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DallasStars.com

NHL announces start time for Stars - Golden Knights Game 4 on April 29

By Dallas Stars Communications

FRISCO, Texas -- The National Hockey League announced today that the start time for Game 4 of the 2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs First Round series between the Dallas Stars and Vegas Golden Knights has been scheduled for **8:30 p.m. CT** on Monday, April 29 at T-Mobile Arena. The game will be televised on **Bally Sports Southwest** and **ESPN** and heard on **Sportsradio 96.7 FM/1310 AM The Ticket**.

As details become available on the playoff schedule, tickets, home games, watch parties and events, they will be posted on [DallasStars.com](https://www.dallasstars.com).

NHL.com

Stars win Game 3 in OT, cut Golden Knights' lead in West 1st Round

By Paul Delos Santos

April 28k, 2024

LAS VEGAS -- [Wyatt Johnston](#) scored his second goal of the game with 3:37 remaining in overtime, and the Dallas Stars defeated the Vegas Golden Knights 3-2 in Game 3 of the Western Conference First Round at T-Mobile Arena on Saturday.

Johnston skated below the right circle on the rush and roofed in a shot over Vegas goalie [Logan Thompson](#)'s left shoulder.

"I tried a couple low [shots] and it didn't work, so I figured I'd throw one up high," Johnston said. "Luckily enough, it worked."

Vegas leads the best-of-7 series 2-1. Game 4 will be at Vegas on Monday (9:30 p.m. ET; SCRIPPS, BSSW, ESPN, SN, TVAS).

[Miro Heiskanen](#) had a goal and an assist, and [Jake Oettinger](#) made 32 saves for the Stars, who are the No. 1 seed from the Central Division.

Dallas recovered after blowing a 2-0 lead in the second period.

"I loved the first period. I think we did some really good things," Stars coach Pete DeBoer said.

"Executed at a high, high level and had great desperation to our game. Our game's building, you know, Game 2 was better than Game 1. Game 3 was better than Game 2. So that's a great sign for me on our group."

Thompson made 43 saves, and [Brayden McNabb](#) had a goal and an assist for the Golden Knights, who are the second wild card from the West.

"They took it to us," McNabb said. "We had no business being in that game. 'LT' stood on his head and saved us and allowed us a chance. We'll learn from it and have a better start in Game 4."

Johnston gave Dallas a 1-0 lead at 11:11 of the first period with his first goal, a backhand through Thompson's five-hole.

"We've taken a lot of pride in the different ages we have on our team. The different times of the careers we have," Stars forward [Tyler Seguin](#) said. "Seeing [Johnston] last year, and then how much he's evolved to this year, and then, it's one thing being elite in the regular season but to do it in playoffs, at [20 years old], that's great."

Heiskanen extended it to 2-0 at 5:25 of the second on a wrist shot from the left circle on the rush.

McNabb cut it to 2-1 at 10:40 with a wrist shot from behind the right circle after [Chandler Stephenson](#) won the face-off draw.

“We dug ourselves a hole that we were able to climb ourselves out of, but I do use a lot of energy to get out of there,” Vegas captain [Mark Stone](#) said. “Goalie, obviously, kept us in the game for the first 35 minutes, until we got the 2-1 goal. We’re playing a good team, hard to beat the best team in our conference three games in a row.

“So, regroup, we're off, make a few changes. But for the majority of the game, it was just the start that kind of cost us.”

[Jack Eichel](#) tied it 2-2 with a short-handed goal at 13:50 on a 2-on-1.

“They had a level of urgency that we weren't able to match. Sometimes that happens,” Vegas coach Bruce Cassidy said. “At some point you've got to get to your game. It just took us too long. Now, having said that, we weather it because of Logan.

“He gave us every chance to get back in the game, and we did so once it was 2-2, then it was a little bit different, but they executed better than we did. You see it in overtime. They had more jump, more urgency. We didn't have that level we needed tonight to win a playoff hockey game.”

NOTES: Johnston (20 years, 349 days) became the youngest player in Stars/Minnesota North Stars history to score an overtime goal in the playoffs, surpassing the mark set by Steve Ott (21 years, 237 days) in Game 3 of the 2004 Western Conference Quarterfinals. ... Thompson tied [Marc-Andre Fleury](#) (Game 7 of the 2019 first round; Game 2 of the 2018 second round) for the most saves by a Golden Knights goaltender in a playoff game.

NHL.com

Johnston scores OT goal for the ages for Stars in Game 3 against Golden Knights

By Nicholas Cotsonika

April 28, 2024

LAS VEGAS -- [Wyatt Johnston](#) is just 20 years old. The Dallas Stars center doesn't turn 21 until May 14.

"He still can't get into the casino and play cards," Dallas coach Peter DeBoer said. "He's not old enough."

Yet he hit it big on the Strip on Saturday.

Johnston scored his second goal of the night 16:23 into overtime, giving the Stars a 3-2 win against the Vegas Golden Knights in Game 3 of the Western Conference First Round at T-Mobile Arena.

Had the Stars lost, they would have fallen behind the Golden Knights 3-0 in a best-of-7 series for the second straight season. They did it against them in the conference final last season, ended up losing to them in six games and watched them go on to win the Stanley Cup.

This time, Dallas cut Vegas' lead to 2-1. Game 4 is here Monday (9:30 p.m. ET; SCRIPPS, BSSW, ESPN, SN, TVAS).

"You don't want to go down 3-0 to the defending Stanley Cup champs," Johnston said. "I think it's that desperation coming out and making sure we're doing all those things that make us successful."

Johnston is a big reason the Stars are considered Stanley Cup contenders.

Selected in the first round (No. 23) of the 2021 NHL Draft, he had 41 points (24 goals, 17 assists) in 82 games as a 19-year-old rookie last season, then six points (four goals, two assists) in 19 Stanley Cup Playoff games.

He had 65 points (32 goals, 33 assists) in 82 games this season, leading Dallas in goals.

The Stars have a mix of players on their roster -- veterans hungry for a championship, players in the middle of their NHL careers and young up-and-comers like Johnston.

"We've taken a lot of pride in the different ages we have on our team, the different times of the careers we have," veteran forward [Tyler Seguin](#) said. "[We've seen] him last year and then how much he's evolved to this year. It's one thing being elite in the regular season, but to do it in playoffs as his age, that's great."

After averaging 3.59 goals per game in the regular season, third in the NHL, Dallas had four goals in the first two games against Vegas.

