

Sports

Jets' Wheeler scores four goals in beating Jackets

Sharks explode in third to defeat Blackhawks

COLUMBUS: Blake Wheeler scored a career-high four goals, three in the third period, and the Winnipeg Jets opened their four-game road trip with a 5-2 win over the Columbus Blue Jackets. Wheeler, who has five goals and seven assists during a six-game point streak, tipped home a shot from Nathan Beaulieu to snap a 2-2 tie with 12:16 left in regulation. Wheeler then converted a nifty pass from Patrik Laine at 17:47 of the third and ended his brilliant night with an empty-netter in the final minute. Mark Scheifele had three assists and Connor Hellebuyck made 40 saves for the Central Division-leading Jets, who won their second straight to begin a road stretch against Eastern Conference playoff contenders. The Blue Jackets, fighting just to make the postseason, lost their second straight to conclude a 2-3-0 homestand despite outshooting Winnipeg 42-26. The Jets were without winger Adam Lowry, who served the first of a two-game suspension for high-sticking Nashville's Filip Forsberg on Friday.

CAPITALS 3, RANGERS 2 (SO)

Alex Ovechkin was awarded the game-winning goal in the fourth round of the shootout and Washington extended its winning streak to four games with an unusual victory over host New York. In the shootout, Ovechkin did not put the puck in the net but as he released the shot, New York goaltender Alexander Georgiev threw his stick in an attempt to stop it. Officials originally declared it was not a goal but after a review in Toronto, the call was overturned as Washington beat the Rangers for the sixth straight time. T.J. Oshie and Nicklas Backstrom scored in the shootout for the Capitals, who also won for the 11th time in 16 games and temporarily moved two points ahead of the New York Islanders into sole possession of first place in the Metropolitan Division. Defensemen Kevin Shattenkirk and Anthony DeAngelo scored in the shootout for the Rangers, who lost their fourth straight game (0-1-3).

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 3, CANUCKS 0

Marc-Andre Fleury had 19 saves to pick up his second consecutive shutout and league-leading eighth of the season as host Vegas cruised over Vancouver. It was the league-leading 32nd victory this season for Fleury, who also garnered his 56th career shutout, just one behind Clint Benedict (57) for 20th place on the NHL all-time career shutouts list. Fleury has 436 career victories, one away from tying Jacques Plante for

eighth place in NHL history. Max Pacioretty, Ryan Carpenter and Reilly Smith all scored goals for Vegas, which outshot the Canucks 48-19, including 38-14 over the first two periods. Jacob Markstrom finished with 45 saves for Vancouver, which lost its third straight game (0-2-1) and sixth in their last seven (1-4-2).

PREDATORS 3, WILD 2 (SO)

Ryan Johansen scored in the fourth round of the shootout as Nashville skated to a win over Minnesota in St. Paul, Minn., in the opener of a home-and-home series. Nashville defenseman Ryan Ellis scored in the second round before Minnesota's Zach Parise sent a backhander between the pads of Juuse Saros in the third to extend the shootout. Johansen ended the contest after slowly skating in on Alex Stalock before backhanding the puck inside the left post. Filip Forsberg scored and Nick Bonino snapped a 15-game goal drought as the Predators salvaged the finale of their three-game road trip to remain one point behind first-place Winnipeg in the Central Division. Jason Zucker and Eric Fehr each scored for the Wild, who saw their five-game winning streak end.

FLYERS 4, ISLANDERS 1

Brian Elliott made 29 saves and four different players scored goals in the first 40 minutes as Philadelphia rolled over host New York. The Flyers won despite playing without third-leading scorer Jakub Voracek and losing center Nolan Patrick in the opening minutes. Voracek sat out for the first time this season due to a lower-body injury, and Patrick exited with an upper-body injury after getting hit in the helmet by the puck on a shot by New York's Cal Clutterbuck. Forward Travis Konecny and defenseman Travis Sanheim scored in the opening period for the Flyers, who improved to 17-4-2 since dropping eight straight Dec. 27-Jan. 8. The Islanders lost their second straight and dropped consecutive regulation games for the first time since Dec. 4-6.

