Chicago in 6

Replay: Chicago in 7

Game 1: Despite great effort by Tampa Bay goalie Bishop, Chicago wins 3-1

1* Bishop: 2 Spectacular Saves, 2 GA (one ENG)

2* Hossa: G, A

3* Crawford

Game 2: Tampa rebounds impressively at home, 5-1, on Johnson's pure hat trick.

1* Johnson: Hat trick

2* Kucherov, G, 3A

3* Palat: 4A

Game 3: Stamkos' goal in first minute of third period holds up for 3-2 win at Chicago.

1* Stamkos: GWG

2* Bishop

3* Paquette: TB's first goal, short-handed

Game 4: Boyle's short-handed goal early in OT shocks Chicago, 3-2, for 3-1 series lead. Down 2-0 after two periods, Lightning scored twice in first six minutes of third to tie the game, and then Bishop withstood withering assault in final three minutes: Five Hawks' scoring chances including a Spectacular Save on Toews.

1* Boyle

2* Bishop

3* Toews: G, constant pressure

Game 5: Facing elimination on the road, Hawks lose Crawford to injury in first 11 minutes, but score last four goals, win 4-1

1* Raanta (sub goalie stars)

2* Toews: GWG

3* Kane: G

Game 6: Crawford returns, posts elimination-game shutout at home. Hawks score all three goals in final 13 minutes.

1* Crawford: SHO

2* Kane: G, A

3* Versteeg: GWG

Game 7: Crawford stars again, losing shutout in final minute of 3-1 win. Hawks take the Cup. As in 2010/2011 “Super Finals,” Hawks win after trailing series 3 games to 1.

1* Crawford

2* Hossa: 1st goal of game, A

3* Saad: GWG

2014/2015 “Super Finals”

LA over Chicago in 6

With more triangles, squares and circles, Kings were solid favorite.

Game 1: Four-goal LA outburst in first 12 minutes sends Crawford to bench. Through two period, Kings held scoring chance advantage, 27-7. Two quick Chicago goals in third made it 4-3, but Williams scored late for 5-3 LA win.

1* Williams: 2G, A

2* Martinez: G, constant pressure

3* Keith: 2A

Game 2: Kings score twice in final minute, but it’s not enough: Chicago, 4-3.

1* Saad: 2G

2* Crawford

3* Keith: 2A

Game 3: LA’s turn to win 4-3 on the road as Brown, Carter score twice each.

1* Quick: His stars account for 9 saves, including 2 Spectacular Saves

2* Hossa: G, 2A

3* Brown: 2G, including GWG

Game 4: Brown scores two again (giving him 7 for the two series) in 4-1 win as LA sweeps a pair in Chicago.

1* Brown: 2G

2* Quick: Stops 15 of 16 scoring chances

3* Doughty: Setup A on SH goal, great D

Game 5: Again down 3 games to 1, Chicago avoids elimination with 3-1 win in LA, scoring the first three goals.

1* Crawford: 2 Spectacular Saves

2* Hossa: G, A

3* Toews: G, A

Game 6: Down 3-0 with five minutes to play, Hawks assault Quick with seven scoring chances and two goals, but the LA goaltender thwarts Toews in the final minute. Hawks are out of magic and Kings claim the championship.

1* Quick

2* Crawford

3* Carter: GWG is his 10th of two series