

LORD STANLEY MEETS GLORIA: Binnington Makes 32 Saves, O'Reilly Named Playoff MVP As Blues Win First Stanley Cup Title 4-1 Over Bruins

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NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE

2019 STANLEY CUP FINAL – GAME SEVEN (BEST-OF-SEVEN)

ST. LOUIS 4, BOSTON 1 (STL WINS SERIES AND STANLEY CUP 4-3): The St. Louis Blues played their first National Hockey League game on Oct.11, 1967 at the St. Louis Arena, a 2-2 tie against the Minnesota North Stars.

On June 12, 2019, the franchises' – and the city of St. Louis' – dream of one day hoisting the Stanley Cup came true.

The Blues, behind 32 saves from rookie goalie Jordan Binnington and goals from four different players, defeated the Boston Bruins 4-1 in the seventh and deciding game of the 2019 NHL Stanley Cup Final, winning the series and their first championship 4-3.

It's the 14th major sports championship for the city of St. Louis, only its third non-baseball championship, joining the 1958 St. Louis Hawks in the National Basketball Association and the 1999 St. Louis Rams in the National Football League, and joining a very select group of cities that have had teams win at least one championship in the four major North American professional sports leagues.

In addition, the Blues became the first team in NHL history to come back from being in last place overall, where they were in the league standings on Jan. 3 of this year, to win the Stanley Cup, one of the most remarkable in-season turnarounds in North American pro sports history.

The Bruins, hosting a game seven in the Final for the first time ever, jumped out of the gate strong, getting numerous chances to score the all-important first goal, but Binnington stood tall, making a number of great saves, a couple bordering on spectacular, as St. Louis kept Boston off the scoreboard.

The Blues then scored first, when, off a scramble started when rookie forward Sammy Blais stole the puck after a hard check. It eventually came to the point, where veteran defenseman Jay Bouwmeester's shot was deflected by Ryan O'Reilly in front between the legs of Boston goalie Tuukka Rask at 16:47 to give St. Louis a 1-0 lead.

It was O'Reilly's fifth goal of the series, setting a team record for most goals in the Final, and the fourth straight game in which he scored. O'Reilly was named the winner of the Conn Smythe Trophy as the playoffs' most valuable player, the second Blues' player to win, behind all-time great goalie Glenn Hall as the first in 1968. O'Reilly tied for the lead in playoff scoring with eight goals and 15 assists for 23 points, tied with the Bruins' Brad Marchand.

Alex Pietrangelo, the Blues' team captain who assisted on the first goal, then make it 2-0 with 7.9 seconds left in the period, when he took a great pass from Jaden Schwartz,

made a great move to his backhand, and shot the puck over Rask's shoulder into the upper left corner of the net to double the lead at the end of the first period.

There was no scoring in the second period, although Binnington again stood on his head, making a couple of big saves to rob Boston players of sure goals. The Blues chances weren't very many, but Rask was equal to the task when called upon. Then in the third period, right after Binnington made a pad save to rob another Bruin, Brayden Schenn took a pass from Vladimir Tarasenko and first-timed the puck into the net at 11:25 to extend the St. Louis lead to 3-0.

Rookie forward Zach Sanford then made it 4-0 at 15:22 before Boston defenseman Matt Grzelcyk ended Binnington's shutout bid at 17:50 to make the score 4-1. Binnington and the Blues then shut the door to clinch the 4-1 final, the Blues' players piling on each other at the final siren.

Meanwhile, at watch parties at both Enterprise Center, the Blues home arena, and at Busch Stadium, the Cardinals' home park that opened up while the team was on the road at Miami for a viewing of the game, the fans, long awaiting the team's first Stanley Cup as well, went wild with delight while breaking out in choruses of the 1982 Laura Branigan hit "Gloria," which the players and fans later adopted as the team's victory song after a visit to a Philadelphia bar in January. Binnington then shut out the Flyers 3-0 that night in his first-ever NHL start as the Blues began their remarkable climb out of the cellar.

Rask ended up with 16 saves as the Bruins outshot the Blues 33-20, including 12-4 at the end of the first period and 23-10 after two, but couldn't score.

The team and city's first-ever Stanley Cup victory parade down Market Street in downtown St. Louis, is scheduled for Saturday afternoon, with details to be announced.