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STANLEY CUP FINAL

Bennett ready to capture Bruins, Blues images from Game 7 of Cup Final

Photographer working 39th championship series will be recording hockey history once again

by Dave Stubbs [@Dave_Stubbs](https://www.twitter.com/@Dave_Stubbs) / NHL.com Columnist

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 Dave Stubbs

BOSTON -- If Wednesday evening unfolds as planned, photographer Bruce Bennett will be on the ice within a few seconds of the 2019 Stanley Cup having been won, once more capturing the unspeakable elation of triumphant players and the crushing disappointment of those who have come up short.

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For the 39th time, Bennett is photographing the Stanley Cup Final. Fans know his work, even if his name isn't always attached to it, Bennett having shot many of hockey's most compelling photos in NHL and international arenas over the past four decades. His talent, experience, sense of timing and good fortune intersect to produce his most magical photos, and Game 7 between the Boston Bruins and St. Louis Blues (8 p.m. ET; NBC, CBC, SN, TVAS) is just his latest opportunity to freeze the action.

As Director of Photography, Hockey Imagery, for the global agency Getty Images, Bennett will lead a team of four photographers into Game 7, shooting his Canon through a hole in the glass in the TD Garden corner just beside the doors through which the arena's two ice-resurfacing machines emerge. It's in vantage points like this that he can get his most dramatic images.



Additionally, Bennett will be operating three cameras by remote control -- one inside the net at the far end of the rink, one attached to a goal-light stanchion to provide a wider view of that crease, and a third that will shoot a wide view of the entire arena.

"With that one, I'm hoping for players to be jumping off the bench, dancing across the ice toward the winning goaltender," he said in conversation on the eve of the game.

Bennett plans to be on the ice within the first half-minute of the final buzzer. Strict rules govern on-ice access postgame; he is in the so-called first wave of three photographers, which includes Dave Sandford from NHL Images and one from the winning team, who will roam the ice freely from the moment the game ends.

"I'm going to work it out hopefully so that I can stay in my position through the first 10, 15 seconds of celebration, then jump the railing and go out on the ice," Bennett said. "For way too many Stanley Cup wins, I've been in the corner 20 or 30 feet back from the ice when that final horn goes off, pushing a button to trigger remote cameras but not having any view of the first few seconds of celebration."



A second wave will join Bennett and the other two shooters, restricted to a carpet at center ice for the Stanley Cup presentation to the winning captain by Commissioner Gary Bettman, but given free rein after the team photo is taken. And then access widens to allow print, digital and electronic media and families onto the ice, where thousands of words will be recorded and thousands of photos will be taken over a period of an hour or longer.

"It's much better than the old days when it was a fight for a position for the first moment, fighting with 25 or 30 photographers to be right in front of the player with the Cup," Bennett said. "We used to say, 'the widest lens wins,' when you'd get pushed right up into the players holding the Cup.

"I remember one year in Edmonton after an Oilers victory was especially violent," he said with a grin. "I got off the ice to discover that my watch had disappeared and the flash had broken off the top of my camera. My memory of that was being pushed right into Wayne Gretzky with the Cup and seeing some fear in his eyes as he was yelling, 'Back up! Back up!' The NHL did a great job of getting things under control after that to kind of calm things down a bit."



