

NHL

# CAPITALS' OVECHKIN SAYS OLYMPIC DECISION OUT OF HIS HANDS

**WASHINGTON:** Alex Ovechkin released a statement through the Washington Capitals acknowledging that the ability to represent Russia in the 2018 Olympics has been taken out of his hands. On the eve of the first day of on-ice training camp workouts, Ovechkin said in the statement that while he loves playing for his country, it won't happen because the International Ice Hockey Federation has assured the NHL that players under contract won't be able to play in South Korea. The NHL announced in April it wouldn't be sending players to the Games for the first time since 1994.

"I said every time I was asked since last Olympics that nobody is going to

tell me I can't play because my country was going to be allowed to ask me," Ovechkin said. "Now the IIHF and NHL say my country is not allowed to ask anybody in the NHL to play and there is nothing to talk about anymore."

The Athletic first reported the IIHF's assurances to the league last week. Ovechkin is set to address reporters after his first official camp practice Friday. Ovechkin began saying a year ago that he was going to the Olympics no matter what. NHL players had participated in the past five Olympics, and Ovechkin played for Russia in the past three. Russia has a long history of using its top players in the Olympics, well before the NHL began participating in

Nagano in 1998. The Soviet Union, and then the Unified Team, won eight of 10 Olympic gold medals from 1956-1992.

"I wanted to make this statement so that my words are clear and nobody misunderstands what I am saying," Ovechkin said. "The Olympics are in my blood and everybody knows how much I love my country. Ever since I was a kid and all the time I have played in the NHL, NHL players have played in the Olympic Games. We never have to make choice between our team and our country my whole career. I love the Capitals and my teammates here as much as I love my country and I know all the other NHL players feel the same for their teams. We should not have to

be in position to make this choice."

In the statement, Ovechkin thanked owner Ted Leonsis for his support. Leonsis had gone on record saying he'd allow Ovechkin and other top players to go to the Olympics if they wanted to, even if it meant missing Capitals games.

That won't happen now. "Our countries are now not allowed to ask us to play in the Olympics," the six-time NHL goals leader said. "Me, my teammates and all players who want to go all lose. So do all the fans of hockey with this decision that we are not allowed to be invited. NHL players in the Olympics is good for hockey and good for Olympics. It sucks that will we not be there to play!"

Ovechkin, who turns 32 next week, had 33 goals and 36 assists in 82 regular-season games last season and added five goals and three assists in 13 playoff games. In 12 NHL seasons, all with the Capitals, he has 558 goals and 477 goals in 921 regular-season games and 46 goals and 44 assists in 97 playoff games.

"My focus as it always is this time of year is on my other dream as a kid, to try to win the Stanley Cup," Ovechkin wrote. "I am excited training camp has started in Washington and the time for talking is done. We just have to go out and do it and I will try my hardest to help my teammates win like I do every year since I came to the NHL." — AP



**ST PETERSBURG:** Dustin Pedroia #15 of the Boston Red Sox looks up at home plate umpire Laz Diaz #63 as he slides home ahead of catcher Jesus Sucre #45 of the Tampa Bay Rays to score off of an RBI single by Mitch Moreland during the 15th inning of a game on Friday at Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg, Florida. —AFP

BASEBALL

# ROYALS BEAT INDIANS TO HALT CLEVELAND'S RECORD STREAK

**CLEVELAND:** The Cleveland Indians can return to clinching their division and playoff preparations. Their historic winning streak is, well, history. Cleveland's AL-record run was stopped at 22 straight games by Friday night's 4-3 loss to the Kansas City Royals, who became the first team to conquer the defending league champions since Aug. 23. Jason Vargas (16-10) pitched into the sixth and Brandon Moss homered off Trevor Bauer (16-9) as the Royals ended baseball's longest win streak in 101 years. With one last chance in the ninth, the Indians put the tying run on base before Mike Minor struck out the side for his first pro save, fanning Francisco Lindor on a pitch in the dirt for the final out.

**DODGERS 7, NATIONALS 0**

Alex Wood struck out eight in six innings, Corey Seager hit a three-run homer during a five-run second and the Dodgers won on the road. Wood (15-3) allowed three hits and walked one. Los Angeles has won three in a row after losing 11 consecutive games and 16 of 17. The teams entered the highly anticipated three-game series having clinched playoff berths and owning the top two records in the National League. The Dodgers lowered their magic number to clinch the NL West to six. Justin Turner and Yasiel Puig homered in the Dodgers' first Washington appearance since winning Game 5 of the NL Division Series last October. Edwin Jackson (5-6) lasted just 2 1/3 innings. The NL East champion Nationals fell six games back of

Los Angeles in the chase for home-field advantage in the playoffs.

