Breaking down each quarterfinal match-up. Included in these reports - injury news, fantasy predictions, and of course my overall prediction.

Eastern Conference Quarterfinals: (1) Boston Bruins vs. (8) Montreal Canadiens

The Skinny:

On paper this series is a huge mismatch, but that is why the game is played on the ice. The Bruins are playing with swagger and confidence, while the Habs have looked meek and timid for most of the season. However, the playoffs do present a clean slate for Montreal to bounce back from a very tumultuous regular season.

Montreal has zero chance to match Boston's toughness, so they must play to their strengths; speed, skill, and transition from the back end. Andrei Markov is out for at least game one, and that is a serious blow as he has been far and away Montreal's most effective player this season. Look for Montreal to try and spread out their offense (especially on the road) to give Boston some match-up problems.

Boston will pound Montreal, I think that is pretty clear. Look for Milan Lucic to be let loose this series. They can match the Habs in the skill department as well, but I don't think that is their best chance at winning the series.

From a fantasy perspective, I personally drafted a ton of Bruins (they are my pick to win it all). Dennis Wideman eats up a ton of minutes and gets lots of points, and Patrice Bergeron is rounding in to form after a below-average season offensively. On Montreal's side, they have a lot of players playing for new contracts. Expect big things from the UFA's, and I have a feeling youngster Matt D'Agostini has a big post-season if the Habs decide to make some noise.

Forwards: Boston. Similar skilled players (arguably the best with Marc Savard), and a more balanced bottom six (although Maxime Lapierre is emerging as a great checking center).

Defense: Boston. Deeper, bigger, more talented. And if Markov is out, the Habs are even thinner on the back end.

Goaltending: Boston. Tim Thomas has played like a Vezina candidate most of the season. Carey Price has not.

Intangibles: Even. Boston has more toughness, but it is hard to count out a team led by Bob Gainey.

Match-up to Watch For:

Since both teams are so deep up front, I'll go with the goalies here. Habs have a shot if Price out duels Thomas.

The Verdict:

Montreal steals a game on the road – Bruins in five.

Eastern Conference Quarterfinals: (3) New Jersey Devils vs. (8) Carolina Hurricanes

The Skinny:

Carolina is deep up front, and the Devils are as well. This series also features two of the best goalies in the league (something I would not have said about Cam Ward last season). Ward has been very consistent all year for the Hurricanes, as in the past inconsistent play has been his one glaring weakness. Both teams also feature mobile defensive units that are deep one through six. This was the toughest series to call for me, as Brodeur showed last playoffs that there are some chinks in his armour.

From a fantasy perspective, most of the 'Canes team has done it before. They also boast a trio of defensemen (Pitkanen, Corvo, and Babchuk) that would be fantastic pool picks if you think the Hurricanes are going to go anywhere.

Forwards: Even. Both teams have elite talent (Parise, Elias, Staal, Whitney), and great role players (Cullen, LaRose, Madden, Clarkson).

Defense: New Jersey. Paul Martin and Johnny "don't call me David' Oduya lead an unheralded defensive group that weathered the storm for most of the season without Brodeur.

Goaltending: New Jersey. Cam Ward has played like a Vezina finalist all season, but Marty is Marty.

Intangibles: New Jersey. Brodeur, Sutter, and Lamoriello. There is something both mystical and boring about the Devils (a very weird - but fitting - combination).

Match-up to Watch For:

Whichever team shuts down the others' top forwards wins the series. I guess that seems like an obvious statement, but both teams are not going to be on the offensive. Something has to give.

The Verdict: Brodeur can't bail the Devils out. Carolina in seven.

Eastern Conference Quarterfinals: (4) Pittsburgh Penguins vs. (5) Philadelphia Flyers

The Skinny:

By far the most intriguing series on paper, the battle of Pennsylvania promises to be a great one once again. The Penguins have been scorching since the trade deadline, thanks to two key reasons: the coaching change (Dan Byslma coming in), and the return of Sergei Gonchar.

This series is going to be a war. Both teams feature star players that love to play on the edge (Crosby, Richards). Jeff Carter has emerged as a go-to sniper and Daniel Briere is a proven playoff beast. For me, the series comes down to the goaltending - and Martin Biron to be specific.

Fantasy-wise, Chris Kunitz plays a playoff style of game and has produced before with Anaheim. Look for him to score some big goals for the Penguins. On the other side, do not forget about Briere. He has slipped many a radar because of his injury-filled regular season, but he usually cranks his game up several notches in the second season.

Forwards: Philadelphia. Hard to overcome Crosby and Malkin, but the Flyers have insane forward depth (thanks in large part to sensational rookie Claude Giroux).

Defense: Pittsburgh. The Flyers are very top heavy with Timonen and Coburn, and the Penguins have a deeper and more balanced six man unit.

Goaltending: Pittsburgh. If Martin Biron plays like he did last spring, the Flyers win. I don’t think he does.

Intangibles: Even. Both teams want to kill the other. This is the series to watch.

Match-up to Watch For:

Crosby vs. Richards. ‘Nuff said.

The Verdict: Fleury outclasses Biron and the Penguins win a war in seven games.

Eastern Conference Quarterfinals: (2) Washington Capitals vs. (7) New York Rangers

The Skinny:

Look for the Rangers to attempt to bring some physicality into this series, as the Capitals are a pretty soft team (past Alex Ovechkin at least). Sean Avery will of course be at the forefront of this series, and he will definitely be doing his best to be a thorn in the side(s) of Ovechkin, Alex Semin, and Mike Green.

The Rangers still struggle to score, and they are facing a goalie in Jose Theodore who has never lost in the first-round before (that is my obscure/useless stat for the day). The Capitals are dynamic offensively and competent defensively, and are the heavy favorites in this series for good reason.

Some fantasy sleepers to keep in mind would be Ryan Callahan and Brandon Dubinsky for New York (Tortorella loves the crash-and-bang style that these two play), and Brooks Laich on the Capitals, who brings some much needed jam and grit to a very skilled top-nine forward group.

Forwards: Big edge to the Capitals. The Rangers top forwards are all perimeter players (Naslund, Gomez, Zherdev, Drury), while the Caps have a great blend of skill, grit, and play-making.

Defense: New York. The Capitals lack mobility on the back end (after Green obviously), and the Rangers have a decent six man unit.

Goaltending: Huge edge to New York. Theodore has been shaky all season, and Lundqvist is one of the best in the game.

Intangibles: Washington. Their power play is going to make teams pay this post-season.

Match-up to Watch For: Betts vs. Ovechkin. I assume the underrated Betts will have the impossible job of shutting Ovechkin down. No one on the Rangers defense is physical enough to match up with Ovechkin, so I expect him to walk all over the Rangers.

The Verdict: Lundqvist steals a couple - Caps in six.