The Stars responded by dominating the first 30 minutes of Game 3.

Johnston backhanded a rebound between the pads of goalie [Logan Thompson](#) 11:11 into the first period to give Dallas a 1-0 lead. Defenseman [Miro Heiskanen](#) finished a tic-tac-toe play at 5:25 of the second to make it 2-0.

Midway through regulation, the Stars were outshooting the Golden Knights 30-10. Thompson was the only reason their lead wasn't larger.

"He was like Dominik Hasek down there," Stars goalie [Jake Oettinger](#) said. "He was incredible."

Vegas came back to tie it 2-2. Defenseman [Brayden McNabb](#) scored at 10:40 of the second, and center [Jack Eichel](#) followed with a shorthanded goal 3:10 later. The second half of regulation, the Golden Knights outshot the Stars 17-8.

But the Stars stuck with it, even though Thompson continued to shine. Thompson stopped Johnston with his left pad at 14:28 of overtime. Then Johnston took a pass at the red line, accelerated over the blue line, darted to the right and cut around defenseman [Shea Theodore](#). As Theodore stretched out his stick, Johnston flicked the puck over Thompson's left shoulder and under the crossbar.

"He had a chance to go five-hole in overtime, and he was a little frustrated," Seguin said. "But the next shift, you saw what he did. It's just about bouncing back and continuing on." Johnston adjusted.

"I tried a couple low, and it didn't work," he said. "So I figured I'd try to throw one up high, and lucky enough, it worked."

This might be Vegas, but it wasn't luck. Remember, he can't go in the casino, anyway. "Really incredible play," DeBoer said.

Johnston's final stat line: two goals, plus-2, eight shots on goal and 15 shot attempts in 23:50.

He became the youngest player in Stars/Minnesota North Stars history to score an overtime goal in the playoffs, breaking the previous mark set by Steve Ott, who was 21 when he scored in overtime in Game 3 of Conference Quarterfinals in 2004.

"I thought he was just outstanding tonight," DeBoer said. "For a kid to be under 21 years old and be on that ice with that level of player and look like he did all night tonight, just an outstanding player."

Johnston said the playoffs definitely feel a lot different this season. He got to go to the conference final last season, play against the Golden Knights and experience the over-the-top atmosphere of T-Mobile Arena, and he gained confidence.

He's growing up in front of our eyes. DeBoer said he will be in the next generation of stars in the NHL.

"Everyone in here knows how good he is and what a good person he is," Oettinger said. "The sky's the limit for him, so when he does stuff like that, no one in here's surprised. I'm just so happy for him, and such a good kid. I'm happy he's in green and white."

The Dallas Morning News

Stars phenom Wyatt Johnston saves Dallas' season with Game 3 overtime winner

By Lia Assimakopoulos

April 28, 2024

Vegas is only so much fun for someone Wyatt Johnston's age.

He can't celebrate at the bar with his teammates, nor can he test his luck at a casino during Dallas' four-day stay.

But the 20-year-old Stars forward left T-Mobile Arena Saturday night as the biggest winner.

Johnston lifted Dallas to its first win of the 2024 Stanley Cup playoffs by a 3-2 margin in overtime, accounting for two of Dallas' goals including his first overtime game-winner of his career.

He was by far Dallas' best player on the ice — as he has been in many games this season — and sparked the dominant offensive performance that Dallas needed.

"I thought he was just outstanding tonight," Stars coach Pete DeBoer said. "For a kid to be under 21 years old and be on that ice with that level of player and look like he did all night tonight, just an outstanding player."

Johnston logged 23:50 of ice time and had eight shots on goal. He scored his first goal a little over 11 minutes into the game, cleaning up a rebound in front of the net. His top-shelf overtime goal looked eerily similar to the one he scored in Game 7 of last year's series with Seattle, which clinched Dallas a spot in the Western Conference Finals.

But less than a year later, his game and confidence levels have drastically improved.

"Definitely feels a lot different," he said. "Obviously, I got to experience a pretty good run last year. I think just learning from last year the playoff style of hockey and trying my best to learn the different areas playing Vegas."

Johnston led Dallas in goals this season with 32 and is now tied with Jason Robertson for the lead in playoff goals (2). He's done that despite being a third-line player.

However, his play earned him a spot on Dallas' top line Saturday alongside Robertson and Roope Hintz. The trio played 111 minutes together in the regular season and led the league in expected goals percentage at 80.2%

Saturday night was just another example of how dangerous they can be.

“They’re great players,” Johnston said of his new linemates. “They’re so smart. See the ice really well, make those plays. I think for me it’s just making sure I’m making those plays. I think it’s just trying to feed off of them.”

Johnston and his line were relentless in Game 3, especially as Vegas goalie Logan Thompson had the game of his career.

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Thompson made 43 saves on 46 shots, including stunning glove saves and stops on breakaways. He turned away a dangerous shot from Johnston just moments before the game-winner.

But Johnston continued to threaten, and it paid off.

“Wyatt Johnston. That’s kind of how we solved them,” Tyler Seguin said.

Dallas’ young core has been the heart and soul of the last few months of the season with Johnston and 21-year-old Logan Stankoven delivering the team’s best performances on many nights. The fanbase saw the potential for that group to grow when the team announced it had called up 22-year-old Mavrik Bourque from the Texas Stars, though he was ultimately a healthy scratch Saturday.

DeBoer cautioned that Bourque would not be responsible for saving the Stars’ season if he did enter the lineup.

But Johnston’s performance Saturday night just might have.

“Johnny was such a stud and made a huge play. Biggest play of the season so far,” Stars goalie Jake Oettinger said. “Everyone in here knows how good he is and just what a good person he is. The sky’s the limit for him. When he does stuff like that, no one in here is surprised. We’re happy he’s in green and white.”

The Dallas Morning News

5 thoughts from Stars-Knights: Wyatt Johnston ends graveyard-shift Game 3 in overtime

By Lia Assimakopoulos
April 28, 2024

The Stars secured their first win of the postseason in a 3-2 overtime finish against the Vegas Golden Knights at T-Mobile Arena on Saturday night.

Vegas, which held a 2-0 series lead, fought back in the second period to force extra time, but Wyatt Johnston found the game-winner for Dallas with under five minutes left in the first overtime period to guarantee the series will return to American Airlines Center next week.

