How (and why) to watch the Overwatch League grand finals

The *Overwatch* League playoffs are already underway, but it's not too late to catch the first live grand finals event in two years on Friday, November 4th, broadcast on YouTube. (Get the full playoff schedule here.) We don't know yet which two teams will be competing in the final match, and any attempt to predict the participants is an act of monumental hubris.

Depending on your perspective, the *Overwatch* League has this either frustrating or exciting tradition of introducing balance patches right before the playoffs. When that happens, the game's strategies, known as metas, that have been solidified over the last few weeks of the season are tossed out, and teams have to adapt quickly to a new style of play.

For this year's playoffs, *Overwatch 2*'s newest hero Kiriko was added, and her presence has been a predictable *shock* to the system, pun very much intended. Her ultimate ability, Kitsune Rush, has had such a dramatic impact on the way the game is played, reducing cooldowns and increasing fire rates, that slower heroes like Reaper and, shockingly, Roadhog are seeing playtime. Her introduction has made it so that teams that have been solidly mediocre are now favored to win it all, while teams that have only known success are fighting for their tournament lives in the playoff's losers bracket.

This happened to my Shanghai Dragons. They, like the two-time *Overwatch* League champions San Francisco Shock, were unable to adapt to the new Kiriko world order and were sent to the losers bracket, where they lost again, exiting the tournament. I'm sad, but don't mourn for me. With the Dragons out, I am now freed from the burdens of fandom, able to simply enjoy matches without the stress of worrying if my team is good enough to beat whoever I'm watching.

