



BOSTON: Ryan Dzingel #18 of the Ottawa Senators defends Patrice Bergeron #37 of the Boston Bruins during overtime at TD Garden on April 6, 2017 in Boston, Massachusetts. The Senators defeat the Bruins 2-1. —AFP

NHL

SENATORS CLINCH PLAYOFF SPOT WITH 2-1 WIN OVER BOSTON

BOSTON: Craig Anderson stopped 28 shots in regulation and overtime and three more in the shootout Thursday to help the Ottawa Senators clinch a playoff spot by beating Boston 2-1, ending the Bruins' six-game winning streak and pulling ahead of them in the Atlantic Division standings. Kyle Turris scored the only goal in the shootout. Anderson stopped Drew Stafford, who scored Boston's only regulation goal, and Ryan Spooner before straddling the goalpost to turn away David Pastrnak's attempt at the end. Tuukka Rask stopped 25 shots for Boston, which went 0-4 against Ottawa this season. The Senators had never swept the Bruins in a season series. Ottawa, which got a goal in the second from Alexandre Burrows, now has 96 points to 95 for Boston after entering the night tied. The Senators still have two games remaining - one more than the Bruins - and also have the head-to-head tiebreaker.

PENGUINS 7, DEVILS 4

The Pittsburgh Penguins clinched home-ice advantage for their first-round playoff series against the Columbus Blue Jackets with a victory over the New Jersey Devils. The Penguins got goals from seven players, two assists from Sidney Crosby - including a spectacular no-look, backhand pass to give Conor Sheary a shot into an open net - and 34 saves from Matt Murray in picking up their 50th win of the season. The win gave Pittsburgh 111 points - the second-highest total in franchise history. Coupled with Columbus' 5-4 loss to Winnipeg, the Penguins will finish second ahead of the Blue Jackets in the Metropolitan Division, gaining home-ice for the best-of-7 first-round series.

LIGHTNING 4, MAPLE LEAFS 1

Brayden Point scored two goals and the Tampa Bay Lightning kept their slim playoff hopes alive by beating the Toronto Maple Leafs. Nikita Kucherov and Michael Bournival also scored for the Lightning, who prevented the Maple Leafs from clinching their first postseason berth in four years. There is only one spot remaining in the Eastern Conference after Ottawa clinched a berth with a 2-1 shootout win at Boston. Toronto, which would have clinched with a win, needs two points over its final two games - against Pittsburgh and Columbus - to beat out the Lightning and New York Islanders for the last spot. Nazem Kadri scored the only goal for Toronto.

ISLANDERS 3, HURRICANES 0

Jaroslav Halak stopped 29 shots in his second shutout of the season, and the fast-starting New York Islanders beat the Carolina Hurricanes. Brock Nelson and Scott Mayfield scored early goals 3:12 apart, and Andrew Ladd added a power-play goal to help the Islanders win their fourth straight and preserve their long-shot playoff hopes for a little while longer. Eddie Lack stopped 20 shots for the Hurricanes, who lost their fourth straight overall, a slide that coincides with their mathematical elimination from the playoff race for the eighth straight year - the longest active postseason drought in the NHL. They've also been shut out in their last two home games.

DUCKS 4, BLACKHAWKS 0

Corey Perry scored a power-play goal, John Gibson made 37 saves in his 12th career shutout and the Anaheim Ducks

clinched home-ice advantage in the first round of the playoffs with a victory over the Chicago Blackhawks. Rickard Rakell had a goal and an assist for the Ducks, who moved to the brink of their fifth consecutive Pacific Division title in a meeting of the Western Conference's two division leaders. Chris Wagner and Ryan Kesler also scored for Anaheim, which has earned points in 13 consecutive games since March 10 (10-0-3).

JETS 5, BLUE JACKETS 4

Jacob Trouba scored twice and Eric Comrie had 35 saves in his NHL debut as the Winnipeg Jets beat the slumping Columbus Blue Jackets. Mark Scheifele, Mathieu Perreault and Bryan Little also scored for the Jets, who held off a late Columbus rally to win their sixth straight. The Blue Jackets, who play Pittsburgh in the first round of the Stanley Cup playoffs next week, were again up and down in dropping their fifth straight, the longest losing streak of the season. Brandon Saad had two goals, Nick Foligno and Boone Jenner scored, and Joonas Korpisalo had 27 saves for the Blue Jackets.