Here are five thoughts from Game 3 of the first-round series:

Stars shine in overtime

Last playoffs, Dallas struggled in overtime with a 1-4 record, including a 1-2 OT mark against Vegas.

But after improving its regular-season overtime record to 12-9, Dallas was able to carry that success into the postseason.

Johnston scored the game-winning goal from a sharp angle to hand Dallas its first win of the postseason.

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Even though it took some time for Johnston to put it in the net, Dallas controlled the overtime period and had a slight 8-7 shot advantage. Vegas looked tired, especially early on.

“They executed better,” Vegas coach Bruce Cassidy said. “You could see it in overtime. They had more jump, more urgency.”

The Stars could have put the game away in regulation with a plethora of chances early, but it didn’t let the series completely slip away thanks to a strong finish.

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Firing from all cylinders

Sometimes when teams are in deep holes in a series, the desperation starts to kick in, and they’ll throw whatever they can on net.

Based on the box score through the first two periods, it looked like that was Dallas' strategy, but in reality, the Stars generated an impressive amount of quality chances that led to a 46-34 shot advantage in the contest.

In the first period alone, the Stars outshot the Golden Knights 18-7 and had an 11-0 advantage in high-danger chances, per Natural Stat Trick. They finished the game with 27 high-danger chances compared to four for Vegas.

"I loved the first period," Stars coach Pete DeBoer said. "We did some really good things, executed at a high level, had great desperation to our game. I would guess [Bruce Cassidy] would say they didn't."

The Stars got off to about as hot of a start as possible, dominating the first period. While they only came away with one goal, they easily could've had two or three more early.

They also controlled the pace on the rush with 12 chances. Vegas had just three.

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Dallas cooled off later in the game, especially in the third period, where it had just five shots on goal. But it was the more aggressive team overall, which ultimately paid off in the overtime win.

Line changes pay dividends

The Stars rarely make drastic changes to all four lines, but they did Saturday. Injuries to Mason Marchment and Radek Faksa somewhat forced Pete DeBoer's hand, but he clearly wanted to see something different from Games 1 and 2.

That's what he got, as all four of Dallas' lines looked solid. Its new top line of Jason Robertson, Wyatt Johnston and Roope Hintz was the league's most dangerous in the limited time it skated together in the regular season with an 80.2% expected goals percentage. It struck first for Dallas in the first period, as Johnston cleaned up a rebound. It also accounted for Johnston's overtime game-winner.

Its third line of Tyler Seguin, Joe Pavelski and Evgenii Dadonov, which was the biggest wild card entering the game, accounted for the second goal via stunning passing from Dadonov to Seguin to Miro Heiskanen, who finished. Seguin also had a pair of breakaway opportunities but was stuffed by Vegas goalie Logan Thompson.

It was unclear which combinations DeBoer would try ahead of Saturday night, but his recipe was a successful one in getting an offensive spark.

Logan Thompson put on a clinic

The primary reason the Stars didn't run the Golden Knights out of the building during their hot start was Vegas' goalie. Thompson put on a magnificent performance in front of his home crowd for the first time this postseason.

Thompson, who had never played a playoff game on home ice before Saturday, made 43 saves, including multiple diving glove saves and stops on breakaway attempts.

"You're not playing against him, but you feel like you are. He was incredible and the reason they were in the game that long," Stars goalie Jake Oettinger said. "Those are hard mentally when the other guy is playing that well. I knew I was going to have to make a couple of big ones."

Oettinger was able to come away with 32 saves in the outing, including some key ones in the third period and overtime.

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Some of Thompson's more notable plays from the night included a robbery of Thomas Harley's shot at an open net in the first period and three 1-on-1 breakaway attempts in the second period — two by Seguin and one by Sam Steel. He also stopped Hintz on the doorstep of Dallas' second power play, which his team turned into a shorthanded goal by Jack Eichel on the other end.

Special teams struggles continue

Special teams haven't told the story of the series, but it has not played to Dallas' favor in the way that it should.

Vegas' two second-period goals came when they had just four skaters on the ice — the first in a 4-on-4 they baited Dallas into during a post-whistle scrum and the second shorthanded.

After Thompson made a save at one end on the power play, Eichel scored on an odd-man rush to tie the score late in the second period.

The Stars gave up just four shorthanded goals in the regular season. Three of those were in an Oct. 21 meeting with Philadelphia. They only allowed one more in their next 78 games.

The Stars went 0-for-2 on their power play chances. They are now 1-for-5 in the series. Vegas, on the other hand, is 2-for-4.

That's surprising given the advantage Dallas had on special teams entering the season. Dallas ranked sixth in power-play percentage (24.2%) and eighth in penalty kill (82%) in the regular season while Vegas ranked 20th in power play (20.2%) and 16th in penalty kill (79.3%).

The Athletic

Stars' youngster Wyatt Johnston delivers 'biggest play of the season' in Vegas

By Jesse Granger

April 28, 2024

LAS VEGAS — Stars forward [Wyatt Johnston](#) isn't old enough to sit down at a slot machine at one of the many casinos within walking distance of T-Mobile Arena, but Saturday night he hit a jackpot on the Las Vegas Strip.

The 20-year-old put together dominant shift after dominant shift, willing the [Stars](#) into overtime. Once there, he caught a pass from [Jason Robertson](#) with speed through the neutral zone, cruised around Vegas defenseman [Shea Theodore](#) and won the game with a perfectly placed shot off the crossbar and into the net.

The 3-2 victory was the Stars' first of the postseason, closing their first-round series deficit to 2-1.

"What a player," Dallas coach Peter DeBoer said after. "A really incredible play by one of the great young players, the next generation of stars in this league. I thought he was just outstanding tonight. For a kid to be under 21 years old and be on that ice, with that level of play, and look like he did all night tonight, he's just an outstanding player."

The Stars dominated Saturday's game, needing overtime only because of a herculean effort by Vegas goalie [Logan Thompson](#). He stopped 43 shots, tying [Marc-André Fleury](#)'s franchise playoff record, to hold the [Golden Knights](#) in the game.

"He was like Dominik Hasek down there, it was incredible," Stars goalie [Jake Oettinger](#) said of Thompson's effort.

Facing the potential of falling behind in the series 3-0 with a loss, the Stars unsurprisingly took the ice with a noticeable edge in urgency.

"You can't manufacture (the feeling of having) your back against the wall, staring at 3-0," DeBoer said. "I think our group understood the situation tonight and played that way right from the start of the game."

