

Sports

Eller's overtime goal nets Caps' wild win over Sharks

Panthers, Driedger put Penguins' streak on ice

WASHINGTON: Washington scored twice in a 32-second span late in the third period and Lars Eller tallied 2:01 into overtime to lift the Capitals to a 5-4 victory over the visiting San Jose Sharks on Sunday afternoon. The Capitals had to overcome a second-period hat trick from San Jose's Evander Kane and a late 4-2 deficit. Captain Logan Couture seemed to seal it for the Sharks on an empty-net goal for that two-goal edge with one minute left in the third period. Washington, however, trimmed the deficit after Jakub Vrana's second of the game with 47 seconds left before T.J. Oshie tallied with 15 seconds left. Goalie Braden Holtby then stopped two breakaways in overtime and made a pass that started the rush on Eller's goal. Eller took a cross-ice feed from defenseman John Carlson and fired a high shot past goalie Martin Jones. The assist was Holtby's first of the season.

FLAMES 5, WILD 4 (SO)

Mark Giordano tied the game with less than six minutes left in the third period and Dillon Dube recorded the shootout winner as Calgary beat Minnesota in St. Paul, Minn. Calgary, which also got goals from Milan Lucic, Travis Hamonic and Michael Stone, has won back-to-back contests for the first time since a seven-game run from Nov. 27-Dec. 12. The Flames' David Rittich stopped 30 shots and six of seven in the shootout. Marcus Foligno scored twice for Minnesota, which has lost three of four.

LIGHTNING 3, HURRICANES 1

Goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy won his fifth straight decision by stopping 28 shots as Tampa Bay pushed its winning streak to seven games with a victory against host Carolina in Raleigh, N.C. Mitchell Stephens, Steven

Stamkos and Brayden Point scored as the Lightning completed a perfect four-game road swing. Nikita Kucherov notched two assists, and Stamkos also had an assist. The Hurricanes, who were playing the first game after the midway mark of their schedule, have lost five of their last seven games. They have three games remaining on a seven-game homestand.

PANTHERS 4, PENGUINS 1

Frank Vatrano and Mike Hoffman each had a goal and an assist Sunday as visiting Florida topped Pittsburgh. Brett Connolly and Evgenii Dadonov also scored for Florida, and goaltender Chris Driedger made 31 saves for the Panthers, who have won seven of 10 and finished a road trip 2-2-0. Jared McCann scored for Pittsburgh, which had its five-game point streak (4-0-1) snapped. The Penguins failed to improve on their NHL-best 16 home wins. They also had won eight in a row at home against Florida.

DUCKS 5, PREDATORS 4 (SO)

Ryan Getzlaf scored the deciding goal in the fifth round of a shootout and added three assists as host Anaheim ended a three-game losing streak by edging Nashville. Adam Henrique posted two goals and an assist, while Cam Fowler and Daniel Sprong also scored, as the Ducks took a season-high 47 shots and picked up their third victory in their last four home games. Goalie John Gibson made three saves in the shootout and 22 in the game. Craig Smith scored two goals and Austin Watson and Rocco Grimaldi one each for the Predators, who lost for the fourth time in their last five games and went 1-1 in a quick trip to Southern California with games on consecutive nights. Juuse Saros made 43 saves for the Predators.

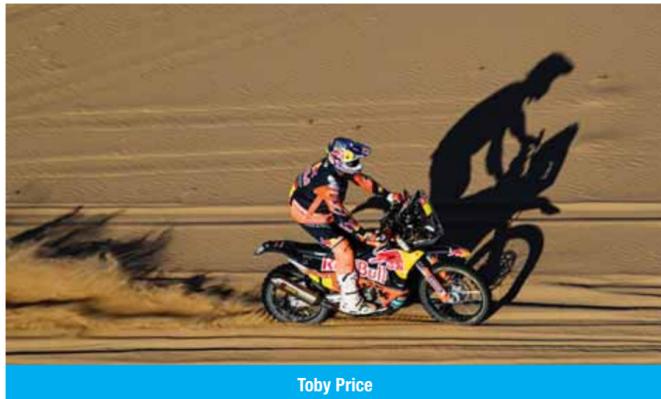


MINNESOTA: Ryan Hartman #38 of the Minnesota Wild takes the puck as teammate Jordan Greenway #18 pins Sam Bennett #93 and Travis Hamonic #24 of the Calgary Flames to the boards during the first period of the game at Xcel Energy Center in St Paul, Minnesota. The Flames defeated the Wild 5-4 in a shootout.— AFP

