

NHL

## DALLAS STARS BRING BACK HITCHCOCK AS COACH

**DALLAS:** Ken Hitchcock is returning to coach the Dallas Stars, a person with direct knowledge of the situation tells The Associated Press. The Stars are expected to announce the hire today, but the person confirmed the move on condition of anonymity yesterday.

Hitchcock won the Stanley Cup with Dallas in 1999, coaching there for parts of seven seasons from 1995-96 through 2001-02. He has since coached the Philadelphia Flyers, Columbus Blue

Jackets and St. Louis Blues. "Congrats Ken Hitchcock on the (Stars) head coach job," 1999 Cup winner and Stars legend Mike Modano tweeted. "My schedule is pretty open."

The 65-year-old was fired as Blues coach in February and replaced by Mike Yeo. Even before that, St. Louis had announced it was Hitchcock's final season there and that Yeo would take over. Hitchcock replaces Lindy Ruff, who was fired Monday after four sea-

sons in Dallas. The Stars missed the playoffs this year after winning the Central Division last season.

The Edmonton native is fourth on the NHL's all-time wins list with 781, one shy of legendary New York Islanders coach Al Arbour for third. Hitchcock can now pass Arbour back with the team that he led to its only title in franchise history.

Dallas considered former Florida Panthers coach Gerard Gallant and oth-

ers for its vacancy but went with the affable Hitchcock, whose recipe for success has worked through several eras of hockey. Good friend and Washington Capitals coach Barry Trotz said he believes Hitchcock will be inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame one day.

"He's a guy that tries to teach the game," Trotz said. "He's a little bit old-school sometimes because he's demanding and it's funny. When you're

demanding with players, they don't like it at the time, but when you go away or there's a change and they come back 10 years later and they go, 'You had it right. I was all wrong.'" Hitchcock made the playoffs in all five full seasons he coached the Blues, leading them to the Western Conference final last spring. He won the Jack Adams Award as NHL coach of the year in 2011-12 when St. Louis won its first of two division titles during his tenure. — AP

BASEBALL

## CESPEDES HITS 3 HOME RUNS AS METS DEFEAT PHILLIES

**PHILADELPHIA:** Yoenis Cespedes hit three of New York's seven homers to back Matt Harvey, and the Mets beat the Philadelphia Phillies 14-4 Tuesday night. Harvey (2-0) left with tightness in his left hamstring after allowing two runs and five hits and striking out six in 5 2/3 innings. Phillies starter Clay Buchholz (0-1) also exited because of an injury, a strained right forearm. He gave up six runs and eight hits in 2 1/3 innings. Lucas Duda hit two homers and Asdrubal Cabrera and Travis D'Arnaud also went deep for New York, which has 46 homers in its last 21 games at Citizens Bank Park. Cespedes fell down on a wild swing on the first pitch he saw, then hit a three-run homer to straightaway center field off Buchholz in the first inning. He connected to deep left in the fourth off Adam Morgan and drove another one way out to left in the fifth against Morgan.

INDIANS 2, WHITE SOX 1, 10 INNINGS

Michael Brantley doubled home Francisco Lindor with two outs in the 10th inning as Cleveland celebrated its 2016 AL championship and then beat Chicago in its home opener. Brantley could only watch and cheer for his teammates last October during their postseason run after undergoing two surgeries on his right shoulder. But he's healthy now, and after playing in just 11 games last season, Brantley made the most of his first home game since May 10 with his game-winning hit. Lindor walked with two outs off Tommy Kahnle (0-1) before Brantley sliced a 3-2 pitch down the left-field line. Lindor was running on the pitch and scored easily while Brantley danced around second base before being mobbed by his teammates. It was the dramatic ending the Indians didn't get in their last home game, a 10-inning loss to the Chicago Cubs in Game 7 of the World Series. Cleveland led the majors with 11 walk-off wins last season. Bryan Shaw (1-0), who took the loss when the Cubs won their first title in 108 years, got the win.