Dallas outshot Vegas 18-7 in the opening frame, and generated 21 high-danger chances in the first two periods. It was a barrage of offense by the Stars, led by Johnston and his 15 shot attempts. Thompson stood on his head for Vegas, turning away breakaway after breakaway, but the Stars eventually found an answer: Their 20-year-old star with the playoff composure of a grizzled vet.

“Wyatt Johnston,” [Tyler Seguin](#) said, laughing. “That’s kind of how we solved (Thompson). He’s a great goalie and made some good saves tonight. We have a kid here that’s elite, and won the game for us.”

Johnston’s rise to stardom happened quickly in Dallas. He’s played every game for the Stars over the last two seasons, racking up 56 goals and 50 assists in the regular season over that span. Even more impressive, especially at his age, Johnston has elevated his game in the postseason. He scored two game winners during last year’s run to the conference finals, and added another Saturday night in Vegas.

“It definitely feels a lot different (in my second postseason),” Johnston said. “Obviously we got to experience a pretty good run by us last year, and so I think just learning from last year, the playoff style of hockey, and trying my best to learn (in all) areas.”

“Johnny is just a stud and made a huge play,” Oettinger said of Johnston. “Biggest play of the season so far.”

“Everyone in here knows how good he is, and what a good person he is. The sky’s the limit for him. When he does stuff like that, no one in here is surprised. I’m just so happy for him. He’s such a good kid. I’m happy he’s in green and white.”

In a high-stakes playoff game with Stanley Cup pedigree all over the ice, Johnston still found a way to stand out. With Johnston on the ice at even strength the Stars held commanding advantages in shot attempts (30-15), shots (15-6), high-danger chances (8-0) and, most importantly, goals (2-0).

“Seeing him last year, and how much he’s evolved this year,” Seguin said. “It’s one thing to be elite in the regular season, but to do it in the playoffs at his age, that’s great.”

Johnston’s overtime goal was a perfect example of his unique composure for such a young player. Thompson had stopped him six times in the game, including a big save earlier in the overtime period, but Johnston eventually solved the puzzle.

“I tried a couple (shots) low and it didn’t work, so I figured I’d try to throw one up high,” he said, “and lucky enough it worked.”

The Stars were the faster team early on, winning races to every loose puck and breaking the puck out of their zone with much more speed and efficiency than the previous two games. It came as no surprise to either coach.

“Probably because they were down 2-0 so they obviously had a level of urgency that we weren’t able to match,” Vegas coach Bruce Cassidy said. “Sometimes that happens. You have a successful road trip, you win a couple and then you come home and think maybe it’s going to be easy. We should be further along than that, so I have to prepare the guys better, clearly.”

The Stars' dangerous transition attack that Vegas held in check so well over the first two games in Dallas was suddenly alive. If not for heroics by Thompson, the game would've been out of reach early. Johnston got the Stars on the board midway through the first period, out-battling Vegas' [Nicolas Roy](#) in front of the net for a rebound goal.

"We had great desperation to our game," DeBoer said. "I would guess Butch would say they didn't. I think when both teams are on it's really hard for either team to look like that. It's probably the first time in the series that a team has grabbed that type of an advantage for that long of a period."

Despite the massive edge in shots and scoring chances for the Stars, Vegas climbed right back into the game in a matter of minutes in the second period. First, defenseman [Brayden McNabb](#) scored with a gorgeous shot through traffic that found the top corner. Less than four minutes later, [Jack Eichel](#) skated down the ice short-handed and beat Oettinger with a hard wrist shot to the same corner.

"That's the danger of their team," said DeBoer, who knows the opponent well after coaching the Golden Knights for three seasons. "Their quick strike offense can turn a game really quickly, especially in this building. I wasn't surprised. As the chances kept going, and we kept missing or LT kept making saves, I knew that we were playing with fire, and sure enough they did get back in it. But I loved our response. I thought we had good composure and got it back on the rails." On one hand, Dallas finally looked like the team that earned the No. 1 seed in the Western Conference, and DeBoer was thrilled with his team's ability to improve as each game has gone along in this series. He's hoping this is just another step in his team building its game. On the other hand, the Stars controlled play for the vast majority of Saturday's game and still needed overtime theatrics to pull out a win. The fact a 27-4 edge in high-danger chances resulted in a nail-biter shows just how tough this Vegas team is to beat. The Golden Knights didn't play particularly well, and yet were one shot away from taking a 3-0 stranglehold on the series.

"They executed better than we did," Cassidy said. "You could see it in overtime, they had more jump, more urgency. We just didn't have that level that we needed to have tonight to win a playoff hockey game. We're going to need to be a lot better on Monday, and I'm going to make sure to prepare the guys so we are."

Dallas had a decided edge in urgency in Game 3. That shouldn't be the case when the teams meet on Monday with the momentum of the series hanging in the balance. Both sides know the ramifications. Home teams that win Game 4 to take a 3-1 series lead have gone on to win the series 86.3 percent of the time in [NHL](#) history. Road teams that win to tie the series 2-2 have gone on to win the series 58.7 percent of the time.

"We knew the situation coming into Vegas," Seguin said. "Our message today was focusing on your first shift and that first period. We had to come in here and steal one no matter what, and now we want to steal two."

ESPN.com

Stars 'steal one' in OT, revive series hopes vs. Golden Knights

By Ryan S. Clark

April 28, 2024

After falling into a 2-0 series hole while losing six straight and nine of their past 11 games to the [Vegas Golden Knights](#), the [Dallas Stars](#) had to do something in Game 3. And they did. The Stars snapped their losing skid to the defending Stanley Cup champions, with 20-year-old forward [Wyatt Johnston](#) scoring twice, including the winning goal in their 3-2 overtime win Saturday in the Western Conference quarterfinals at T-Mobile Arena.

"We knew the situation coming into Vegas," said Stars center [Tyler Seguin](#), who finished with an assist. "We know these guys are the champs from last year, and we know how good they are on home ice. ... We knew we had to come in here, we had to steal one no matter. Now, we want to steal two."

Coming close but not being close enough to win games had been the narrative for the Stars entering Game 3.

They opened Game 1 with a 4-3 loss and were within striking distance in Game 2 before an empty-netter from [Jack Eichel](#) late in the third period created extra separation in a 3-1 defeat. Game 3 saw Dallas find its footing early. Johnston scored the opening goal near the halfway point of the first period before [Miro Heiskanen](#) doubled the lead to 2-0 a little more than five minutes into the second period.