**BREWERS 10, MARLINS 2**

Neil Walker hit a grand slam during an eight-run eighth inning, and the Brewers beat the Marlins in the opening game of a series relocated from Miami to Milwaukee because of the aftermath of Hurricane Irma. The Marlins were technically the home team and batted in the bottom of the innings. Milwaukee even used palm trees, fake flamingos and giant blue and pink sea shells to give Miller Park a South Florida feel. Miami's Dee Gordon went hitless in four at-bats to end his 17-game hitting streak. Brian Ellington (0-1) got the loss. Jared Hughes (4-3) picked up the win after tossing a scoreless seventh inning.

**RED SOX 13, RAYS 6, 15 INNINGS**

Xander Bogaerts had two hits in Boston's seven-run 15th inning and the Red Sox beat Tampa Bay in a game that lasted 6 hours, 5 minutes. Austin Pruitt (7-5) walked Jackie Bradley Jr. to lead off the top of the 15th. Bogaerts followed with a single. Dustin Pedroia hit a ground ball that was misplayed by second baseman Brad Miller, allowing Bradley to score the lead run. Andrew Benintendi, Mitch Moreland, Deven Marraro and Bogaerts drove in extra runs for the Red Sox, who maintained their three-game lead over the New York Yankees in the AL East. Brandon Workman (1-1) got the

win. Blaine Boyer, the 21st pitcher to appear in the game, pitched the 15th for Boston. Nine Red Sox pitchers set a club record with 24 strikeouts.

**CUBS 8, CARDINALS 2**

Kris Bryant had three hits, including his 27th homer, and the Cubs opened a big weekend series with their fourth consecutive win. Bryant went deep in the fourth and singled twice in Chicago's seven-run sixth. The NL Central-leading Cubs stayed three games ahead of Milwaukee and increased their advantage over St. Louis to four games. Chicago pitcher John Lackey and catcher Willson Contreras were thrown out for yelling at plate umpire Jordan Baker in the fifth. Carl Edwards Jr. (4-4) pitched a perfect sixth for the win. Tommy Pham homered for St. Louis. Carlos Martinez (11-11) was charged with seven runs and six hits in 5 1/3 innings.

**YANKEES 8, ORIOLES 2**

Didi Gregorius hit a tiebreaking two-run homer and drove in four runs, leading the Yankees to their fifth win in six games. Luis Severino (13-6) allowed three hits in eight innings. He made one big mistake, Welington Castillo's opposite-field, two-run homer to right that put the Orioles ahead 2-1 in the second. Severino is 8-2 with a 2.09 ERA in 12 starts since the All-Star break. Gregorius hit a sacrifice fly in the first, homered against Miguel Castro for a 4-2 lead in the fifth and added another sacrifice fly in a three-run seventh. Baltimore lost for the eighth time in nine games. Gabriel Ynoa (1-2) allowed three runs - two earned - and five hits in 4 1/3 innings.

**ASTROS 5, MARINERS 2**

Carlos Correa and Evan Gattis had two hits apiece and each drove in a run, and the Astros moved closer to clinching the AL West title. Houston's magic number dropped to two, meaning the Astros could secure their first division championship since 2001 with a win today if the Angels lose today. The Astros led 3-0 after one inning as James Paxton (12-4) struggled in his return from the disabled list after sitting out since Aug. 10 with a strained pectoral muscle. He allowed three runs in 1 1/3 innings to snap a seven-game winning streak. Charlie Morton (12-7) pitched six strong innings for Houston. Ken Giles tossed a scoreless ninth for his 31st save.

**DIAMONDBACKS 3, GIANTS 2**

Robbie Ray won his fifth straight start

and A.J. Pollock hit a two-run double as Arizona beat San Francisco. Ray (14-5) struck out 10 and gave up two runs (one earned), six hits and no walks as the Diamondbacks won for the 19th time in 24 games and for the eighth straight time on the road. The Diamondbacks trailed 2-1 when Pollock doubled in two runs off Jeff Samardzija (9-14) in the seventh inning. Arizona reduced its magic number for clinching its first post-season berth since 2011 to seven.

**BLUE JAYS 4, TWINS 3**

Josh Donaldson homered and drove in the go-ahead run in the seventh inning with an infield single that ricocheted off the mound, sending Toronto to the win. J.A. Happ (9-10) pitched into the seventh inning in his third straight win, and Roberto Osuna got three outs for his 36th save in 46 opportunities. The Twins had a three-game lead over the Los Angeles Angels for the second AL wild card going into the night, with the Seattle Mariners 3 1/2 games back. The New York Yankees hold the first wild card with a four-game edge on the Twins. Twins starter Bartolo Colon (6-13) was charged with four runs in six-plus innings on "Big Sexy Night." The Twins had souvenir T-shirts for fans who bought a special ticket package in honor of the burly right-hander, who joined the Twins two months ago and has more than held his own despite his decreased velocity.

