

FIVE SPORTING FAIRYTALES WITH AN UNHAPPY SEQUEL

LONDON: Premier League champions Leicester's shambolic defence of their title leaves them in real danger of relegation—they would not be the first to have seen a fairytale sporting success quickly decline into a nightmare.

Here AFP Sports looks at five other examples:

BOXING - BUSTER DOUGLAS

James 'Buster' Douglas tamed the fearsome 'Iron' Mike Tyson in Tokyo in 1990, the 42/1 outsider inflicting his first defeat and becoming undisputed heavyweight world champion. Douglas-whose preparation had been upset by the loss of his mother—was unable to summon up that same intensity nearly a year later as his first defence ended in defeat to Evander Holyfield, who knocked him out in the third round. The only intensity he came

up with was to balloon in size till he came close to dying. That sparked him out of his lassitude but despite winning several bouts on returning to the ring there was never a likelihood he would regain the golden touch that for just one memorable night in Japan had earned him his place in the history books.

CRICKET - ENGLAND TEAM

In a bizarre piece of scheduling there were two Ashes series set for 2013.

England generally outplayed Australia in the series they hosted winning 3-0 and came close to a first ever 4-0 success. That Aussie side were labelled the worst to have toured England. Months later England were to return shellshocked as the revitalised Aussies—not far removed from the same group of players humiliated in England—had turned things round in

remarkable fashion and whitewashed them 5-0 Down Under in a series that stretched into 2014. Until the recent 4-0 series loss to India it was probably the lowest point of England's fortunes under skipper Alastair Cook.

GOLF - IAN BAKER-FINCH

Debonair Australian golfer looked to be on the trajectory to greater things when he captured the 1991 British Open aged 31. However, it was to prove to be the peak as very rapidly he descended into the equivalent of Dantes Inferno in terms of his game and form. He won a couple of times on the less competitive Australia tour but in the cauldron of the PGA Tour and the Majors he played without any confidence at all. He reached his nadir in the 1997 British Open shooting an opening 92 and in despair in the lock-

er room he cried and then announced tournament golf was over for him. "I felt like I was walking naked, like the grass was taller than me," Baker-Finch told golftoday.uk. "I tried to walk with my head high. It was really hard."

RACING - NORTON'S COIN

Fairytale win in the 1990 Cheltenham Gold Cup the 'blue riband' of steeplechasing for the unglamorous 100/1 shot, trained by Welsh dairy farmer Sirrell Griffiths, whose stable ran to just two horses and which clearly impressed avid racing fan the Queen Mother, who presented the trophy. "She said to me 'I think it's marvellous to think that you've only got two horses and you can win a race like this,'" recalled Griffiths in 2015. Norton's Coin won just once in 18 more starts, not even riding legend Lester Piggott could

conjure some magic out of him when he ran over the flat at Royal Ascot.

FOOTBALL - NUREMBERG

Nuremberg made sporting headlines in 1968 when they captured the Bundesliga title under coach Max Merkel. However, Merkel unlike Claudio Ranieri with his Leicester squad didn't retain faith in them and sold many of the title winners — including leading scorer Franz Brungs—whilst bringing in 11 fresh faces. However, it rebounded on him catastrophically as they struggled from the start and whilst they were far from certainties to go down he was sent packing with several games remaining—internal unrest was suspected to be the final straw. His departure did not stop the trot and they were relegated at the end of the season. — AFP

FIA MEETS IN LEBANON

JOUNIEH: Beirut will host in the 16th & 17th Feb 2017 FIA - MENA clubs and federations meeting. The meeting will be hosted by ATCL - Lebanon. Jean Todt FIA president & Nasser Al Attiyah - FIA Vice President, who arrived in Lebanon yesterday evening from Geneva after attending FIM first meeting. It's assured that most of the presidents

March 2016. About the agenda of the meeting, Nasser Al Attiyah confirmed that the agenda of this meeting will discuss many important issues, as MENA region is considered exceptional due to the hard regional circumstances that surround the region. No doubt that motorsport is directly affected by such circumstances especially the organizational aspect and logistic one.

TARGET

Al Attiyah added that the meeting will try to find realistic solutions in order to survive the motorsport in the region, which is considered our main target. We will do our best to promote the motorsport according to a well studied approach.

Al Attiyah also said that the issue of T1-T2-T3 cars participation into the Middle East Championship for rallies will be discussed after re-naming this class to MERC 4, provided that it passes through a legal channel between the two championships. Each class results will be counted separately. We will discuss also many files related to motorsport in MENA, Karting being the most prominent one, Al Attiyah concluded.



Nasser Al Attiyah

of FIA - MENA federations and clubs will attend the meeting. The meeting will discuss many important issues after the third meeting which was held in Algeria last



COLUMBUS: New York Rangers' Nick Holden, right, pushes Columbus Blue Jackets' Matt Calvert to the ice during the second period of an NHL hockey game Monday, in Columbus, Ohio. — AP

NHL

SMITH STOPS 36 SHOTS, COYOTES BEAT FLAMES

CALGARY: Christian Dvorak has clearly shaken off the rookie jitters. Dvorak had two goals and an assist and Mike Smith made 36 saves for his 32nd career shutout as the surging Arizona Coyotes beat the Calgary Flames 5-0 on Monday night. Dvorak's third multi-point effort in the last five games gave the rookie seven points (five goals and two assists) over that span. He had just 13 points in the first 45 games. "The first 20 or 30 games, he's just happy to be in the league," Arizona coach Dave Tippett said. "He recognizes that he's capable of playing here and he's doing things right and he's not in awe of people anymore. He just goes out there and plays and he's a really good player."