Having a two-goal lead, however, was short-lived. The Golden Knights tied the score on a pair of second-period goals from [Brayden McNabb](#) and Eichel.

Both teams struggled to come up with the winning goal in the third and in overtime. Stars goaltender [Jake Oettinger](#) finished with 32 saves and a .941 save percentage for what was his strongest performance in the postseason.

Oettinger's counterpart, [Logan Thompson](#), was one of the main reasons why the Golden Knights even reached overtime. Johnston's first goal along with Heiskanen's salvo that gave the Stars a 2-0 advantage was the product of an attack that went from struggling to find consistency in the first two games of the series to one that showed why the Stars are among the teams that could potentially dethrone the Golden Knights this postseason.

Through the first two games of this series, Thompson had faced 50 shots. The Stars already had 33 shots by the end of the second period before finishing with 46 shots, with Thompson stopping 43 of them.

Johnston was responsible for a game-high eight shots, with his final being the winner that he snuck beneath the crossbar and over Thompson's shoulder from a side angle to bring the Stars within a game of tying the series.

"I tried a couple low, and it didn't work," said Johnston, who led the Stars with 33 goals in the regular season. "So, I tried to throw one up high and I'm lucky enough it worked."

Stars coach Peter DeBoer reiterated afterward that his team had to be the more desperate club Saturday night.

DeBoer's logic was simple. The Golden Knights were still going to have a series lead no matter what happened in Game 3. The Stars, on the other hand, had to find a way to avoid going back to Dallas trailing 3-0.

Getting off to an early start. Finding ways to constantly get shots. Making sure the Golden Knights were the ones who struggled to find cohesion at times. These are the details that allowed the Stars to win Saturday, and they're also the attributes DeBoer said proves the team has shown gradual improvement since the start of the playoffs.

"What I do like about our game is that our game's building," DeBoer said. "Game 2 was better than Game 1. Game 3 was better than Game 2. That's a great sign for me on our group."

Shap Shots

20/20: Wyatt Johnston saves the Stars season

By Sean Shapiro

April 28, 2024

It's now a series.

While technically the Vegas Golden Knights couldn't have won this series with a Game 3 victory, we all know what happens when a team goes up 3-0.

So the Dallas Stars, in a must-win game, won in overtime. They probably should have won earlier, but we'll talk about all of that now in the 20/20.

1. Logan Thompson.

2. Logan Thompson.... fine, I'll give you some more.

The Vegas goalie hosted a masterclass in goaltending Sunday. Thompson stopped 43 shots, turned away at least half a dozen breakaways and turned what should have been a Dallas blowout into a tight overtime playoff game.

I'm not the biggest believer in Money Puck's Deserve to Win O'Meter, but in this game, the meter lined up with what I watched.

Here is how it registered at the end of the second period.



3. Vegas turned the tide a bit in the third period, but eventually, finally, the better team won in overtime and it's a whole new series.

4. Wyatt Johnston finally did what no one else on the Stars was able to do on the game-winning goal.

He elevated the puck over Thompson.

It wasn't Johnston's best chance of the net nor was it necessarily "high-danger," but it was effective as he beat the goalie over the left shoulder.

Here is the angle:

It was Johnston's second goal of the night, and was certainly earned by a player who has been one of Dallas' best players in this entire series.

5. The game swung with 6:10 remaining in the second period.

With Dallas on a power play, Thompson made another scintillating glove save, this one on Roope Hintz, which sparked a 2-on-1 rush the other way for Vegas.

Miro Heiskanen played the 2-on-1 well, he took away the pass, but Jack Eichel played it even better as he sniped a shot past Jake Oettinger on the stick side.

It was a two-goal swing, instantly turning a potential 3-1 Dallas lead into a 2-2 tie.

6. Dallas has historically been a slow-starting team.

It's been a common theme in the Jamie Benn era, across multiple coaches, the Stars often start games and series slow.

That wasn't the case in Game 3.

Dallas dominated the opening period. The Stars outshot the Golden Knights 18-7 and had an [11-0 edge in high-danger chances according to Natural Stat Trick](#).

Process-wise, it was about as good as a period the Stars could have drawn up.

Results-wise, however, there was a slight frustration from a Dallas perspective that they only led 1-0.

7. One of Dallas' struggles in the first two games was their inability to find the second pucks.

The rebounds off both the goalie and the defenders in the high slot. The rare moments of chaos that exist within the Golden Knights typically stout defensive system.

It was fitting the Stars opened scoring in Game 3 that way, with Wyatt Johnston finding the second puck to give Dallas a 1-0 lead.

It was a designed play for Dallas off a face-off win by Roope Hintz, quickly moving the puck out to Jason Robertson along the right flank in a spot similar to his normal power play office.

This is what the Stars love on the power play — Robertson with the shot-pass option coming down the right side of the offensive zone with traffic headed to the net.

From here, it's all about Hintz and Johnston doing the dirty work.

Both stop at the net, but Hintz engages earlier with his defender while Johnston is able to clean things up before Vegas can get its defensive bunker built.

8. Evgenii Dadonov has a weird past history with Vegas.

He spent one season with the Golden Knights, and they tried to trade him away, but had the transaction cancelled because it negated his no-trade clause.

Dadonov eventually left Vegas by way of Ottawa and Montreal before he ended up in Dallas last season.

And with the Stars lack of success against Vegas in recent years, it had to feel pretty good for Dadonov to make the play he did on Heiskanen's goal that made it 2-0.

Dadonov isn't overly fast, but one of his strengths is that he knows his weaknesses. He's been described to me by multiple coaches as a cerebral player, and instead of pushing for the shot from this moment, he holds up to allow others to join the play.

