

Sports

Pujols, second in all-time RBIs, Brewers overpower Reds

Rockies edge D-backs, snap seven-game skid

HOUSTON: Framer Valdez struck out 11, Kyle Tucker hit a home run and Carlos Correa hit a three-run double as the Houston Astros returned home to end a three-game losing streak with an 11-4 victory Monday against the Los Angeles Angels. The Angels' Albert Pujols made history when he moved into sole possession of second place on the all-time RBIs list with 2,087. He broke a tie with Alex Rodriguez on the RBI list and settled in behind all-time leader Hank Aaron (2,297). After getting swept in a three-game series on the West Coast against the upstart San Diego Padres, the Astros opened a four-game series and a 10-game homestand on a positive note. Justin Upton hit a home run for the Angels, who rallied to within a run in the fifth, but still ended up losing for the 10th time in their last 12 games. Valdez (3-2) gave up four runs on six hits over seven innings, while throwing 113 pitches. Angels starter Patrick Sandoval (0-4) gave up his five runs on seven hits and two walks over 2 2/3 innings with one strikeout.



BLUE JAYS 6, RAYS 4

Randal Grichuk slugged a three-run homer in the seventh inning as Toronto rallied to salvage a series split with Tampa Bay in St. Petersburg, Fla. With his club trailing 3-2, Grichuk, who also doubled, pulled a drive over the short fence in left field to give Toronto its first lead in the final game of the four-game series — the only contest not decided by one run. Toronto starter Tanner Roark tossed a season-high 96 pitches but allowed three runs and six hits in five innings. Rays starter Blake Snell (5 2/3 innings, two runs) was in line for his third straight win, but Aaron Loup (3-2) lost for the second time in the series.

TWINS 3, INDIANS 2

Miguel Sano belted a two-run homer in the sixth inning to lift visiting Minnesota to a victory over Cleveland. Nelson Cruz launched his seventh homer

in 10 games for the Twins, who have gone deep eight times en route to winning four of the five meetings with the Indians this season. Kenta Maeda (4-0) allowed one run on five hits and a walk while striking out seven in five innings for his second strong performance against Cleveland this season. Cesar Hernandez led off the first inning with a homer in the second consecutive contest for the Indians, who have dropped three of four on the heels of a season-high six-game winning streak.

RANGERS 3, ATHLETICS 2

Isiah Kiner-Falefa hit a go-ahead home run in the second inning, and ace right-hander Lance Lynn and two relievers made the lead stand up as host Texas held off Oakland in Arlington, Texas, in the first of a four-game series between the two American League West teams. The Rangers snapped a season-high eight-game losing streak by beating Oakland for the first time in four games this season. The Athletics, whose 20 wins led the American League until the Twins matched that mark on Monday, have lost two of their past three games. Oakland is now 6-4 in games decided by one run.

Third loss in a row

BREWERS 4, REDS 2

Justin Smoak homered and drove in three runs, and Milwaukee ended a season-high four-game skid with a home win over struggling Cincinnati.

The Brewers handed Cincinnati's Trevor Bauer, who entered with a 0.68 ERA, his first loss of the year. It was the Reds' third loss in a row as Bauer (3-1) yielded four runs, seven hits and walked two while striking out eight in 6 1/3 innings. Omar Narvaez homered and Brett Anderson (2-2) allowed only a pair of solo home runs over six-plus innings as the Brewers earned a needed victory following a 4-6 road trip. Josh Hader pitched a scoreless ninth for his

sixth save, and he has yet to allow a run or a hit in eight appearances (8 1/3 innings) this season.

CUBS 9, TIGERS 3

Javier Baez hit a pair of homers and drove in three runs, David Bote homered and finished with four RBIs, and Chicago downed host Detroit. Baez and Bote each had three hits, and Jason Heyward added two doubles and scored a run. Alec Mills (3-2) lasted seven innings and allowed three runs on seven hits with seven strikeouts. Christin Stewart hit a two-run homer for the Tigers, who have lost 11 of their last 13 games. Making his second major league start and first at home, Detroit right-hander Casey Mize (0-1) gave up four runs (three earned) on five hits and struck out two in 3 1/3 innings.