BLACKHAWKS 4, RED WINGS 2

Adam Boqvist scored the go-ahead goal with 10:13 remaining in the third period and goaltender Corey Crawford stopped 19 of 21 shots to rally host Chicago past Detroit. Making his first start in nearly two weeks, Crawford earned his first victory since Dec. 6 as he

spelled Robin Lehner, who is day-to-day with a right knee injury after making the past four starts for Chicago. The Blackhawks have won four of five and six of eight. The Red Wings, who lost for the eighth time in nine games, also lost defenseman Trevor Daley, as he left the ice after taking a shot to his ankle.— Reuters



Toby Price



Dmitry Sotnikov

First ever Dakar stage in Saudi

JEDDAH: The 2020 Dakar Rally has burst into life with an opening stage that gave competitors a stern wake up call - 319 kilometres against the clock. The first ever Dakar stage in Saudi Arabia represented a new start for all 342 vehicles entered into the rally.

The opening bike stage win went to reigning champion Toby Price (AUS). Despite his roadbook locking up on him, and then tearing completely, he was still able to post the fastest time of day. Just five seconds back from Price is Ricky Brabec (USA), followed 35 seconds later by Matthias Walkner (AUT).

"Once the roadbook has gone you're pretty much driving blind." - Toby Price Price and Walkner's fellow Red Bull KTM Factory Team riders, Sam Sunderland (GBR) and Luciano Benavides (ARG), are also well placed within the Top 10 after the first day of racing. If the team are going to extend their remarkable record of 18 consecutive Dakar wins, they'll need one of this foursome in top spot after stage 12.

The surprise winner on the opening day of the car race is Vaidotas Zala (LTU) who led home a star-studded field of offroad competitors. While Zala holds the overnight lead he will be aware of 13-time winner Stephane Peterhansel (FRA) breathing down his neck in second overall.

In third place is Peterhansel's fellow MINI Buggy driver Carlos Sainz (ESP), just one place ahead of defending car class champion Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT). Al-Attiyah led the stage for most of the day before a succession of punctures plagued his Toyota Hilux late in the stage. "We had three punctures to stop and fix. We had to stop every two or three kilometres to fix a rear wheel, very strange." - Nasser Al-Attiyah.

Aron Domzala (POL) is the first side-by-side driver to register a stage win at the 2020 Dakar. However, defending SxS champion Chaleco Lopez (CHI) is less than seven minutes behind in fourth place. It was a mixed opening SxS stage for the members of Red Bull Off-Road Team USA. Mitch Guthrie Jr. (USA) scored a Top 10 on his first ever Dakar stage while his team-mate Blade Hildebrand (USA) is looking to claw back 35 minutes on Domzala and

the other frontrunners on the coming stages. "This was my very first Dakar stage and it feels great to just get over the line." - Mitch Guthrie Jr.

The coaching crew of Cyril Despres (FRA) and Mike Horn (SUI) were placed in the Top 5 of the SxS race in their 1000cc OT3 buggy up until kilometre 254 of the stage. For the final 60 kilometres of the stage their progress was hampered by overheating issues, but they battled on to cross the finish line.

Over in the truck race it hasn't taken long for Team Kamaz Master to scale the leaderboard. Anton Shibalov (RUS) leads the race with his three fellow Kamaz drivers all well positioned to assert their dominance over the early rounds of this first Saudi Arabian Dakar. There looks to be a battle Royale shaping up in the quad category. Two-time winner Ignacio Casale (CHI) took the opening stage and leads another former champ Rafae Sonik (POL) by 5m36s at the summit.

After an overnight stay in the Al Wajh bivouac, the Dakar moves off to Neom in northwestern Saudi Arabia. The timed special stage of 367 kilometres will offer the riders spectacular views of the Red Sea as well as plenty of navigational challenges along the way.

The 2020 Dakar Rally has burst into life with an opening stage that gave competitors a stern wake up call - 319 kilometres against the clock. The first ever Dakar stage to be held in Saudi Arabia represented a new start for all 342 vehicles entered into the rally. As well as a few familiar faces taking early leads, we also have a crop of intriguing newcomers to keep an eye on.

It was a pre-sunrise start for the Dakar convoy after Saturday night's Start Podium in the city of Jeddah. The bikes set off first on the desert route to Al Wajh, followed by the quads, cars, side-by-sides and finally the trucks. The opening bike stage win went to reigning champion Toby Price (AUS). Despite his roadbook locking up on him, and then tearing completely, he was still able to post the fastest time of day. Just five seconds back from Price is Ricky Brabec (USA), followed 35 seconds later by Matthias Walkner (AUT).

including by getting lookalikes of athletes to provide the samples.