MABLINS 8, BRAVES 4

A gray cat went scrambling for cover in the Marlins Park outfield midway through Miami's home opener, and no wonder, given the barrage off Marcell Ozuna's bat. Ozuna homered twice and had a career-high six RBIs to help Miami beat Atlanta. Announced attendance was 36,519, and that didn't include a cat that ran onto the field midway through the game. It scurried along the outfield warning track, ran away from right fielder Giancarlo Stanton, crawled up the center field wall and then appeared to get stuck in the animatronic home run sculpture. Marlins president David Samson said if Ozuna had hit a third homer, the sculpture would not have been activated for fear of harming the cat. Dan Straily (1-1) allowed three runs, two earned, in five innings for his first victory since joining Miami. Bartolo Colon (0-1) allowed six runs in four innings.

ANGELS 6, RANGERS 5, 10 INNINGS

Carlos Perez's squeeze bunt in the 10th inning capped another comeback for Los Angeles, which scored three times in the ninth before going on to beat Texas. The Rangers led 5-0 through six innings. With runners on the corners and one out, Perez set down a perfect bunt that hugged the inside grass and died without going foul. The Angels had rallied to score seven runs in the ninth in the previous game on Sunday to beat the Mariners. The Angels' ninth-inning comeback Tuesday came off Rangers' closer Sam Dyson. Down 5-2 going into the inning, the Angels got a solo home run from Danny Espinosa, back-to-back doubles by Yunel Escobar and Mike Trout, and a run-scoring single from Albert Pujols to tie it.

Trout then robbed Mike Napoli of a home run to lead off the 10th. Cam Bedrosian (1-0) got the win with an inning of relief and Jeremy Jeffress (0-1) was stuck with the loss.



**PHILADELPHIA:** New York Mets' Yoenis Cespedes follows through on a three-run home run off Philadelphia Phillies starting pitcher Clay Buchholz during the first inning of a baseball game, Tuesday, in Philadelphia. — AP

RED SOX 8, ORIOLES 1

Drew Pomeranz struck out six in his season debut, Dustin Pedroia drove in four runs and Boston beat Baltimore. Christian Vazquez added a two-run triple in the eighth, capping off a 4-for-4 game, as the Red Sox tagged Baltimore pitchers for 15 hits and had back-to-back three-run innings in the seventh and eighth to blow the game open. Pomeranz, who opened the season on the disabled list with a strained left forearm, took a shutout into the seventh inning. He held Baltimore to four hits and one run in six innings and picked up his first win at Fenway Park.

TIGERS 2, TWINS 1

Matthew Boyd allowed one hit in six outstanding innings and James McCann homered in the fifth to lift Detroit over Minnesota. Boyd (1-1) took a no-hitter into the sixth before Robbie Grossman broke it up by lining a clean single to left field with two out. The Detroit left-hander struck out six and walked two before turning the game over to the bullpen. Tigers relievers have struggled so far this season, but they were able to close this game out. Francisco Rodriguez allowed a run in the ninth but recovered for his third save in four chances. Pinch-hitter Max Kepler hit a popout with two on to end it. Hector Santiago (1-1) allowed only three hits in 6 1/3 innings, but one of them was a two-run shot by McCann.

NATIONALS 8, CARDINALS 3

Daniel Murphy homered, doubled twice and tied career highs with five RBIs and four hits and Washington defeated St. Louis. Matt Wieters and Jayson Werth also hit solo shots to help Washington earn a second home series victory. Nationals left-hander Gio Gonzalez (1-0) allowed two runs - one earned - over seven innings. He allowed six hits before retiring his last 11 batters. Lance Lynn (0-1) allowed six runs - four earned - and five hits and four walks over five innings.