CARDINALS 9, ROYALS 3

Paul Goldschmidt and Paul DeJong drove in three runs each to power St. Louis past visiting Kansas City. Goldschmidt hit a run-scoring infield single and a two-run homer as the Cardinals won for the fourth time in five games. DeJong hit a sacrifice fly and a two-run double in his second game back from a bout with COVID-19. Cardinals starter Jack Flaherty (2-0) allowed just one hit in five scoreless innings to earn the victory. He did not walk a batter and struck out three. Royals starter Brad Keller (3-1) yielded five runs on six hits with three walks and four strikeouts in his four-plus innings.

MARLINS 11, NATIONALS 8

Jesus Aguilar produced three RBIs — two on a double in Miami's six-run fourth inning — and the Marlins defeated host Washington. Miami, which took three out of five games in the series, netted five singles, one double, one walk and one hit-by-pitch in the big inning. Marlins starter Pablo Lopez (3-1) earned the win, allowing six hits, two walks and three runs, none earned. He also struck out three. Nationals starter Austin Voth (0-3) gave up six hits, three walks and six runs in 3 2/3 innings. He fanned three. Washington's offense was led by Adam Eaton, who drove in four runs, and Juan Soto, who went 4-for-5 with two doubles and an RBI.



HOUSTON: Shohei Ohtani #17 of the Los Angeles Angels strikes out in the first inning against the Houston Astros at Minute Maid Park in Houston, Texas. —AFP

ROCKIES 3, DIAMONDBACKS 2

Trevor Story homered, Ryan Castellani returned to his hometown and earned his first major league win, and Colorado ended a seven-game losing streak with a 3-2 win over Arizona in Phoenix. The Rockies won without star outfielder Charlie Blackmon, who was scratched from the lineup before the game due to quadriceps tightness. The Diamondbacks lost their sixth consecutive game. Story raised his total to 20 career home runs in his 70 games against the Diamondbacks. Castellani (1-1) played youth and high school baseball in Phoenix before being drafted in the second round in 2014 by the Rockies. He pitched six innings Monday, allowing two runs on three hits with three strikeouts and three walks. — Reuters

Brailsford plots eighth Tour title

PARIS: Tough, unsentimental and dominant in cycling for more than a decade, Dave Brailsford wielded his axe ahead of the Tour de France this week and was then compared by one of his earlier victims to former Manchester United boss Sir Alex Ferguson.

Brailsford is the mastermind behind both British cycling's massive Olympic gold haul, and a staggering seven Tour de France titles in the past eight years, first with Sky and now under the name of the Ineos Grenadiers.

The 56-year-old began his run clinching the 2012 Tour de France with Team Sky's Bradley Wiggins, who he had already guided to multiple Olympic gold medals.

But jaws dropped the following season when Brailsford axed his popular star in favour of the shy but determined Chris Froome. For the 2020 Tour, Brailsford again took out his cleaver as he dropped Froome, who has four titles, and his other British star Geraint Thomas who won in 2018 and was runner up last year.

Once again Brailsford put his hopes in a young in-form rider, in this case the defending champion

Colombian 23-year-old Egan Bernal. "He manages Ineos like Sir Alex Ferguson," Wiggins said comparing Brailsford to the man who led soccer's Manchester United to 13 Premier League titles.

"Egan is clearly the man now," Wiggins said on his podcast this week. "But if Bernal is clearly the man they are putting their money on he's told the other guys, and found fresh challenges for them," Wiggins said.

WINNING IS THEIR NORM

Thomas has been named as Ineos captain for the Giro d'Italia and Froome at the Vuelta a Espana. "They want to win all three Grand Tour in a single year," Wiggins suggested. This kind of ambition comes as no surprise for the Brailsford, who introduced the concepts of 'Mission Clarity' and 'Marginal Gains Strategy' to cycling.

