

# CHINESE GROUP COMPLETE TAKEOVER OF BIRMINGHAM

**LONDON:** Chinese group Trillion Trophy Asia (TTA) completed their lengthy takeover of English club Birmingham City yesterday making it the third club based in the city to fall under Chinese control.

The confirmation of the purchase of the second tier side by TTA—who are controlled by 55-year-old Hong Kong businessman Paul Suen and his business partner Daniel Sue—brings to a definitive end the stormy ownership of disgraced businessman

Carson Yeung. TTA now hold approximately 50.64 per cent of the shares of Birmingham's parent company Birmingham International Holdings Limited (BIHL) — Yeung had been chairman and executive director of the company. Receivers Ernst & Young had been running the club since February 2015, after BIHL went into receivership. Former banker Panos Pavlakis has been in charge of the day-to-day operations as director since

2014. TTA—who 16 months ago were given a two year exclusivity period to complete the takeover—became the third Chinese operation to secure control of a Birmingham club.

Yunyi Guokai Sports Development Limited, led by Chinese entrepreneur Guochuan Lai, bought Premier League side West Brom in September, and Tony Xia acquired ailing former European Cup winners Aston Villa earlier this year.

Nearby second tier side Wolves is also under Chinese ownership, Fosun International completing their takeover in July. "The club's parent company, Birmingham International Holdings Limited (BIHL), has resumed trading on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange and is now in the expert hands of Trillion Trophy Asia Limited (TTA)," read a statement from Birmingham.

"It means that, as a club, we have new

owners - and we welcome all at TTA into the Blues family and we look forward to exciting times ahead at St. Andrew's under their guidance and with their backing."

Suen, who is an expert in turning around poorly-performing stocks and wholly owns Wealthy Associates which owns TTA, has been financing Birmingham for some time and he and his company have committed themselves to owning the club for a minimum two years. —AFP

## LYNX DOWN SPARKS 85-79 TO STAY ALIVE IN WNBA FINALS

**LOS ANGELES:** Midway through the first quarter, Maya Moore was looking in her teammates' eyes, searching for clues as to how the game would go.

She could see their passion and resolve. "I knew we were going to fight," she said. Moore scored 31 points and Minnesota's defense held Nneka Ogumike and Candace Parker in check to help the Lynx beat the Los Angeles Sparks 85-79 on Sunday night and force a decisive fifth game in the WNBA Finals.

"Every possession was so crucial and we just made more of them," Moore said. Lindsay Whalen added 13 points, Seimone Augustus had 12 and Sylvia Fowles had 10 points and 13 rebounds in tying the series 2-2 and sending it back to Minneapolis, where the Lynx will try to win their record-tying fourth championship on Thursday.

"This is what a Finals game should look like," Minnesota coach Cheryl Reeve said. "Both teams leaving it all on the floor." Ogumike, the league MVP, scored 11 points on 5 of 10 shooting, while two-time MVP Parker scored 14 points and made 6 of 7 free throws for the Sparks, who were trying to close out their first title since 2002 in front of their fans at Staples Center.

Chelsea Gray led the Sparks with 20 points off the bench. She was 6 of 11 and made all four of her free throws. The Sparks outscored the Lynx 10-4 to open the fourth, tying it at 69-all on Parker's driving bank shot as she fell out of bounds. Los Angeles got most of its points at the free throw line, going 6 of 9 in that span.

Whalen scored two straight baskets to put the Lynx back in front 73-69 on turnovers by Ogumike and Kristi Toliver, who finished with 15 points.

"We'll replay this game in our minds and know we have to play with a little bit more poise down the stretch," Toliver said. "Be more decisive."

Trailing 77-72, Gray hit her fourth 3-pointer to draw the Sparks within two. "We were trying, we were making things happen down the stretch," Los Angeles coach Brian Agler said. "It's just the ability to play with poise down the stretch."

The teams traded baskets and Minnesota led 79-77. Parker was called for a shooting foul on Rebekkah Brunson, who made both free throws for an 81-77 lead. Before Parker fouled Brunson, it appeared that Minnesota hadn't gotten the ball

across halfcourt in time to avoid an 8-second violation. Replays suggested the ball was still in the backcourt when the shot clock was at 16.

"I think they forgot they had to get the ball over the line," Toliver said. "But that's life. We can't leave it up to the officials to determine a series. We have to go take it."

With 42 seconds left, Whalen lost the ball to Ogumike. At the Sparks' end, Brunson stole it from Parker, who ended up getting whistled for the foul.

"I had it at one point and after that I didn't see what happened because I think I was on the floor," Whalen said. "It was kind of a wild play."

Moore stole an inbounds pass and Ogumike fouled her with 4 seconds left. Moore made both to close out the win, missing just one of her 12 free throw attempts.

