With the top eight seeds set in the Western Conference, we are finally able to breakdown the match-ups from top to bottom. Every series is shaping up to be absolutely fantastic hockey, and I wouldn't call any team an underdog (it has been a long time since you could say that). Without further ado…

(1) Detroit Red Wings vs. (8) Calgary Flames

Forwards:
Zetterberg still isn't healthy, and he is the key cog for the Wings attack. Datsyuk will step it up in his absence, shedding his reputation as a playoff choker. Jarome Iginla was huge for the Flames in 2004, but can the Flames still play the punishing, physical style with players like Huselius and Tanguay? The key question mark is Zetterberg. Without him, the Wings will be in tough to generate enough scoring chances to beat Kiprusoff.
Edge: Calgary

Defense:
Dion Phaneuf has been going through a bit of a sophomore struggle this season, and Regehr is not nearly as effective in the new NHL. Newly acquired Brad Stuart has adjusted well to Calgary, displaying a punishing physical style that has endeared him to Calgary fans. On the other side, the Wings are led by one of the greatest ever in Nick Lidstrom. Matt Schneider and

Dany Markov add depth behind him. Detroit is one of the stingiest teams in the league, as they play a very smart positional game in the defensive end.
Edge: Detroit

Goaltending:
Miikka Kiprusoff is back in all-world form just in time for the playoffs. He is playoff tested, and can steal a game or two for the Flames in this series. Dominik Hasek is also playoff proven, but he is getting up there in age and consistency has been a bit of an issue this season.
Edge: Calgary

Coaching:
This isn't even close in my mind. Mike Babcock is one of the smartest, most tactical coaches in the game right now, and Jim Playfair has had trouble getting the most out of the talented Flames lineup.
Edge: Detroit in a big way

Intangibles:
Both teams have solid role players with players like Yelle and Conroy on Calgary, and Draper and Maltby on Detroit. Kyle Calder has added a physical dimension to the Wings since being acquired as well. Both teams are experienced and deep.
Edge: Even

Outcome:
It all comes down to Zetterberg in this series. If he can return and play a key role for the Wings up front, they take it. If not, I don't know if Datsyuk and Bertuzzi are enough to beat Kiprusoff and the physical Flames defense.
Detroit in SEVEN.

(2) Anaheim Ducks vs. (7) Minnesota Wild

Forwards:
Marian Gaborik is at the moment the most dangerous player in the NHL. Behind him, the Wild have a ton of depth with the likes of Demitra, Rolston, and Bouchard. Anaheim also has a superstar forward in Teemu Selanne, and similar depth. The Ducks are much more physical up front, but the Wild can out-skate any team in the West.
Edge: Even

Defense:
The Wild allowed the least goals against in the entire league this season, but the playoffs are a different game. No team can even come close to matching lines against Niedermayer and/or Pronger. The Wild have a solid defensive group, but Anaheim has two of top three in the league.
Edge: Anaheim

Goaltending:
Nicklas Backstrom has been great since replacing Manny Fernandez as the starter, but he lacks

JS Giguere's big game experience. This series won't be a goaltenders duel, but it may require one of them to step up and steal a game. I'm not sure Backstrom can do that against the high flying Ducks.
Edge: Anaheim

Coaching:
Randy Carlyle has done a great job in both of his seasons in Anaheim, and is one of the better coaches in the league. Unfortunately, he is facing the ultimate tactician in Jacques Lemaire. It seems that over the years, Lemaire knows his opponents better than they do.
Edge: Minnesota

Intangibles:
Both teams have even depth at forward, but play very different styles. The Wild are fast and look to capitalize on turnovers, while the Ducks like to punish opposing defenses along the boards. They are both fantastic clubs and this series is going to be won by the team who gets the most from every player.
Edge: Even

Outcome:
A few weeks ago, I proclaimed the Wild as my choice for Stanley Cup champ. Marian Gaborik is playing out of his mind, and his speed is impossible for most defensemen to contain. Well, besides Scott Niedermayer. The Ducks are the worst possible match up for the Wild, as the Ducks are a physically punishing team that will wreak havoc on the smaller Wild defense.
Anaheim in SIX

(3) Vancouver Canucks vs. (6) Dallas Stars

Forwards:
The Sedins' have been fantastic this year and present huge match up problems for the Stars defense. Dallas lacks high scorers but has depth and playoff proven performers like Stu Barnes, Mike Modano, and Jere Lehtinen. A key for the Canucks will be getting back Ryan Kesler, who is arguably the best young defensive forward in the West.
Edge: Even

Defense:
Vancouver has a quartet of stellar blue-liners in Ohlund, Salo, Bieksa, and Mitchell. Dallas has high-end talent in Boucher and Zubov, as well as very solid depth on the lower pairings. Both teams have excellent, mobile defenses that move the puck well and limit the turnovers.
Edge: Even

Goaltending:
Marty Turco has a very shaky playoff track record. Roberto Luongo has no playoff track record. With that being said, this will be the difference maker. Luongo is the best goaltender in the league, while Turco has to shake his playoff past.
Edge: Vancouver

Coaching:
Alain Vigneault is the frontrunner for the coach of the year because of the masterful job he has done in turning around the Canucks. Dave Tippett is one of the best in the league as well.
Edge: Even

Intangibles:
Luongo has been anxious to get to the playoffs since he entered the NHL with the Islanders, and this is his shot. His confidence is infectious, and the Canucks' league best PK will get a huge boost with the return of Ryan Kesler and Josh Green. The key for me besides goaltending is if Dallas can find a way to limit the effectiveness of the Sedins'.
Edge: Vancouver

Outcome:
This will be a hard-fought, low scoring series. Both teams play a conservative style and make the safe play over risky breakouts. They have nearly identical team stats this season in every category, but as I have said the playoffs is an entirely different game.
Vancouver in SIX

Nashville Predators vs. San Jose Sharks

Forwards:
Both teams are big, deep and talented. Joe Thornton was great last year in the playoffs, but he and the Sharks have to face Peter Forsberg, one of the greatest playoff performers in recent memory. The Predators and Sharks can roll out three scoring lines and both teams have fast, aggressive depth players. Forsberg can tip the series if he plays like he has in the past.
Edge: Predators

Defense:
Kimo Timonen is the best defenseman in the league that no one knows about, but people soon will. He plays a great game at both ends of the ice. Craig Rivet has added a great defensive presence to the young Sharks blue line. Both teams have a number of young, inexperienced defensemen that are looking to make an impact in the playoffs.
Edge: Even

Goaltending:
Both teams have two capable starting goalies, but unfortunately only one can play at a time. Tomas Vokoun and Evgeni Nabokov look to be the early favorites, and both have performed well in the playoffs, especially Nabokov who led the Sharks deep in the playoffs in 2004.
Edge: Even

Coaching:
Barry Trotz is the longest serving coach in the league, having been with the Predators since they entered the league. Ron Wilson has been to the playoffs before, and is also an excellent coach.
Edge: Even

Intangibles:
With both teams both being so potent at forward, this is going to come down to special teams and defensive zone play. The Sharks have the best PP in the West, and dynamite checkers like Mike Grier and Curtis Brown.

Outcome:
This is going to be the most exciting series in the West from a viewer's perspective. Both teams play fast, physical, up-tempo hockey with lots of offensive chances. I expect the team who is the most proficient in special teams and gets the most stable goaltending to come out on top.
Nashville in SEVEN