

Sports

Blues' goaltender Allen earns rare home-ice win over Oilers

ST LOUIS: St Louis Blues goaltender Jake Allen enjoyed rare home-ice success in a 2-1 victory over the visiting Edmonton Oilers on Wednesday. Allen made 35 saves to earn his first victory at Enterprise Center since Jan. 3, and the Blues completed a sweep of their four-game homestand. Brayden Schenn and Mackenzie MacEachern scored goals to support him. James Neal scored and Mikko Koskinen stopped 42 of 44 shots for the Oilers, who have just three victories in their past 11 games (3-7-1). Allen made 20 of his previous 21 starts on the road, dating to last season, when he lost the starting job to Jordan Binnington. In the 2018-19 season, he posted an .878 save percentage and 3.65 goals-against average at home and produced vastly better ratios (.924, 2.26) on the road. He had lost his only previous home start this season before Wednesday.

DEVILS 3, DUCKS 1

Kyle Palmieri scored the tiebreaking goal in the second period for New Jersey, who began the post-Taylor Hall era by beating Anaheim

in Newark, N.J. Nico Hischier scored earlier in the second and Sami Vatanen scored early in the third for the Devils, who have won back-to-back games for just the fourth time this season. They have yet to win three in a row. Former Devils center Adam Henrique scored in the first period for the Ducks, who have lost the first two games of a four-game East Coast road trip.

AVALANCHE 4, BLACKHAWKS 1

Mikko Rantanen and Ian Cole had a goal and an assist apiece, and Pavel Francouz made 31 saves to lead visiting Colorado to a victory over Chicago. Nathan MacKinnon and Andre Burakovsky also scored goals while Gabriel Landeskog had two assists for Colorado, which improved to 9-1-1 over its last 11 games. The Avalanche have won all three meetings with the Blackhawks this season, outscoring them 16-6 in the process. Ryan Carpenter scored for Chicago, which lost for the fifth time in six games (1-4-1). Corey Crawford stopped 32 of the 35 shots he faced. —Reuters



NEWARK: Nikita Gusev #97 of the New Jersey Devils and Adam Henrique #14 of the Anaheim Ducks battle for the puck during the first period at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey. —AFP

Rookies on display again as Giants visit Redskins

LANDOVER: Intriguing storylines are scarce in the basement battle between the New York Giants and Washington Redskins on Sunday afternoon in Landover, Md. However, the game could feature another duel between rookie quarterbacks to determine which team likely will finish last in the NFC East. The Giants and Redskins enter play with matching 3-11 records. The Giants are 1-6 on the road and the Redskins 1-6 at home, the latter's only win on Nov. 24 against the visiting Detroit Lions.

While Redskins rookie quarterback Dwayne Haskins will get the start for Washington, it's undecided if his rookie counterpart with the Giants, Daniel Jones, will get the nod. Jones (ankle) was a full participant in Wednesday's practice, but Giants coach Pat Shurmur wants to see a full week before making a decision, according to reports.

Eli Manning got the win in his stead Sunday against the Miami Dolphins, snapping a nine-game Giants losing skid. Manning choked back tears afterward in what was likely his final start at home wearing Giants blue. Jones had already supplanted Manning as the starter when these two teams met in Week 4, a 24-3 victory by the Giants. The win made Jones 2-0 in his first two starts, ginning up excitement with Big Blue Nation. However, it would prove to be the Giants' last win until the victory over Miami.

Jones threw for 225 yards, a touchdown and two interceptions in Week 4. Haskins didn't start that day but was inserted into the game in the second quarter by then-head coach Jay Gruden. The rookie didn't fare much

better than starting QB Case Keenum, however, going just 9-for-17 for 107 yards and three picks in his pro debut.