Dvorak, who was linemates with Toronto's Mitch Marner and Calgary's Matthew Tkachuk last season on the Ontario Hockey League's London Knights, agreed.

"I'm definitely feeling more comfortable and more confident as the season has gone on," Dvorak said. "Gelling with my linemates, forming some chemistry and we've been playing pretty well as of late."

Martin Hanzal, Ryan White and Justin Martinook also scored for the Coyotes, who have points in four straight (3-0-1) and are 6-2-1 in their last nine.

Chad Johnson had 19 saves through two periods and was replaced by Brian Elliott to start the third with the Flames trailing 4-0. Elliott stopped eight of the nine shots he faced. Dvorak's eighth goal of the season came 2:38 into the second period as he whipped a shot over Johnson's glove for the first of three Arizona goals in the second period. That was followed by a great effort from Martinook, who corralled a dump-in off the corner boards and after muscling his way past defenseman Dennis Wideman, zipped a shot under the cross bar to make it 3-0 at 4:04.

Dvorak then showcased his passing ability on an odd-man rush. Carrying the puck down the wing, he found Luke Schenn in the high slot coming late and as the defenseman cut to the net, he had it glance in off White's skate with 8:52 left in the middle period.

"If the shot is there, I'll shoot it. If the pass is

there, I'll pass it. I'm just trying to make some plays out there while making sure I'm responsible defensively as well," said Dvorak, a second-round pick in 2014.

Starting his ninth consecutive game, Smith was busiest in the first period when the Coyotes were outshot 19-9 yet emerged with a 1-0 lead on a goal by Hanzal. "We were able to weather that storm and get out of that first period ahead," Tippett said. "We hadn't played our best hockey yet so it was definitely nice to come back in the second, get our feet moving, make some plays." Calgary was playing for the first time since a 3-2 win at Pittsburgh last Tuesday night. The Flames had won four of five going into their break.

RANGERS 3, BLUE JACKETS 2

Jimmy Vesey scored the go-ahead goal in the third period, and Antti Raanta stopped 30 shots as the New York Rangers beat the Columbus Blue Jackets 3-2 on Monday night.

Dan Girardi and Kevin Hayes also scored for the Rangers, who won their sixth straight game and moved into a three-way tie for sec-

ond place with Columbus and Pittsburgh in the tough Metropolitan Division.

Raanta made two big saves in the final 23 seconds after the Blue Jackets pulled the goalie for a sixth skater and were swarming.

Brandon Dubinsky and Nick Foligno scored for Columbus, and Sergei Bobrovsky finished with 20 saves. Hayes put the Rangers up 2-1 after stripping the puck from David Savard and on a breakaway 4:49 into the third period.

Foligno knotted the score again with 8:07 left in regulation. Vesey then got the game-winner less than two minutes later with a wrist shot from the bottom of the right circle.

Columbus got on the board 8:12 into the game, just as New York's Pavel Buchnevich was leaving the penalty box. Brandon Saad caught up with a rebound off the back board and shoveled it out to Dubinsky, who beat Raanta from 14 feet out. The Rangers tied it with a short-handed goal from Dan Girardi 12 seconds into the second period. Girardi fired a wrist shot past Bobrovsky from the top of the right circle. — Agencies

NHL results/standings

Arizona 5, Calgary 0; NY Rangers 3, Columbus 2.													
Western Conference						Metropolitan Division							
	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS							
Minnesota	37	12	6	187	129	80	Ottawa	29	18	6	143	143	64
Chicago	35	17	5	166	147	75	Boston	29	23	6	157	155	64
St. Louis	29	22	5	161	165	63	Toronto	25	18	11	165	161	61
Nashville	27	21	8	158	151	62	Florida	24	20	10	134	153	58
Dallas	22	25	10	158	182	54	Tampa Bay	25	24	7	154	160	57
Winnipeg	25	29	4	166	185	54	Buffalo	23	23	10	138	159	56
Colorado	15	36	2	107	181	32	Detroit	22	24	10	141	169	54
Pacific Division						Atlantic Division							
San Jose	34	18	5	156	135	73	Montreal	31	19	8	165	150	70
Anaheim	29	18	10	151	147	68							
Edmonton	29	19	8	157	146	66							
Los Angeles	28	23	4	138	136	60							
Calgary	28	26	3	149	164	59							
Vancouver	25	25	6	135	160	56							
Arizona	19	28	7	129	169	45							



RIO DE JANEIRO: This file photo taken on August 2, 2016 shows Rafael Nadal of Spain (L) listening to his coach and uncle, Toni Nadal during a practice session at the Olympic Tennis Center in Rio de Janeiro ahead of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. Rafael Nadal's career-long coaching relationship with his uncle Toni Nadal will end this year. — AFP