'Mission Clarity' means the team ignores stage victories at the Tour and focuses solely on winning the general classification. Bernal, for example, only took the yellow jersey on stage 19 of 21 in 2019. Marginal gains has become a little more controversial. "If you broke down everything you could think of that goes into riding a bike, and then improved it by one percent you'll get a significant increase," Brailsford explained.

Applying it to tactics, technology, communications, health and psychology the team overstepped the line according a British govern-



Dave Brailsford

ment committee who described some of their prescription drug use as unethical.

The inquiry came after leaked reports of so called TUE's, therapeutic use exemptions, in this case cortisone injections for asthma. While the inquiry cast a cloud over British cycling and Team Sky's achievement, no legal lines were crossed.

His run at the top continues on Saturday as the 2020 Tour de France embarks from Nice over two months late with Ineos again the team to watch. "We've been looking at how we think we can win this race," said

the fluent French speaker who grew up in Wales.

"We've got some ideas about maybe a slightly different approach," he said. "We've got a good game plan and we think that these are the guys to deliver." "The decision we've come to, and what we're very excited about, is that we're going to get Egan and Richard (Carapaz) to target yellow," Brailsford said when unveiling his Tour roster.

Wiggins had a simple analysis. "Winning has become their norm," said the man who got it all rolling back in 2012. —AFP

Korea's top golf event moved to Vegas

SEOUL: South Korea's biggest golf tournament was moved to Las Vegas because of coronavirus restrictions yesterday, as the rest of the US PGA Tour's \$30 million 'Asian swing' also looked in doubt. The CJ Cup, originally due to take place on Jeju island from October 15-18, will now be played at Las Vegas's Shadow Creek course on the same dates, the PGA Tour and sponsors CJ Group said in a joint statement.

South Korea — which had brought its outbreak largely under control, but is now tackling several clusters of infections — has imposed strict limits on travel, with all arrivals required to spend two weeks in quarantine.

Separately, the PGA Tour said it was in talks over the fate of Japan's Zozo Championship and the WGC-HSBC Champions in Shanghai, which are scheduled to be held in consecutive weeks after the CJ Cup.

With combined purses of \$29.75

million, the PGA Tour's three-stop swing has been the highlight of Asia's golf calendar in recent seasons.

"We are currently engaged in discussions with the stakeholders of both the Zozo Championship and World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions and will make an announcement shortly on the status of both events," the PGA said in a statement sent to AFP.

The \$10.25 million Shanghai tournament has been under a cloud since Chinese authorities banned most international sports events this year, to guard against coronavirus outbreaks. All three tournaments attract top-quality players. The Zozo Championship was won last year by Tiger Woods, who equalled Sam Snead's record of 82 PGA Tour victories.

In its three years of existence, the CJ Cup has been won by two former world number ones — Justin Thomas in 2017 and 2019, either side of Brooks Koepka's victory in 2018.

"While our players have always looked forward to visiting Korea, the current circumstances provided this new opportunity to bring the event to Las Vegas," said Ty Votaw, the PGA tour's vice president of international operations. —AFP

Varlamov blanks Flyers in NHL series opener

LOS ANGELES: Semyon Varlamov posted his second straight shutout as the New York Islanders used a balanced scoring attack to beat the Philadelphia Flyers 4-0 in the opening game of their playoff series on Monday. Andy Greene, Jean-Gabriel Pageau, Anders Lee and Devon Toews each scored in game one of their best-of-seven Eastern Conference semi-final series in the NHL's quarantine bubble in Toronto.

Varlamov is the first Islanders goalie with consecutive shutouts in the playoffs. "We're playing well defensively," Varlamov said. "The guys played unbelievable again in front of me."