BLUES 6, PANTHERS 3

Jaden Schwartz had a goal and two assists to lead the surging St Louis Blues over the Florida Panthers. David Perron, Vladimir Tarasenko and Alex Pietrangelo each had a goal and an assist, and Patrick Berglund and Ryan Reaves also scored as the Blues improved to 13-2-2 in their last 17 games. Jake Allen had 29 saves. Vincent Trochek, Michael Matheson and Denis Malgin scored for the Panthers, who lost their sixth straight. James Reimer stopped 32 shots. —AP

RED WINGS AND DETROIT SAY FAREWELL TO STORIED JOE LOUIS ARENA

DETROIT: The unmistakable whiff of a sewer line hits you near the corner of Steve Yzerman Drive and Jefferson Avenue before you set foot on the steps that climb into Joe Louis Arena, a nearly windowless, drab grey building on the banks of the Detroit River.

Despite the stench and lack of sunlight, the Motor City has enjoyed many fond memories in the home of the Detroit Red Wings, where the franchise has raised four Stanley Cup banners to rafters also crowded by tributes to some of hockey's all-time greats, like Gordie Howe and Steve Yzerman.

Red-and-white clad fans have been filling seats in the 20,058-seat arena, saying so long in the same season the Red Wings ended their playoff streak at 25. The arena is not scheduled to host another hockey game after Detroit plays Montreal tonight and New Jersey on Sunday night. The Red Wings will begin a new era with the Pistons at nearby Little Caesars Arena next season.

Detroit had one of the best runs in NHL history from the early 1990s until last season, when they tied the third-longest playoff streak in league history. Years ago, though, its hockey team was known as the "Dead Wings," and cars were given away to get fans to attend games shortly after moving from Olympia Stadium to Joe Louis Arena for the 1979-80 season.

"This team was not very good when The Joe opened," said NBC announcer Doc Emrick, a Michigan resident who was a season-ticket holder for 20-plus years.

Things sure improved, though. Here's a look back at some of the memorable moments at Joe Louis Arena.

MR. HOCKEY'S RETURN

Howe played for the Red Wings from the 1946-47 season until retiring for the first time in 1971. He returned on Feb. 5, 1980, in his 50s as a Hartford Whaler and was welcomed back at the NHL All-Star Game with an ovation people are still talking about nearly four decades later.

"That can't be duplicated," said Al Sobotka, who has taken care of the ice for the Red Wings for decades. "It was unbelievable. The atmosphere was jumping."

HOOPS AT THE JOE

The Pistons were pushed out of their home in the suburbs at Pontiac Silverdome due to a scheduling conflict on April 27, 1984, when they closed an opening-round series against the Bernard King-led New York Knicks. Hall of Famer Isiah Thomas scored 16 points in the final 90 seconds of regulation for the Pistons to force overtime before the Knicks went on to win the game and series.

"I will never forget the electric atmosphere of Joe Louis arena that night," Thomas wrote in a text message to The Associated Press on Thursday night. "The fans inspired me to one of my greatest performances ever and I thank them for bringing the best out of me and countless others who experienced the energy of Joe Louis Arena."

ENDING A DROUGHT

Yzerman, simply known as The Captain by Red Wings fans, hoisted the Stanley Cup after finishing off a sweep of the Philadelphia Flyers on June 7, 1997. That ended an NHL championship drought that dated to 1955.

"That was the best," said Karen Newman, who has been signing the national anthem for the Red Wings at home games for nearly 30 years. "Grown men were crying. Confetti was falling. I still have confetti in my glass jar from that game. That's how important that moment was. It was huge."

The Red Wings repeated in 1998 and are still the last franchise to pull off the feat. They won three Stanley Cups in a six-season stretch and a fourth in an 11-season span, shortly after the salary cap stopped them from spending more than most teams in the league.

Off the ice and away from the crowds, Yzerman enjoyed getting to know some of the all-time greats that wore the winged wheel for the storied franchise. "What I have always found unique about the Red Wings is I come into this building as a kid, you walk in and one day you see Gordie Howe, you talk to Gordie Howe," Yzerman recently recalled. "The next day, you walk in and you see Ted Lindsay." —AP