

PENGUINS RALLY PAST HURRICANES 4-2

PITTSBURGH: Sidney Crosby scored a pair of highlight-reel goals as the Pittsburgh Penguins rallied past the Carolina Hurricanes 4-2 on Thursday night for their fourth straight victory. Crosby beat Eddie Lack with a slick backhander in the first and added a redirect from his knees in the second to extend his points streak to 10 consecutive games as Pittsburgh strengthened its grip on seventh in the crowded Eastern Conference playoff race. Phil Kessel had a goal and an assist and Nick Bonino picked up his fifth of the year. Rookie Matt Murray shook off a slow start to finish with 31 saves. Phillip Di Giuseppe and Riley Nash scored for the Hurricanes.

KINGS 4, RANGERS 3

Anze Kopitar scored the tying goal with 4:10 to play and tipped home the winner at 1:34 of overtime, propelling the Los Angeles Kings to victory over the New York Rangers. Kopitar deflected a slap shot by Jake Muzzin to end it in dramatic fashion for the Pacific Division-leading Kings, who rallied from a two-goal deficit for their third straight win over a certain playoff team. Los Angeles won after trailing to start the third period for the NHL-best eighth time this season. After tipping home a shot by Milan Lucic to force OT, Kopitar got his first multi-goal game since his hat trick against the Rangers last month. JT Miller had a goal and an assist for the Rangers, who haven't won back-to-back games in March.

COYOTES 3, SHARKS 1

Shane Doan scored with 1:31 left and Mike Smith stopped 27 shots in his first home game in nearly four months as the Arizona Coyotes took advantage of two disallowed goals to beat the San Jose Sharks 3-1 Thursday night. Smith returned from a 40-game absence due to a core muscle injury with a 44-save shutout Edmonton on Saturday and was sharp again in his first home game since Nov. 27. He was helped by two San Jose goals that were waved off after



PITTSBURGH: Carolina Hurricanes' Nathan Gerbe (14) gets past a diving Pittsburgh Penguins' Trevor Daley (6) on a breakout during the first period of an NHL hockey game in Pittsburgh, on Thursday, March 17, 2016. Gerbe's shot was blocked. —AP

official reviews, one for offside and the other for kicking the puck into the goal. Doan scored his 25th goal of the season by squeezing a shot past Martin Jones from a tough angle. Michael Stone also scored and Antoine Vermette added an empty-net goal.

STARS 4, LIGHTNING 3

Jamie Benn scored two goals to give him a career-best 36 as the Dallas Stars took sole possession of first place in the Western Conference by rallying for victory over the Tampa Bay Lightning. Benn's winning goal 11:50 into the third period came about 2 minutes after Stephen Johns' first NHL goal as the Stars dropped the Lightning to 31-2-0 when leading

after two periods. Dallas (93 points) is two points ahead of St. Louis atop the West. Both teams have 10 games remaining. Steven Stamkos had two goals for the Lightning (85 points), who stayed in third in the Atlantic Division and fell four points behind division-leading Florida, a 4-1 winner at Toronto.

PANTHERS 4, MAPLE LEAFS 1

Jussi Jokinen scored two unusual goals to help lift the Florida Panthers over the Toronto Maple Leafs. Jokinen wasn't attempting to score on either goal against the Maple Leafs, with two passing attempts pinging off Toronto sticks and beating Jonathan Bernier. Jaromir Jagr and Teddy Purcell added empty-net goals

for the Panthers, who won for the fourth time in five games. Florida is three wins from matching its franchise record of 43. Morgan Rielly scored for the Leafs, who had a two-game win streak snapped.

DEVILS 7, WILD 4

Devante Smith-Pelly, Mike Sislo and Adam Henrique scored two goals apiece as the New Jersey Devils had their best offensive performance of the season in a victory over the Minnesota Wild. Reid Boucher also scored, Tyler Kennedy added a season-high three assists and Keith Kinkaid made 28 saves as New Jersey snapped a three-game home losing streak. Nino Niederreiter, Jared Spurgeon, Justin Fontaine and Mikko Koivu scored for the Wild, who squandered a chance to move ahead of Colorado into the eighth and final playoff spot in the Western Conference.

PREDATORS 4, ISLANDERS 2

James Neal and Ryan Johansen each scored a goal and added an assist to lead the Nashville Predators past the New York Islanders. Ryan Ellis and Austin Watson also scored for Nashville, which has recorded at least one point in the standings in 16 of their last 17 games. Rookie Ryan Pulock and Brock Nelson had the goals for the Islanders, who have lost of four of their last five.