SHARKS 5, BLACKHAWKS 2

Melker Karlsson scored twice in the third period as San Jose won back-to-back games for the first time in nearly three weeks, defeating visiting Chicago. Tomas Hertl, Timo Meier and Marcus Sorensen also scored for the Sharks, who had alternated wins and losses for their previous eight games. San Jose pulled within three points of Pacific Division-leading Calgary.



NEW YORK: Skating in his 400th NHL game, Brendan Smith #42 of the New York Rangers is stopped by Braden Holtby #70 of the Washington Capitals at Madison Square Garden on Sunday in New York City. — AFP

Micheal Haley, Joonas Donskoi and Tim Heed each had two assists. Dylan Strome and Erik Gustafsson scored for the Blackhawks, and goalie Cam Ward stopped 29 of 33 shots. Chicago went 1-2 on its three-game California trip.

SENATORS 3, PANTHERS 2

Rookie Rudolf Balcers' power-play goal broke a 2-2 tie with 2:35 left and helped Ottawa snap a seven-game losing streak while also giving interim coach Marc Crawford his first win at the expense of host Florida in Sunrise, Fla. Florida's Mike Hoffman, who played seven seasons with the Senators, rang the potential game-tying goal off the post with nine seconds left and Panthers goalie Roberto Luongo off the ice for the extra attacker. Zack Smith and Brian Gibbons scored goals for Ottawa, which won for the

first time since Feb. 16. Aleksander Barkov and Troy Brouwer tallied for the Panthers, who lost their fourth straight (0-3-1).

DUCKS 2, AVALANCHE 1

Jakob Silfverberg and Cam Fowler each scored goals as Anaheim showed it still has some fight left with a victory over visiting Colorado, halting a five-game losing streak. Ducks goaltender John Gibson made 25 saves in his second game since returning from multiple injuries. The Ducks' victory also came during the return of captain Ryan Getzlaf, who had missed the previous five games with an upper-body injury. The Avalanche dropped their second consecutive game, derailing their efforts to get back into playoff contention in the Western Conference. Colorado has lost three of its past four games following a four-game winning streak. — Reuters

Tahir to quit one-day international cricket

JOHANNESBURG: Veteran leg-spinner Imran Tahir said yesterday he would retire from one-day international cricket after the World Cup in England and Wales, which ends on July 14. But he said he would like to continue playing for South Africa in Twenty20 internationals. Tahir, who will turn 40 later this month, played a starring role for South Africa, taking three for 26, in their eight-wicket win in the first one-day international against Sri Lanka at the Wanderers Stadium on Sunday.

His performance drew attention to the fact that he was not on the list of contracted players for the 2019/20 year released by Cricket South Africa last week. But he revealed yesterday that he had reached an agreement with CSA for his contract to expire at the end of July, extending his 2018/19 contract by three months. In a statement released by CSA, Tahir said he would re-assess his freelance future after the World Cup. "I have always wanted to play in the World Cup," he said. "I have a mutual understanding with Cricket South Africa and going forward I decided that I would finish at the World Cup, that is why I am contracted until then. After that, Cricket South Africa has allowed me to go and play around the world in various leagues but I would also love to play T20 cricket for South Africa."

Tahir said retiring from one-day internationals was a difficult decision. "I would love to play for as long as I can," he said, "but there is a stage in your life where you have to make big decisions." He said, though, that



JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's Imran Tahir appeals for a leg before wicket (LBW) decision as Sri Lanka's Kusal Mendis misses a shot during the first one day international (ODI) cricket match between South Africa and Sri Lanka at the Wanderers Stadium, Johannesburg, on Sunday. — AFP

he would like to play for South Africa in the 2020 ICC T20 World Cup in Australia.