ROCKIES 3, PADRES 2

Nolan Arenado hit a go-ahead homer in the seventh, Antonio Senzatezela threw seven sharp innings for his first major league win and Colorado beat San Diego. Arenado lined a fastball from reliever Miguel Diaz (1-1) to right for his third homer. Carlos Gonzalez and Charlie Blackmon also hit solo shots to help Colorado knot the three-game series with San Diego at a game apiece. Senzatezela (1-0) and his blazing fastball made things difficult for the Padres. He allowed two runs while striking out five. The Rockies' reliable bullpen took it from there, with Greg Holland working his way around a leadoff walk in the ninth to earn his fifth save.

DIAMONDBACKS 4, GIANTS 3

Robbie Ray pitched shutout ball into the seventh inning despite some control issues, Jake Lamb hit a bases-loaded triple and Arizona beat San Francisco. Chris Lannetta added an RBI single, and A.J. Pollock singled, scored and made a stellar play in center field to rob Aaron Hill of extra bases in the third. Arizona improved to 7-2, matching its best start in franchise history. Ray (1-0) settled in after pitching out of a pair of early jams and overcame matching his career high of five walks. The lefty struck out eight and allowed four hits over 6 2/3 innings. Jeff Samardzija (0-2) allowed three runs in 6 2/3 innings.

ASTROS 7, MARINERS 5

George Springer hit his fourth leadoff home run of the season, Evan Gattis had a bases-loaded pinch-hit double and Houston beat Seattle. Seattle reliever James Pazos gave up hits to all four Houston batters he faced in the sixth inning - including Gattis' double and a run-scoring single by Alex Bregman - as the Astros scored four runs to take the lead for good. Joe Musgrove (1-0) pitched into the sixth inning, giving up three runs and seven hits for Houston. Ariel Miranda (0-1) allowed four runs and seven hits. — AP



**HONG KONG:** From left, New Zealand's Sam Webster, Ethan Mitchell and Edward Dawkins, celebrate on the podium after winning the gold medal in the Men's Team Sprint at the World Track Cycling championships in Hong Kong, yesterday. — AP

CYCLING

## OLYMPIC DREAMS AS KIWIS SHOOT TO SPRINT SUPREMACY

**HONG KONG:** New Zealand's team sprint trio allowed themselves to dream of an elusive Olympic gold medal after they underlined their dominance at the Track Cycling World Championships yesterday.

Ethan Mitchell, Sam Webster and Ed Dawkins made it two world titles in a row and three in four years with a flawless performance at the Hong Kong Velodrome.

The Kiwis were denied Olympic glory last year in Rio by a British team which is now on hiatus, but they were worthy champions in Hong Kong as they qualified fastest for the final and beat the Netherlands by 0.333sec.

"We just want it more than everyone else," said a jubilant Dawkins. "We've been the same three guys in the same order for the last eight years. 'We know each other so well we can fight as hard as we can and still have perfect technique. That's what we have over the rest of the world.' 'We are not physically better riders. We have the same bikes thereabout."

But as a team as a unit we perform better."

After world titles in 2014, 2016 and 2017, as well as Olympic silver last year, one goal is now amount for the team-victory at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020. "Tokyo is in the back of our minds all the time, every race," Dawkins said.

"We race every race as if we were there, putting ourselves under the same amount of pressure so when it comes down to racing on that day we're not overwhelmed by it."

He added: "Olympic gold is the only thing that we haven't won... Winning in Tokyo would be icing on an awesome career."

VICTORY IN 'LAST TWO METRES'

France took bronze with victory over Poland while in the women's race, Russia's Daria Shmeleva and Anastasia Voynova also won their second straight title when they beat Australia.

For the Russian pair, it was a redemptive win after they only won last year's title when the Chinese team were disqualified on a technicality. "This final was very important for us because this time we beat the team," Voynova said.

"Last time in the world championships, the Chinese riders were relegated and that's why we became the world champions. But this year, it's our own victory."

Earlier, Italy's Rachele Barbieri grabbed her maiden world trophy and the first gold medal of the championships with a furious final sprint to win the women's 10km scratch race.