RED WINGS 3, BLUE JACKETS 1

Henrik Zetterberg and Darren Helm scored in the third period to lead the Detroit Red Wings past the Columbus Blue Jackets. Luke Glendening also scored and Jimmy Howard stopped 27 shots as Detroit moved a point ahead of Philadelphia for the Eastern Conference's second wild-card playoff spot. Alexander Wennberg spoiled Howard's shutout bid on a power-play goal with 1 minute to go, ending the Blue Jackets' home scoreless streak at 156:02. Sergei Bobrovsky finished with 19 saves as Columbus lost its third straight. —AP

GIANT KILLER GOFFIN SETS UP RAONIC SEMI AT INDIAN WELLS

CALIFORNIA: Belgian David Goffin continued his giant-killing run at Indian Wells as he stormed into the last four of the BNP Paribas Open with a 7-6(4) 6-2 upset victory over former US Open champion Marin Cilic on Thursday. A day after ousting third seed Stan Wawrinka, Goffin battled through to his first Masters 1000 semi-final where he will meet Canadian Milos Raonic, a 7-5 6-3 victor over Frenchman Gael Monfilis.

Goffin saved 11 of 12 break points against tall Croatian Cilic before sealing the win in just over an hour-and-a-half and declared himself ready to take on another big server. "It's good that in tennis you can find some solution against big players like Marin or Milos or (John) Isner," the 25-year-old told reporters. "Maybe I'm quicker. I think I can take the ball earlier. I have other weapons. That's why tennis is a nice sport. 'I'm really happy with the way I managed the important points ... it was the key of the match, to win the first set, and to be more relaxed in the second.'"

After being forced to fighting off four set points in the opening stanza, Goffin broke 10th seed Cilic's serve twice in the second set. "I was on my baseline and I was making him run a lot," said the Belgian, who has won two ATP titles. "When I had the opportunity on his second serve, I was really aggressive, so that's why it was a better second set." Raonic pounded out 10 aces to reach the semi-finals at Indian Wells for the second straight year. "I did things well. I created opportunities for myself," the 12th seed told reporters. "I served well and when I did get myself in trouble, I felt like it was me forcing the game. —Reuters

LAVILLENIE, SUHR SOAR AS WORLD INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS BEGIN

PORTLAND: Pole vault stars Renaud Lavillenie and Jenn Suhr lit up the opening day of the World Indoor Athletics Championships here Thursday as the first major track and field event since Russia was banned from the sport got under way. French Olympic champion Lavillenie produced a display of swaggering brilliance to romp to gold at the Oregon Convention Center. The 29-year-old from Clermont-Ferrand needed only two jumps to take gold with a clearance at 5.90m before putting the seal on a superb night's work with a new championship record of 6.02m. Lavillenie then delighted the Portland crowd with three attempts at 6.17m, which would have broken his own world record of 6.16m, but failed with each.

Yet victory was sweet for Lavillenie as he reclaimed the title he last won in Istanbul in 2012. Injury robbed him of the chance to defend the crown at the last indoor championships in Sopot, Poland two years ago. Sam Kendricks of the United States took silver with Poland's Piotr Lisiek claiming bronze. Women's pole vault Olympic champion Suhr had earlier bagged the first gold medal of the championships with a similarly imperious display. The 34-year-old US star whose previous best finish at a world indoors was a silver medal in 2008 - took gold with a championship record clearance of 4.90m. Sandi Morris of the United States took silver, while Ekaterini Stefanidi of Greece claimed the bronze.

Road to recovery?

The championships got under way on Thursday with beleaguered International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) president Sebastian Coe acknowledging the sport faced a long road to recovery. Athletics has been rocked by a corruption scandal in the governing

body's leadership and lurid revelations of systemic doping of Russian athletes, who are suspended from international competition and could even be tossed from the Olympics. "This is an important staging post in the season and it's an important part of our road to recovery," Coe said. "We're back in competition which is really important for our sport." Coe said he was confident that reforms to IAAF practices would help to restore faith in the sport as it reels from the worst crisis in its history.

But he warned: "We're not going to return to trust overnight. You don't stick 10 dollars in a slot machine and suddenly trust appears in the tray." Coe also cast a grim eye over the latest doping revelations to rock world sport, with around 100 positive tests for the newly banned endurance-boosting drug meldonium, the substance which snared tennis star Maria Sharapova. Athletics has already been tainted by the meldonium scandal, with Ukraine on Thursday confirming that 800-meter runner Natalya Lupu would not compete in Portland after admitting to using the drug. Coe said he was concerned that the meldonium cases could be part of a wider problem of athletes abusing prescription drugs for performance-enhancing purposes. "We need to look very closely at that," Coe said. "But the bigger challenge of course is around the use of prescription drugs if there isn't an underlying medical condition. "That's not just a medical issue that's clearly a very big ethical issue and we need to meet that challenge." The first full day of the championships will see five gold medals up for grabs, with the highlight coming in the men's 60m. Other titles to be decided will be the women's 60m hurdles, women's long jump, women's pentathlon and men's shot put. —AFP