No question this year's Cinderella has to be the Montreal Canadiens. They knocked off the President's trophy winning Washington Capitals after being down three games to one. Absolutely stunning. The road doesn't get any easier for Les Habitants who now have to face Sidney Crosby and his defending Stanley Cup champion Pittsburgh Penguins.

Unbelievable, tremendous, amazing, incredible, are just some of the things being written and said about Jaroslav Halak. He has certainly come up big of late, but one thing he can't do is score goals. That's being done by what many see as a rag-tag collection of cast-offs and under-appreciated players, but let's see what we can find if we dig a little deeper.

GP

G

A

Pts

Cammalleri

10

8

5

13

Gomez

10

1

7

8

Plekanec

10

4

4

8

Gionta

10

4

3

7

A.Kostitsyn

10

3

3

6

Subban

5

1

2

3

(All statistics in article are prior to Wednesday night's games)

Small in stature, but not lacking in heart, Brian Gionta has one Stanley Cup to his credit and 34 points in his last 47 NHL playoff games. The one time 48 goal man (82-48-41-89 in 2005-06) is a tough little player who plays bigger than his five foot seven inch, 175 pound frame.

Scott Gomez has won two Stanley Cups. He had recorded 81 points in 114 NHL playoff games heading into this year. Gomez cut his teeth playing in what was a stifling New Jersey system. He knows how to bring it in the playoffs. Watching the opening face-off in Game Seven against Washington, he was really talking it up with Backstrom, obviously trying to get into the young Swede's head. Experienced and responsible defensively. That big contract is paying dividends for Montreal at the moment.

Travis Moen owns one Stanley Cup ring and he played a significant role in that playoff run, recording 12 points in 21 games.

Mike Cammalleri was a complete wild card entering the playoffs as his post-season portfolio was slim to say the least. Entering these playoffs, he had three points in only six post-season games (all last year with Calgary) and seven points in seven AHL playoff matches. That's it.

Tomas Plekanec has carried his resurgent regular season into the playoffs. He now has 21 points in 31 career NHL playoff games and 18 points in 27 AHL playoff contests.

To state the obvious, the loss of Markov is huge for Montreal. He led the team in average time on the ice in both the regular season and playoffs. Promising rookie P.K. Subban has stepped in and hasn't made any glaring mistakes defensively. He has three points in five games and is effectively replacing over two-thirds of Markov's ice time.

Avg TOI

+/-

Markov

23:46

-3

Gionta

22:39

-3

Gorges

22:32

+1

Gomez

21:18

-3

Gill

21:00

+3

Plekanec

19:58

-2

Cammalleri

19:43

-3

Subban

17:11

0

Bergeron

16:15

-11

For Hal Gill and Josh Gorges to be plus players after ten games against both Washington and Pittsburgh is nothing short of amazing. Conversely, Marc-Andre Bergeron is visibly struggling with his defensive play and his shortcomings have really been taken advantage of as evidenced by his league worst minus-11.

Some interesting team statistics:

Pittsburgh had the third highest ranked power play (30.8 per cent), but scored the most power play goals (12), while Montreal had the seventh ranked power play (20.5 per cent) and scored eight goals with the man advantage.

Montreal gets credit for the fifth best penalty kill (86.4 per cent) and has let in six power play goals against, while Pittsburgh sits second last with a 71.0 per cent kill rate, but had only allowed three more power play goals against. Montreal had been short-handed 44 times, the second most in the playoffs compared to Pittsburgh's 31 times down a man.

Montreal had a ridiculous amount of Blocked Shots with 228, nearly 100 more than the second highest team - Pittsburgh had 130!

Montreal had the worst face-off percentage in the playoffs, clicking 44.2 per cent of the time. I wouldn't put much stock into this stat, as Washington sits atop this list winning an awesome 57.1 per cent of their face-offs. There is a saying that statistics are for losers.

Kudos should also go out to the Montreal brain trust for letting go players who on the surface seemed like decent players, but for one reason or another were deemed not a good fit with what Montreal was attempting to put together.

Alexei Kovalev has a Cup ring and 98 points in 116 playoff games. Former Captain, Saku Koivu has 48 points in 54 playoff games. They identified Chris Higgins as expendable, even though he had 11 points in 22 playoff games. Alex Tanguay was an integral part of the Avs Stanley Cup win in 2000-01 with 21 points in 23 games. Robert Lang has 46 points in 91 playoff games.

Their replacements, at least positionally, Brian Gionta, Scott Gomez, Mike Cammalleri, Travis Moen and Dominic Moore are all having good to great playoffs.

Bringing players into Montreal who have experienced playoff success and can play within the game plan orchestrated by Jacques Martin is something that has had a very positive effect on everyone in the dressing room. The only problem is that the team in the other dressing room also has experienced their share of playoff success, making back-to-back upsets very difficult for the Habs. Will the clock strike midnight on this Cinderella story or will valiant Prince Halak find the beauty that fits the glass slipper?