This time, Haskins comes off his best game by far in Sunday's 37-27 loss to the Philadelphia Eagles. Haskins completed 19 of 28 passes for 261 yards and two touchdowns, good for a passer rating of 121.3. The rookie did not throw an interception. Haskins has 1,232 passing yards on the season with five touchdown passes and seven interceptions. Jones, by comparison, has thrown for 2,374 yards with 18 touchdowns against 11 picks. His bugaboo has been fumbles; Jones has lost 10, most by any quarterback in the league.

The Jones-Haskins duel isn't the only rookie showdown. Wide receivers Darius Slayton of the Giants and Washington's Terry McLaurin have put together nice rookie campaigns. While Slayton has the edge in touchdowns, 8-7, McLaurin has more catches (51-44) and receiving yards (833-690).

The Giants put tight end Evan Engram on injured reserve Tuesday. He had missed the past five games with a foot injury. The Giants signed wide receiver David Sills from their practice squad to take Engram's spot on the roster.

Guard Kevin Zeitler (ankle) was limited in Wednesday's practice and tight end Rhett Ellison (concussion) was a full participant. Both are listed as questionable. The Redskins put three players on injured reserve Tuesday — Pro Bowl guard Brandon Scherff (elbow/shoulder), receiver Trey Quinn (concussion) and cornerback Jimmy Moreland (foot). Scherff played in 11 games.

Washington signed defensive backs Coty Sensabaugh and Kayvon Webster to the active roster. The Redskins have a slew of players questionable for Sunday: offensive tackle Donald Penn, safeties Montae Nicholson and Landon Collins, DE Jonathan Allen and cornerback Quinton Dunbar. —Reuters

Russia to decide on appeal against doping ban

MOSCOW: Russia's anti-doping agency will decide whether to launch an appeal against a four-year ban from major sporting events over systematic violations, a prohibition denounced by the country's leadership as politically motivated.

The supervisory board of RUSADA will hold a meeting and is widely expected to announce its formal rejection of the December 9 decision by WADA to ban Russia for non-compliance.

This formal disagreement with WADA would trigger the process of appeal against the ban at the Lausanne-based Court of Arbitration for Sport. RUSADA supervisory board chairman Alexander Ivlev is due to announce the decision at 1000 GMT.

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) on December 10 banned Russia for four years from major global sporting events, including the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, over manipulated doping data.

Under the sanctions, Russians will still be allowed to compete at the Olympics next year and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, but only as neutrals and if they can demonstrate that they were not part of what WADA believes was a state-sponsored system of doping.

Russian President Vladimir Putin slammed the ban as a "politically motivated" ruling that "contradicted" the Olympic Charter. Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev lamented it was "the continua-

tion of this anti-Russian hysteria that has already become chronic."

'INEFFICIENT AND USELESS'

The expected confirmation of an appeal will coincide with the annual marathon press conference of Putin, also on Thursday afternoon, where the president is set to again take a position on the issue.

The director general of RUSADA, Yuri Ganus, who has long argued for a major crackdown by Russia against doping cheats, said he expected the supervisory board to appeal but strongly opposed the move.

"The board will decide to appeal," he told AFP. "I believe this to be inefficient and useless." Ganus, whose rigorous stance puts him at odds with his own government and supervisory board, argues that Moscow needs to accept the sanctions and own up to its faults in order to be able to reform.

The suspension was handed to Russia over falsifying data from a doping testing laboratory that was handed to WADA earlier this year as part of the compliance reinstatement process. The significant extent of state-sponsored doping in Russia, notably between 2011 and 2015, was revealed in the independent report by sports lawyer Richard McLaren, released in 2016.

The issue has dealt a colossal blow to the status of post-Soviet Russia as a major sports power after hosting events such as the 2013 World Athletics Championships, the 2018 World Cup and the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. The Sochi Games later became notorious for the number of doping violations by prominent Russian athletes. The situation has also divided Russian sports stars, with three-time world champion high jumper Mariya Lasitskene calling on sports officials to be held to account over the ban. —AFP