**ANGELS 7, RANGERS 6**

C.J. Cron hit a two-run homer to cap the a five-run rally in the sixth inning, and Los Angeles trimmed its deficit in the AL wildcard race to two games. Andrelton Simmons had two run-scoring singles for the Angels (75-72), who gained a game on the Minnesota Twins (77-70) with just their third win in eight games. Los Angeles used seven pitchers in a bullpen start, with former closer Bud Norris getting the first six outs. Yusmeiro Petit (5-0) pitched two perfect innings, and Blake Parker earned a six-out save. Shin-Soo Choo hit a two-run homer in the sixth for Texas (72-75). The Rangers have lost four straight and six of seven, their playoff hopes down to a flicker. Yohander Mendez (0-1) took the loss.

**ROCKIES 6, PADRES 1**

Tyler Chatwood pitched into the sixth inning and drove in his first runs of the season, helping the Rockies to the victory. Nolan Arenado homered as Colorado remained 2 1/2 games ahead of Milwaukee and moved 3 1/2 games ahead of St. Louis

for the second NL wild card. Chatwood (8-12) tossed 5 2/3 innings and left after Wil Myers' 28th homer. It was Chatwood's third start after six relief appearances. San Diego's Clayton Richard (7-14) allowed four runs and seven hits in six innings.

**REDS 4, PIRATES 2**

Zack Cozart hit two of Cincinnati's four solo home runs, powering the last-place Reds to the victory. Joey Votto and Scott Schebler also connected, sending the Pirates to their third straight loss and eighth in the last nine games. Homer Bailey (5-8) allowed one run in 5 2/3 innings for his first win in six starts since Aug. 11. Raisel Iglesias got five outs for his 27th save. Chad Kuhl (7-11) gave up all four home runs, a single-game career high for the second-year right-hander.

**ATHLETICS 4, PHILLIES 0**

Daniel Mengden pitched a two-hitter for Oakland, and Matt Olson and Matt Joyce each hit a two-run homer. Mengden (1-1) struck out seven and walked none in his first career shutout in his 18th start. J.P. Crawford had both hits off Mengden. Phillies starter Mark Leiter Jr. (3-6) allowed four runs and seven hits in six innings. Mengden also got his first career hit, a single off Crawford's glove in the shortstop hole before Joyce connected in the second.

**TIGERS 3, WHITE SOX 2**

Mikie Mahtook hit a game-ending RBI single with two outs in the ninth inning, helping Detroit stop a six-game skid. Former Tigers reliever Al Alburquerque (0-2) walked Jeimer Candelario with one out in the ninth, and Aaron Bummer walked Tyler Collins with two outs. White Sox manager Rick Renteria brought in Juan Minaya, who uncorked a wild pitch to move the runners to second and third. Mahtook then hit a 3-2 pitch up the middle for his first career game-ending hit. Shane Greene (4-3) got four outs for the win.

**BRAVES 3, METS 2**

Sean Newcomb struck out eight in 5 1/3 innings, and the Braves handed the Mets their fifth straight loss. Newcomb (3-8) gave up two runs and six hits. Aroldys Vizcaino pitched the ninth for his 11th save in 13 opportunities. Rafael Montero (5-10) became the fourth straight Mets starter pitcher to fail to complete five innings. He was lifted with two outs in the fifth after throwing 108 pitches and allowing three runs and seven hits. — AP

MLB Results/Standings

Arizona 3, San Francisco 2; Colorado 6, San Diego 1; Houston 5, Seattle 2; Toronto 4, Minnesota 3; Milwaukee 10, Miami 2; Atlanta 3, NY Mets 2; Cincinnati 4, Pittsburgh 2; Boston 13, Tampa Bay 6 (15 innings); Detroit 3, Chicago White Sox 2; Kansas City 4, Cleveland 3; NY Yankees 8, Baltimore 2; LA Dodgers 7, Washington 0; Oakland 4, Philadelphia 0; Chicago Cubs 8, St. Louis 2.

American League Eastern Division				National League Eastern Division					
	W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB
Boston	84	63	.571	-	Washington	89	58	.605	-
NY Yankees	81	66	.551	3	Miami	68	79	.463	21
Tampa Bay	72	76	.486	12.5	Atlanta	67	79	.459	21.5
Baltimore	72	76	.486	12.5	NY Mets	63	84	.429	26
Toronto	69	79	.466	15.5	Philadelphia	57	90	.388	32
Central Division				Central Division					
Cleveland	91	57	.615	-	Chicago Cubs	81	66	.551	-
Minnesota	77	70	.524	13.5	Milwaukee	78	69	.531	3
Kansas City	73	74	.497	17.5	St. Louis	77	70	.524	4
Detroit	61	86	.415	29.5	Pittsburgh	68	80	.459	13.5
Chicago White Sox	59	88	.401	31.5	Cincinnati	64	84	.432	17.5
Western Division				Western Division					
Houston	89	58	.605	-	LA Dodgers	95	52	.646	-
LA Angels	75	72	.510	14	Arizona	86	62	.581	9.5
Seattle	74	74	.500	15.5	Colorado	81	67	.547	14.5
Texas	72	75	.490	17	San Diego	65	82	.442	30
Oakland	65	82	.442	24	San Francisco	57	92	.383	39