Tahir, who has taken 156 wickets in 95 one-day

internationals, played in the 2011 and 2015 World Cups. He also played in the 2014 and 2016 World T20 tournaments. — AFP

Mitchell claims first PGA win with big final putt

TOKYO: Keith Mitchell sank a clutch 15-foot birdie putt at the last hole to win his first PGA Tour event with a one-stroke victory at the Honda Classic on Sunday.

The second-year professional edged out Brooks Koepka and Rickie Fowler with a final round 67 to finish at nine-under 271. The more experienced Koepka (66) and Fowler (67) put the pressure on but Mitchell denied them a chance at a playoff at PGA National with his long putt. The 27-year-old began his day with back-to-back bogeys, then roared back with birdies at four of the final seven holes. "I've been close before and I let my emotions take over," Mitchell told NBC television. "I bogeyed the first couple of holes and I said, 'Not again.'"

He finished the day with a big smile to go with six birdies and three bogeys. "I was trying to focus on what was going on," Mitchell said. "My mind started wandering there a little bit at the end ... and then I hit a great putt."

Ryan Palmer (63) and Lucas Glover (66) shared fourth at seven-under 273 and 56-year-old Vijay Singh (70) was sixth at six-under as he missed a chance to become the oldest player to win a PGA Tour event. A thrilling final nine holes saw as many as six players tied for the lead at Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

Palmer set the early tone with his splendid early finish that included eight birdies and a bogey in the round of 63. As he watched from the clubhouse for several hours, things heated up on the tough back nine.

Third-round co-leader Wyndham Clark (72-275) and the surging Koepka and Fowler, who made a 45-foot birdie putt at the 17th, also were tied for the top at one point. Finally it came down to Mitchell, Koepka and Fowler.

Koepka birdied two of his last three holes, and Fowler closed with four birdies in eight holes. Mitchell birdied the par-three 15th hole from



PALM BEACH GARDENS: Keith Mitchell poses with the trophy after winning the Honda Classic at PGA National Resort and Spa on Sunday in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. — AFP

four feet and then made the clutch putt at 18 even though his tee shot ended up in a bunker. Singh lost a

chance to be in the mix when he hit his tee shot badly at the 17th and the ball rolled into the water. — Reuters

Cricket to make Asian Games return at Hangzhou 2022

MUMBAI: Cricket will return to the next Asian Games at Hangzhou 2022 after the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) added it to its sports programme for the next edition of the continental event. Cricket has struggled to grow beyond its traditional bases and was last played at the Olympics in the 1900 Paris Games.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has been pushing for the game's Olympic return with the shortest 20-over format and hopes it will find a place at the 2028 Games in Los Angeles.

The Asian Games remains the largest multi-sports event that features cricket and Guangzhou 2010 and Incheon 2014 included both men's and women's competitions. Cricket was, however dropped for the Games in Jakarta-Palembang last year but was added back for Hangzhou at the OCA general assembly in Bangkok, where Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah was re-elected president of the OCA unopposed for an eighth term.

"Cricket will return at Hangzhou," OCA honorary life vice president Randhir Singh told Reuters. Cricket made its maiden appearance in the Commonwealth Games in 1998 when the South African men's team won the gold medal in Kuala Lumpur but has not featured in the quadrennial competition since then.

The ICC has submitted a bid for the inclusion of women's Twenty20 in the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Singh, who has been appointed as the chairman of the coordination committee for the Asian Games, said he visited Hangzhou last month to see venue options to host cricket.

"They showed us grounds which were a bit small. We asked options for bigger grounds," he added. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is open to cricket's inclusion provided all top teams compete but the Indian cricket board (BCCI), the game's richest and most influential, has been rather reluctant.

The powerful BCCI fears it might lose its autonomy and be answerable to the country's Olympic committee. The BCCI did not allow its teams to participate in Guangzhou and Incheon blaming a packed international schedule but the Indian Olympic Association was hopeful they would be able to convince the board for 2022.

"We will send a letter to the BCCI requesting them to send a team for Hangzhou 2022. We welcome the OCA's decision to include cricket for the next Games," IOA secretary general Rajeev Mehta told Reuters from Bangkok. The BCCI officials were not available for comment. — Reuters