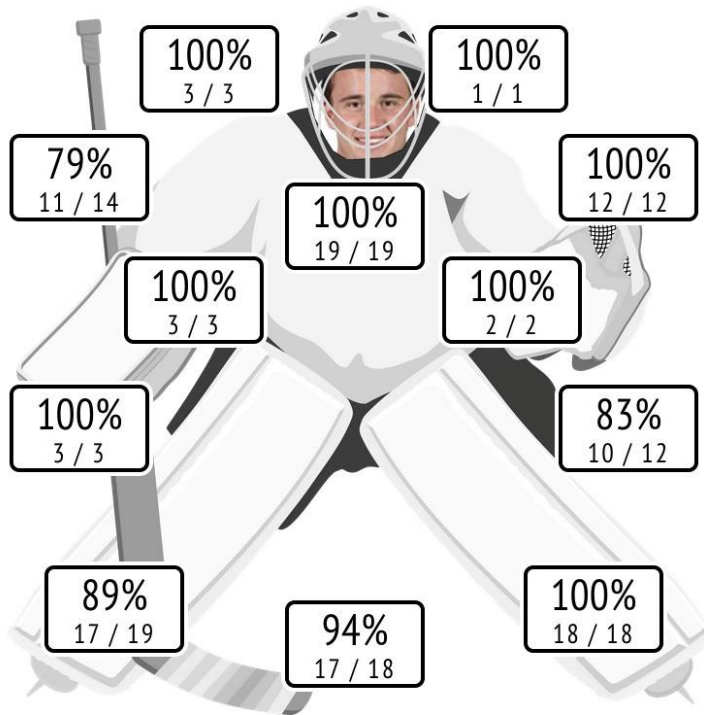
That sets the stage well for Tyler Seguin and Heiskanen, who build off that space.

9. Credit to the TNT broadcast on pointing out that Brayden McNabb's goal was a clean look because Joe Pavelski and Matt Duchene both overly committed to the right side of the ice after a face-off loss.

10. Oettinger was beaten high blocker twice.

If you are looking for the "book," on where to shoot on Oettinger lately, that's the place to go. Coming into tonight, here was Oettinger's performance from the past five games according to InStat.

SPOTS ON GOALIE



Notice that save percentage on shots to the high blocker?

Yeah, Vegas did too.

11. To Oettinger's credit, he was very good in the third period and in overtime when Vegas turned it on and pushed for a game winner and series clincher.

12. Mavrik Bourque was recalled before Game 3 and took warmups, but didn't play in the game. Instead Ty Dellandrea and Craig Smith entered the lineup with Mason Marchment and Radek Faksa injured.

Bourque's call-up for Game 3, according to a couple sources, was effectively a smoke screen and insurance if another injury had happened. Bourque could have played, he's NHL ready and just won the AHL MVP award, but the Stars are also strong believers in sticking with players — like Dellandrea and Smith — that were part of the NHL group all season.

13. Dallas elected to effectively only use five defenders in this game.

Nils Lundkvist only had five shifts and none after a 35-second cameo in the second period.

With Jani Hakanpää still hurt, the Stars are greatly missing having No. 6 defenseman the coaching staff actually trusts.

Pete DeBoer misses Joel Hanley.

14. Thompson robbed Thomas Harley in the first period.

Harley got to the front of the net in transition and picked up the rebound after a high-danger shot by Miro Heiskanen, shoveling a backhand back at the net that was thwarted by Thompson's glove. Two key things happened on the save.

First, Thompson didn't overly slide as he moved right to left. Second, Harley didn't get the puck completely clean, so it had a slight flutter that made it easier for the goalie to complete a great save.

15. Thompson then robbed Seguin early in the second period on a clean breakaway.

And with how much space Seguin had after stealing the puck from Jack Eichel, it felt like more of a shootout than an in-game breakaway.

Seguin attempted to wait out Thompson the backhand, but couldn't elevate the puck over the right pad or get the proper extension around the toe.

Seguin tried to go high blocker later in the period on a shorthanded breakaway that was also stopped by Thompson.

16. I didn't expect Esa Lindell to be on the list of multiple players robbed by a goalie, but he nearly scored twice in the second period.

First on a breakaway out of the box, going high glove. Later on an in-zone play where Thompson flashed leather.

17. I found this interesting today — [Vegas forward Anthony Mantha uses a white stick with white tape because he's colorblind.](#)

18. Linesmen Devin Berg took a puck to the face early in the second period and needed stitches and left the game for a bit.

One thing that should be noted, in the playoffs there is always an additional referee on standby. So Dan O'Rourke, a referee, entered the game as a linesman for about eight minutes of game time.

19. Another Thompson note.

He catches with his right hand, he's one of the unicorns in the NHL.

Of the 98 goalies to appear in an NHL game this season, 91 catch with their left hand.

Of the seven that catch with their right-hand, only three played more than five NHL games this season — Thompson, Charlie Lindgren, and Karel Vejmelka.

From a Dallas perspective, of their 82 regular season games, 78 were played against goalies that catch left-handed.

It's not an excuse, but I think Thompson's glove positioning is helping him live rent-free in the Stars' heads.

20. Wyatt Johnston, future Stars captain?

For a long time I've thought it would be Robertson, but games like this make me wonder if he's the eventual successor to Jamie Benn.

Either way, Game 4 is Monday. Thanks for reading.

Stars Stack

(2024 Playoffs, Round 1) Game 3 Stray Observations: Wyatt Johnston...elite.

By David Castillo

April 28, 2024

Fine. Let's do it.

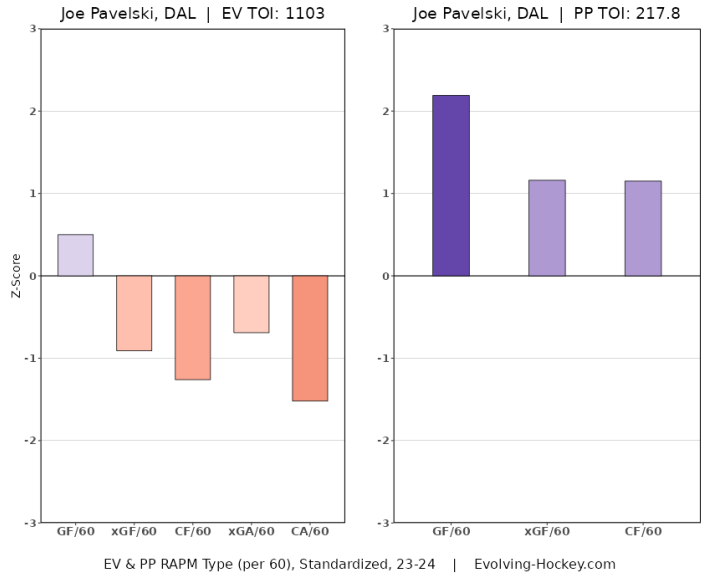
Let's talk about Wyatt Johnston. First and foremost, a lot of credit to Jim Nill and his scouts on this one. The rest of the world wasn't necessarily out to lunch on this one, mainly because this was the COVID draft. A lot of shortened seasons, and minimal video made sure that 2021 would always be a draft with a ton of hindsight analysis. But even in that context, this is a whopper.