"We fought today," Ogumike said. "When it comes to focus and awareness, we can sharpen up there. We're going to fight again." The Lynx scored six in a row to take their largest lead, 52-42, early in the third, which ended in a 3-point contest. The Sparks made three, including two by Gray, and Moore hit two 3s for the Lynx, who led 65-59 going into the fourth. Moore scored 10 points in the third. Minnesota dominated the Sparks 22-4 in fastbreak points and controlled the boards, 41-25.

### STILL HURT

Janel McCarville missed her second straight game with a back injury, leaving the Lynx without her 6-foot-2 post presence.

### FOUL TROUBLE

Brunson, who guarded Parker much of the time, finished with six points and five fouls. Fowles had four fouls.

### KOBE AND THE GIRLS

A bearded Kobe Bryant returned to the scene of some of his greatest career moments, watching courtside with wife Vanessa and their two daughters. Also on hand was Sparks co-owner Magic Johnson, who returned from Chicago where the Dodgers were playing the Cubs in the National League Championship Series at the same time. Lakers guard Lou Williams, Cedric the Entertainer and Marsai Martin of "black-ish" attended. — AP



**VANCOUVER:** Vancouver Canucks right wing Alexandre Burrows (14) tries to get the puck away from Carolina Hurricanes defenceman Noah Hanifin (5) as teammates goalie Eddie Lack (31) and defenceman Klas Dahlbeck (6) look on during first period NHL action in Vancouver, British Columbia, yesterday. — AP

# CANUCKS ERASE THREE-GOAL DEFICIT TO BEAT HURRICANES

**VANCOUVER:** Brandon Sutter scored 32 seconds into overtime and the Vancouver Canucks erased a three-goal deficit to beat the Carolina Hurricanes 4-3 on Sunday night.

Sutter beat goalie Eddie Lack on a quick shot on a 2-on-1 run rush for the Canucks' second straight comeback win. Markus Granlund had a goal and an assist and Bo Horvat and Ben Hutton also scored for Vancouver, which got 19 stops from Jacob Markstrom. Sutter added an assist.

Justin Faulk had a goal and an assist, while Victor Rask and Teuvo Teravainen also scored for Carolina. Lack made 27 saves against his former team. The Hurricanes were coming off a 5-4 overtime loss to Winnipeg on Thursday in which they blew a 4-1 third-period lead, while the Canucks beat Calgary 2-1 in a shootout on Saturday to open their season. Vancouver trailed 3-1 after two periods, but cut the deficit just 1:11 into the third when Granlund finished a nice passing play with Sutter and Jannik Hansen for his first of the season after Faulk turned the puck over in his own zone.

The Canucks continued to press and Hutton tied the game with 5:50 left in regulation when he buried his first from the slot past Lack, a fan favorite during his two seasons in Vancouver before he was traded to Carolina following the 2014-15 season.

Lack stood strong during a late Vancouver power play, including a great stop on Sven Baertschi in front and then another on Granlund with about a minute left in regulation. Carolina led 2-0 after scoring goals 1:24 apart late in the opening period, and stretched that lead at 5:28 of the second when Faulk took advantage of some soft defensive

NHL results/standings													
NY Islanders 3, Anaheim 2 (OT); Buffalo 6, Edmonton 2; Vancouver 4, Carolina 3 (OT).													
Western Conference					Central Division								
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS								
St. Louis	3	0	0	11	6	6	Tampa Bay	2	0	0	9	6	4
Colorado	1	0	0	6	5	2	Ottawa	2	0	0	9	7	4
Dallas	1	1	0	9	8	2	Montreal	1	0	1	7	5	3
Minnesota	1	1	0	6	6	2	Toronto	1	0	1	8	6	3
Winnipeg	1	1	0	8	8	2	Buffalo	1	1	0	7	6	2
Nashville	1	1	0	6	7	2	Boston	1	1	0	7	7	2
Chicago	1	2	0	9	11	2	Detroit	0	2	0	5	10	0
Pacific Division					Metropolitan Division								
San Jose	2	0	0	5	3	4	Pittsburgh	2	0	0	6	4	4
Vancouver	2	0	0	6	4	4	Philadelphia	1	0	1	7	6	3
Edmonton	2	1	0	14	13	4	Washington	1	0	1	4	4	3
Arizona	1	0	0	4	3	2	NY Rangers	1	1	0	7	6	2
Anaheim	0	2	1	6	10	1	Carolina	0	0	2	7	9	2
Calgary	0	2	1	8	14	1	NY Islanders	1	2	0	7	9	2
Los Angeles	0	2	0	3	6	0	New Jersey	0	1	1	3	5	1
Eastern Conference					Atlantic Division								
Florida	2	0	0	6	2	4	Columbus	0	2	0	5	9	0

play to bury his own rebound past Markstrom off the rush for his first of the season. Vancouver started to play better as the second period wore on, and Horvat scored his first with 7:57 left after taking a rebound off the end boards and making a strong move to the net on the backhand. Lack, who lost his only start against Vancouver last season, was called upon to make a couple of big saves to keep the Hurricanes up by two through 40 minutes, including a great pad stop on a slick deflection by Loui Eriksson.