The 20-year-old left it ultra-late before she caught Elinor Barker on the line following a last-lap break for victory by the British Olympic team pursuit gold-medallist.

Barbieri, the European under-23 champion, was left to celebrate her first major title, while Belgium's Jolien D'Hoore took bronze.

Barbieri, Barker and D'Hoore had been among a group of six, also including 2015 champion Kirsten Wild and America's Sarah Hammer, who surged forward after the halfway point.

"I can't even believe it," Barbieri said. "My coaches said to me to follow the strongest riders... I don't believe it. In the last two metres I won." Canada's men were an early casualty in the team pursuit when all four riders crashed heavily and limped from the track during their qualifying heat against New Zealand.

Australia, who flirted with the world record in qualifying, were fastest into Today's final where they face New Zealand. — AFP



**HONG KONG:** Gold medalist Rachele Barbieri, center, of Italy, silver medalist Elinor Barker, left, of Great Britain and bronze medalist Jolien D'Hoore of Belgium pose with their medals on the podium after winning the women's scratch race at the World Track Cycling championships in Hong Kong, yesterday. — AP

## NEW AUSTRALIA BOSS PLEDGES 'COMPASSIONATE' APPROACH

**HONG KONG:** Cycling Australia's new high-performance director Simon Jones has pledged to put riders first rather than obsess about medals as he sets about taking the country to the very top of the sport.

The Briton, a veteran of British Cycling and Team Sky-both highly successful but recently controversial-said a "compassionate" approach was ultimately more effective than treating riders like "robots". "We have to treat each other with respect but we need to be honest and challenge each other," Jones told AFP ahead of the Track Cycling World Championships in Hong Kong. "High-performance environments are an uncomfortable place to be, because it's not about the status quo, we're constantly looking for improvement. "But I think there's a way we can do that in which we put the person first. We're all human beings-we're not machines, we're not robots... we (can't) just think mechanically around the medals, and forget there's a human being."

"They're on a journey, we're all on journeys here and ultimately they've got to love what they do," Jones said his approach had been indelibly shaped by his experiences in Britain, whose riders won six gold medals-three times more than any other country-at last year's Olympics. However, British Cycling has been in turmoil after claims of sexism and bullying, while Team Sky, where Jones has spent the last two years, has hit trouble over the drugs records of 2012 Tour de France winner Bradley Wiggins.

MARGINAL GAINS

Jones said he would implement a refined form of the "marginal gains" philosophy made famous by Team Sky's ex-British Cycling supremo Dave Brailsford, where small advantages

in a wide range of areas are said to make a big difference in competition.

Somewhat surprisingly Wiggins, a five-time Olympic gold medallist and a long-time collaborator with Brailsford, recently rounded on marginal gains, calling it "a load of rubbish". "Marginal gains is about continuous improvement. I think marginal gains can be applied to quite a mechanistic (way)... but this game is about people," Jones said.

He added: "It's about each and every person understanding their role and how they can improve, and most importantly we need to improve in the biggest gain areas."

"As opposed to looking at marginal gains across the board, we've got to be quite clever about where we focus on improvement. The trick is often leaving things out on purpose... and it will be different for different people at different times." Jones, who only started his new job last week, began his career as a sports scientist with British Cycling in 1995 before rising to head coach by the 2004 Olympics. He also worked at the Western Australia Institute of Sport from 2007-2013.

He is taking charge at the start of a new chapter for Australia after the retirement of two-time Olympic champion Anna Meares, and following a disappointing Rio campaign where the team failed to win any gold medals. "This to me is the best job in the world. And I want the athletes to feel that when they're in training and it's difficult and they have a bad day, they still can step back and think, 'I just love this'," Jones said. "Unless you love what you do, I don't think you can be the best in the world... Unless you engage, you're not going to value-add, you're not going to go the extra mile, and that's what you need to do in high performance. — AFP