The undercover team also filmed Thailand's Olympic bronze medallist Rattikan Gulnoi admitting to using steroids when she was 18 years old — something that could see her stripped of her prize.

Christian Baumgartner, who heads the German federation, told ARD the IWF's chief was to blame.

"Ajan stands for a system that has established doping in weightlifting over decades and that has gone off the rails for decades," Baumgartner charged, adding that "a culture of corruption has spread".

Beyond doping, the ARD report also cited documents allegedly showing at least \$5 million in funding flowing

from the International Olympic Committee to the IWF were transferred into two Swiss accounts of which only Ajan had oversight.

Hungarian national Ajan, 80, has been in the IWF's management since 1970, taking over as president of the federation in 2000.

In a statement to AFP later Sunday, the IWF said it was examining the allegations made in the broadcast.

"Amid a number of apparent falsehoods, unsubstantiated allegations and disproven rumours dating back to as far as 2008, there does seem to be some fresh information included in the programme which may be of use to the IWF's efforts to promote clean weightlifting and protect clean sport," said the statement.—AFP

Thomas win Tournament of Champions in playoff

LOS ANGELES: Justin Thomas said he "got very lucky" after botching the last hole in regulation but holding on to win the Tournament of Champions in a playoff on Sunday, edging Patrick Reed and Xander Schauffele for his 12th US PGA Tour title.

The 26-year-old American birdied the third extra hole to beat Reed after defending champion Schauffele had been eliminated with a three-putt par on the first playoff green.

World number four Thomas stuck his third shot three feet from the pin at the par-five 18th on the Plantation Course in Kapalua, Hawaii, to set up an easy birdie and watched as Reed missed his seven-foot putt to extend the playoff.

All three had finished 72 holes with 14-under par totals of 278 after Thomas, who enjoyed a two-shot lead with three to play, bogeyed two of the last three holes.

He fell back to 15-under at the 16th before his three-wood second shot at 18 found the high-high grass in a penalty area on his way to a bogey in a four-under-par final round of 69.

Playing partner Schauffele, the world number eight, reached the green in two, but missed a seven-foot birdie putt for victory, carding a three-under par 70.

Reed, ranked 11, was already in the clubhouse on 14-under after capping a bogey-free seven-under 66 with a 20-foot birdie putt at the 72nd hole. Reed, the 2018 US Masters champion, had putts to win on each of the first two playoff holes but was unable to get efforts from 30 feet and 12 feet to drop.

"For some reason I was supposed to win this week," Thomas said. "I got very, very lucky to have that putt. "But I also stuck to my process," said Thomas, who like the entire field in the winners-only event dealt with challenging, gusty winds for a fourth straight day.

"I truly felt like through 15 holes it was one of the best rounds I ever played," said Thomas who started the day one stroke off Schauffele's lead and pulled level with a birdie at the eighth where Schauffele bogeyed.

He kept the accelerator down with birdies at nine, 10 and 11, and added two more at 14 and 15 — where his putt through the fringe circled the cup before rattling in. "I was in such control tee to green, I was putting it beautifully, my irons were awesome," Thomas said. "I hit a really good drive on 16, just the wind took it more. "Eighteen," he admitted, "was just a disaster.

"But it worked out, so I guess I can't complain," Thomas concluded. Schauffele said Thomas's run of six birdies in eight holes was astonishing, especially given the windy conditions. "He was hitting ridiculous shots, making good putts in the wind, and he deserved the lead he got," said Schauffele.

But he was disappointed that he didn't take advantage of his own opportunity. "I should have won the tournament," Schauffele said. "I mean, JT was right there, but with the circumstances given I should have closed it up and I didn't." —AFP

'Corruption, doping cover-up' at IWF

BERLIN: The International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) and its long-time chief Tamas Ajan have been accused of establishing a "culture of corruption" and doping cover-ups over decades in a German documentary to be aired Sunday.

Prominent weightlifters were rarely subject to tests, while some doping controllers were allegedly taking cash to accept manipulated urine samples, claimed the report by journalists at German broadcaster ARD including Hajo Seppel, who broke the story on Russia's state doping scandal.

Dorin Balmus, doctor of the Moldovan national weightlifting team, was caught on hidden camera explaining how urine samples could be manipulated —