Vancouver had a number of early chances and held an 8-1 shot advantage 10 minutes into the game before the visitors found their

legs. Rask scored his second goal of the season with 2:24 left in the period after working a give and go with Lee Stempniak, roofing a perfect shot into the top corner.

The Hurricanes then doubled their lead on the power play with 49.7 seconds remaining when Teravainen, who was acquired from Chicago in an offseason trade, picked up a loose puck after Faulk's point shot was blocked and swept his first of the year past Markstrom. Canucks now continue a four-game homestand tonight against St. Louis. While Hurricanes play their third of six straight on the road to start the season tonight in Edmonton. — AP



**LOS ANGELES:** Los Angeles Sparks guard Kristi Toliver, right, shoots as Minnesota Lynx forward Maya Moore defends during the second half in Game 4 of the WNBA Finals, yesterday, in Los Angeles. The Lynx won 85-79. — AP

## WESTBROOK, ADAMS POWER THUNDER PAST TIMBERWOLVES

**OKLAHOMA CITY:** Russell Westbrook's fans finally got to show their appreciation for his loyalty to the Thunder. Westbrook had 26 points and 10 assists to help Oklahoma City beat the Minnesota Timberwolves 112-94 on Sunday night. It was Oklahoma City's first home preseason game after opening with two games in Spain, then playing in Dallas and Tulsa. Oklahoma City's crowd cheered loudly when Westbrook was the first player announced during pregame introductions, in part, because the former scoring champion and two-time All-Star MVP re-signed with Oklahoma City after Kevin Durant chose to leave for Golden State. Westbrook was more concerned about the way the Thunder played. "We are getting into the flow of things, trying to figure out different things we can use," he said. "It was good." Westbrook fired up the crowd when he got one of his typical blow-by layups in the first quarter and was fouled. He got the arena energized again when he uncorked a highlight-reel one-handed dunk in the third quarter. Steven Adams scored 14 of his 20 points in the first half as Westbrook

constantly looked for him. Victor Oladipo scored 11 points and Enes Kanter added 10 points and eight rebounds. The Thunder (2-3) will host Denver today.

Thunder guard Anthony Morrow was not with the team because he was awaiting the birth of his twin sons. Thunder guard Alex Abrines left the game with a right hip contusion and did not return.

The Timberwolves played at Miami on Saturday, so Andrew Wiggins, Ricky Rubio, Karl-Anthony Towns and Zach LaVine were among those who rested Sunday. John Lucas III scored 18 points and Andreian Payne added 16 for Minnesota (3-2). The Timberwolves host Memphis tomorrow.

### HAWKS 105, MAGIC 98

Paul Millsap and Tim Hardaway Jr. each scored 19 points to lead the Hawks. Millsap made 7 of 12 shots and had nine rebounds and seven assists for the Hawks (3-2). Serge Ibaka scored 25 points and Evan Fournier added 22 for the Magic (1-4). Thabo Sefolosha scored 15 points and made 3 of 4 3-pointers. ... The Hawks shot just 40.9

percent from the field but made 23 of 27 free throws. ... Rookie Taurean Prince scored 13 points in 27 minutes. Ibaka, in a more significant offensive role in Orlando after having played with Durant and Westbrook in Oklahoma City, made 9 of 15 shots. He had 19 points and 17 rebounds Friday against Indiana. ... Bismack Biyombo had 19 rebounds. ... Orlando made just 12 of 24 free throws. Biyombo connected on just 3 of 10.

### NUGGETS 106, TRAIL BLAZERS 97

Wilson Chandler scored 18 points and Will Barton had 17 to lead Denver/Chandler made 4 of 5 3-pointers and Jusuf Nurkic had 13 points and nine rebounds for Denver (3-3). C.J. McCollum scored 20 points and Al-Farouq Aminu added 18 for the Trail Blazers (3-2). Damian Lillard scored four points on 1-for-10 shooting. Jamal Murray scored 15 points. ... The Nuggets shot better from 3-point (46.2 percent) than overall (45.1). ... The Nuggets made just 20 of 33 free throws. Aminu made 5 of 7 3-pointers. ... Noah Vonleh had 10 rebounds. ... Portland shot 39.8 percent. —AP



**ORLANDO:** Orlando Magic forward Bismack Biyombo (11) goes up to shoot in front of Atlanta Hawks forward Paul Millsap, left, and Thabo Sefolosha (25) during the first half of an NBA preseason basketball game in Orlando, Fla., Sunday. — AP