Johnston already looks like the best forward on a team with Jason Robertson, Roope Hintz, and Matt Duchene; players more or less in their prime. How does Seattle feel about picking Matty Beniers, right now? Or San Jose taking William Eklund? Edmonton, taking Xavier Bourgault, etc? Unfair or not, I'm starting to wonder if Dallas didn't get the best player in that draft. These are all fantastic players, and Johnston's work isn't done, but Johnston didn't just score the goals, he embodied the Stars' dominant performance, [tallying 11 scoring chances all by himself](#).

Talking about Johnston does a disservice to the rest of the team, though, who all put in the work. If you're looking for good signs, you found them basically everywhere. That Logan Thompson's brilliant performance wasn't enough to win the game says a lot about the group effort. Vegas still has the 2-1 lead, with another game at home, but for now, the Stars survive.

Robertson-Hintz-Johnston

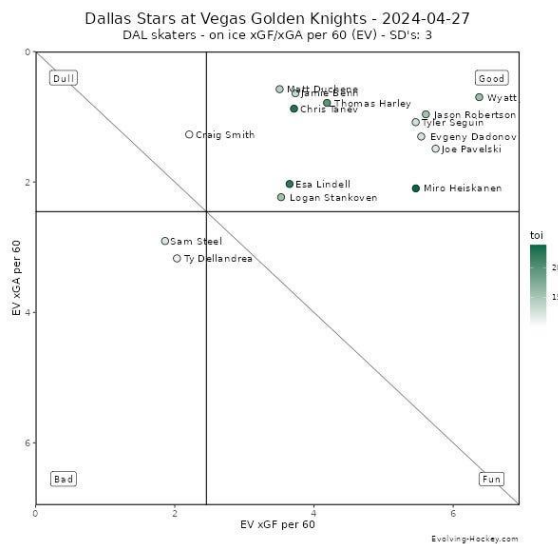
Right away getting Joe Pavelski off the top line paid off in the opening shifts. This is not necessarily a slight against Pavelski. Father Time has finally gotten the upper hand on him, which is to be expected. But he simply hasn't been driving play, like, at all. Pavelski is a case study on in the contradiction between production and performance.



It's not the this was a secret throughout the year. Johnston got some icetime with the Robertson and Hintz early in the season, and they looked how they looked tonight: fantastic. But I don't think anyone was prepared for the kind of game Johnston ended up having next to those two. It was so good, you almost want him to save games like this for when he can grow a proper beard.

Duchene-Benn-Stankoven

A lot of credit goes to the other new-look top line.



Vegas had all kinds of trouble early with just the raw velocity Stankoven and Duchene in particular generate from their rush attack. Dallas definitely started to look a little winded towards the end.

They didn't generate much in the third period, but one of the few chances came from Stankoven next to a wide open net. It was an impossible pass to wrangle, but he nearly pulled it off. Don't be surprised if they get on the board in Game 4.

Jake Oettinger

Oettinger probably wants that McNabb goal back, but I thought it was an assured performance. Thompson was such an impossible standard, it's easy to think less of Oettinger by comparison, but I thought he stayed composed when he needed to.

Tyler Seguin: also new and improved

Seguin could have had at least a pair against a goaltender having a normal night. I thought he was one of the better forwards, an absolute dog on the forecheck, and with his old legs under him — if just for a night. I'm not too sure that new third line is capable of moving forward, but it wasn't bad, and Seguin was a big part of that.

Leftovers: Dellandrea and Smith draw back in

I've been one of the last, remaining fans of Ty Dellandrea. No, I don't think he's a top six forward waiting in the wings, but I do think he's bottom six material, and belongs on an NHL team. It was frankly odd to take Smith out, who had been a mainstay in favor of Evgenii Dadonov, who wasn't, but both attacked with the kind of speed you want in a fourth line.

The Vegas perspective

For all the hooting and hollering from Stars fans, myself included, I doubt Vegas cares much about this one, save for wasting that kind of performance from their goalie. They eventually weathered Dallas' storm, even if they couldn't weather Johnston. Nonetheless, there's still Game 4 in their barn.

It'll be interesting to see how Cassidy responds. Dallas really opened up a can on Vegas, tactically. It's hard to tell much of it was on the new forward lines, or Vegas simply caught slipping for a game, but everything that made them effective in the previous two contests seemed like an afterthought. If you're the Knights, a game like this should be concerning. You got the matchups you wanted, and none of it seemed like enough. Unlike the previous two games, where the games were competitive, this one wasn't. I don't think the Stars have suddenly figured it all out, but I also don't see many teams stopping that top six. If any team can figure it out, though, it's definitely Vegas.

Stars Thoughts

Game 3 WCQF AfterThoughts: Wyatt Johnston Outwaits the Universe

By Robert Tiffin

April 28, 2024

Look, it is past 2am, and I am tired. We're all fighting it, and each one of us is day-to-day, to paraphrase Vin Scully. Rooting for a team in the Central Division means being beholden to the television schedules of coastal executives. But you know who doesn't care about time zones?

Wyatt Johnston tonight:

- 23:28 TOI
 - 2 goals, including OT winner
 - 15 shot attempts
 - 8 shots on goal
 - I had him down for 11 scoring chances
 - Stars had 91% of expected goal share in his minutes via NST
- Dimitri Filipovic (@DimFilipovic) [April 28, 2024](#)

I don't think a large portion of the fan base has caught up to how good Johnston has been. He's effectively become Dallas's most consistent and best forward, and even as a teenager last year, he showed how little he gets fazed by playoff pressure.

His patience on the winning goal was telling, just as Dadonov's patience to set up the Stars' second goal was. Dallas finally found a way to avoid charging into the brick wall that is the Knights' 1-2-2, and they found it early and often. Johnston may not have scored on most of his chances, but he stayed focused and calm enough to take advantage of his final chance in a crucial moment, even if the angle made it look like one of his lower-tier scoring opportunities, relative to so many others he got during the game.

Some people are just like that, immune to whatever stress we mortal humans feel. When Johnston was faced with what seemed like the Stars' 100th scoring chance of a maddening game, he channeled [Jason Spezza in 2016](#)...or perhaps himself, last year against Seattle.