"It feels good to get back-to-back shutouts, but at this point it's not about shutouts. It's playoff hockey; the most important thing for me is to get the win and get ready for the next game." Varlamov made all 29 saves and

stretched his shutout streak to 136 minutes, 20 seconds. He made 21 saves in a 4-0 win over the Washington Capitals in game five of their first round series.

The second game of the best-of-seven series will be played Wednesday. Goaltender Carter Hart stopped 25 shots for the top seeded Flyers, who eliminated the Montreal Canadiens in six games in the first round.

"They were the better team in the first, we were the better team in the second and couldn't find a way to capitalize on some of our real good looks," Flyers coach Alain Vigneault said. "I believe if we get the same looks sooner or later we'll be able to put the puck in the net. But the third period got a little bit away from us. We lost a couple of battles that they were able to capitalize on."

The Islanders outshot Philadelphia 15-4 and scored once in the first period before igniting for three goals in the third. Pageau, with his fifth of the playoffs, beat Hart from the front of the net early in the third to make it 2-0. Lee, on a pass from Canadian star Mathew Barzal, and Toews, into an empty net late, rounded out the scoring in the final period. —AFP

Ailing Djokovic advances, Serena claws out victory

NEW YORK: World number one Novak Djokovic battled through neck pain on the way to a 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 victory over Ricardas Berankis at the Western & Southern Open, where second seed Dominic Thiem crashed out.

Djokovic, who pulled out of doubles with a sore neck on Sunday, made it through to the round of 16 despite the ailment, for which he received treatment on court. "It's getting better," he said after the 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 win. "It's been four days. It's not yet where I'd like it to be but it's heading in the right direction."

That's good news with the US Open starting on August 31 on the same New York hardcourts hosting this week's tournament, which was moved from Cincinnati to establish a quarantine bubble for the upcoming Grand Slam.

Djokovic twice went down a break in the second set, but broke back both times. He let out a roar when he broke for a 5-4 lead then calmly served it out. He next faces American Tenny Sandgren, a 6-7 (4/7), 6-2, 7-6 (7/5) winner over 15th-seeded Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime.

The upset of the day was at the opposite end of the men's draw, as 32nd-ranked Filip Krajinovic of Serbia toppled Austria's Thiem 6-2, 6-1.

Thiem, who pushed Djokovic to five sets in an Australian Open runner-up finish in January, couldn't find his rhythm in his first match since the ATP tour resumed after a five-month coronavirus hiatus. "It was just a horrible game by myself," Thiem said. Didn't play well at all, didn't get any rhythm. "I had really troubles with returning."

Krajinovic lined up a meeting with Hungarian Marton Fucsovics, who ousted 14th-seeded Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov 7-5, 4-6, 6-2.

Former world number one Andy Murray also notched an upset, surprising world number seven Alexander Zverev 6-3, 3-6, 7-5 for his first win over a top-10 player in more than three years.

In women's action, third-seeded Serena Williams bucked the upset trend that saw top seed Karolina Pliskova and number two Sofia Kenin ousted on Sunday. The 23-time Grand Slam champion battled back from the brink against Dutch qualifier Arantxa Rus, dominating a third-set to win 7-6 (8-6), 3-6, 7-6 (7/0).

Williams dropped four straight games in the second set against the hard-hitting left-hander, who has never won a WTA title. After rallying from 0-40 down in the opening game of the third she looked to have turned the tide with a service break on the way to a 3-0 lead. Serving for the match at 5-3 in the third, Williams was broken to love, Rus winning the next two to give herself a chance to serve it out.

She was broken, and Williams crushed her in the tiebreaker to wrap up a bruising victory in two hours and 49 minutes. "That was tough. It was a real physical match out there," said Williams, who tried to pump herself up on the spectator-free Grandstand court with fist-pumping cries of "c'mon" and squeals of triumph and frustration. It was Williams' fourth three-set match since she returned at a tournament in Lexington, Kentucky, in the wake of the WTA's coronavirus shutdown. "I'm actually super fit and I'm super ready," she said. —AFP