Some players just see the game in slow motion, and Johnston has proven himself to be a card-carrying member of that group. Jack Eichel is also in that category, or at least I'm assuming he is, based on how time seemed to slow down the way it does during an action movie sequence involving the death of a hero's best friend.

That's a good reminder of how much our emotions taint our observation, though, because Dallas well and truly dominated this game in every way except the most important one. The Knights didn't score a single 5v5 goal tonight, and Dallas scored three, but it should've been closer to twice that.

Dallas outchanced Vegas in embarrassing fashion, with sites like [Natural Stat Trick](#) putting the edge at 23-4 in Dallas's favor for the *game*.

That accords with the series trend, too. Vegas has gotten three goals at special teams as well as looking much more dominant at 4v4, while Dallas has just the one power play goal. But at 5v5, the Stars have been outrageously better, even before tonight's battering ram of a victory. Dallas has [over twice as many expected goals](#) as Vegas at 5v5, but Logan Thompson clearly failed to read his analytics briefing before the game, and it took nearly everything Dallas could muster to avoid a third straight loss to an opponent who didn't really seem to bring their A-game, and almost didn't need to. I'm not going to list all the chances Dallas had, because you saw them all. Tyler Seguin could've made it 3-0 in the first all by himself, only to get stoned by Thompson time and time again. Then Wyatt Johnston took more of a safecracking approach, scoring "just" two goals despite trying nearly everything imaginable to unlock Thompson's beset-but-effective style. Breakaways, 2-on-1s, shots through traffic...nothing seemed to work. Dallas finally got to a rebound in Johnston's opening goal, and then Miro Heiskanen took a beautiful Seguin feed off the rush and put it just inside the post for the 2-0 lead. Everything else, Thompson saw or sat on.

Jake Oettinger deserves more credit than he's getting. Because of the out-of-his-mind performance by Thompson, fans grew frustrated when Oettinger surrendered two goals in the middle frame. But really, Oettinger has been good enough for Dallas to be in command of this series. The Stars just haven't been able to outscore the Golden Knights. Don't overlook how difficult it is to hang in there, as Oettinger did, making huge stops late in the third period and in overtime. So many teams and so many goalies collapse once a hard-earned lead evaporates, but Dallas stood strong and stayed patient, waiting for chance after chance to come.

Those chances did come, but it took (fittingly) well over a regulation game for Dallas to get enough of them to convert into a win. This really was a game out of 2007 vs. Luongo, where the goalie starts to get into everyone's head, where each scoring chance feels equally useless. Disaster seemed so obviously to be lurking around every Brayden McNabb shot, every Eichel rush, every random puck flung from the point. It was all Vegas had, but it was nearly enough, more than once. We'll look at more details later, but for tonight (this morning), just relish the good stuff. You're lucky if you get any playoff overtime wins in a given year, and Dallas just got a really special one. These sorts of goals tend to outlive their context, and regardless of where Dallas's playoff run winds up, Johnston's goal meant a whole lot to a whole bunch of people.

Vindication, justice, hope, whatever you want to call it; the Stars did everything you could have asked of them on Saturday night, but it felt for all the world like it wasn't going to be enough, like it was all leading up to an inevitable disappointment. Instead, Dallas fans got a memory for the ages. Think back to the overtime goals you remember. Of course Hull and Morrow are up there, but also Langenbrunner, Ott, Radulov, Klingberg, and even Gurianov. I may even one day accept the fact that Corey Perry scored a Stanley Cup Final overtime goals for this franchise, but I think we're still a few years away from that day. I hope so, anyway. Someone has to maintain standards around here. The newly minted fourth line was solid and energetic, and the Stars really did look like a top team shaking off the amnesia. Things tightened up later on, sure, but anything less than a career night by

Logan Thompson and the Stars are locking down a three- or four-goal lead after 20 minutes, rather than fighting for their lives with a series hanging in the balance. Dallas found a new game plan and some new forward lines, and they made hay. Vegas is going to hit back, and hard, but don't think for a second that this was just a weak team giving a dead cat bounce. This was the team that won the West consistently carving up the defensive structure of the reigning Cup champions. It was close, because all games in this series (like that 2007 series) have been close. But that means Dallas could win another one with just one more good break. With this Stars team, you can't cede an inch, or they'll run you into the ground over the course of a mile. Vegas may have just wound up in a marathon when they were hoping for a short steeplechase.

This goal may be a punctuation mark, or it may be a turning point. We can't know that just yet, nor should we try to guess. Some gifts are special enough that they force you to stop and rejoice, and this is one of them. So relish it, re-live the ride, and listen to Josh Bogorad crush this call with a catharsis we all needed. Some things are better than sleep.

SinBin.Vegas

DALLAS STARS 3 VEGAS GOLDEN KNIGHTS 2 (2-1 VGK) – OT

By Ken Boehlke

April 28, 2024

Recap: Up 2-0 in the seven-game series the Golden Knights immediately had to fend off a desperate Stars team. Dallas outshot Vegas 18-8 in the opening period but were only able to get one past Vegas goaltender Logan Thompson. After the opening twenty minutes the Golden Knights trailed 1-0.

Thompson continued to put on a show in net stopping, 29 shots in 30 minutes of action. The Stars were able to double their lead to 2-0 in the middle frame, however Brayden McNabb finally got the Golden Knights on the scoreboard midway through the second period. Minutes later Jack Eichel tied the game with a crucial shorthanded goal. Through 40 minutes, Game 3 was locked in a 2-2 score.

Vegas had several quality chances to start the final frame, but Dallas was able to fend off the home team's attack. Both teams battled until time ran out in regulation and needed overtime to decide a winner. Dallas would go on to score late in sudden death to secure the game 3-2.

After their 3-2 loss in overtime the Golden Knights now lead the Stars 2-1 in their seven-game series. The series will resume on Monday night from The Fortress. Puck drop for Game 4 is scheduled for 6:30 PM. (Recap by Jason)

Analysis: The Golden Knights were an utter disaster for the first 30+ minutes of the game. They could not get through the neutral zone and it led to a flurry of incredible chances coming at Logan Thompson. Thompson stood on his head and thwarted so odd-man rushes. Then, in a flash, VGK scored at 4-on-4 and 4-on-5 to strike back and tie a game they should have been down by four or more. They started to defend better in the 3rd and early OT, but the legs

started to catch up to them and a fresh youngster came flying through the neutral zone to end it. (Analysis by Ken)