

Sports

Schwartz lifts St Louis Blues past Bruins 2-1

Ducks overcome Flames 4-0

MONTREAL: Jaden Schwartz scored a pair of goals, including the game-winner 30 seconds into overtime to send the St Louis Blues past the visiting Boston Bruins 2-1 on Wednesday. It was the third straight game in which St Louis fell behind and came back to win in overtime. Ryan Donato scored the lone goal for Boston, which clinched a playoff berth for the second straight season under new coach Bruce Cassidy with a point. The Bruins have lost two straight and four of six (2-2-2). Jake Allen recorded 21 saves in the winning effort for the Blues while Anton Khudobin had 18 saves for the Bruins.

Penguins 5, Canadiens 3

Derick Brassard scored a tiebreaking goal early in the third period, and Jake Guentzel finished with one goal and two assists as Pittsburgh defeated visiting Montreal. Guentzel added his goal with 1:33 left, with Sidney Crosby collecting career assist No. 700 on the play. In the second period, Crosby scored a spectacular goal, twice batting the puck in the air, the second time knocking it into the net. Patric Hornqvist and Evgeni Malkin also scored for Pittsburgh. Jonathan Drouin, Nikita Scherbak and Jacob de la Rose lit the lamp for the Canadiens, who dropped their fourth straight.

Ducks 4, Flames 0

John Gibson made 29 saves for his fourth shutout of the season, and Anaheim claimed a fourth straight win with a victory at Calgary. The Flames nearly doubled the visitors in shots on goal but couldn't solve Gibson. At the other end, the Ducks could do no wrong en route to a win that vaulted them over the Los Angeles Kings for third place in the Pacific Division. Andrew Cogliano scored his third short-handed goal of the season, his 16th with the Ducks, which ties Paul Kariya for the franchise record. Ondrej Kase, Hampus Lindholm and Francois Beauchemin had the other Anaheim tallies.

Coyotes 4, Sabres 1

Antti Raanta made 29 saves while picking up his fifth win in six games, and Derek Stepan had a goal and an assist to lead Arizona to a victory at Buffalo. Dylan Strome, Richard Panik and Max Domi also scored for the Coyotes, and Clayton Keller added two assists. Arizona, which began the season 0-10-1, improved to 13-5-2 in its past 20 games. Jordan Nolan scored the lone goal for Buffalo. Sabres goalie Chad Johnson, hit in the mask by a Brendan Perlini shot midway through the first period, stopped 13 of 15 shots before being replaced by Linus Ullmark six minutes into the second period. Ullmark finished with 12 saves.—Agencies

NHL results/standings

Arizona 4, Buffalo 1; Pittsburgh 5, Montreal 3; St. Louis 2, Boston 1 (OT); Anaheim 4, Calgary 0.

Eastern Conference							Western Conference						
Atlantic Division							Central Division						
	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS							
Tampa Bay	50	19	4	264	205	104	Nashville	48	14	10	236	178	106
Boston	45	17	10	240	186	100	Winnipeg	44	19	10	242	190	98
Toronto	43	23	7	246	208	93	Minnesota	41	24	8	227	210	90
Florida	37	27	7	219	218	81	Colorado	40	25	8	236	210	88
Detroit	27	35	11	189	228	65	St. Louis	40	28	5	203	194	85
Montreal	26	36	12	185	237	64	Dallas	38	28	8	212	201	84
Ottawa	26	35	11	199	251	63	Chicago	30	35	9	209	228	69
Buffalo	23	38	12	173	240	58	Pacific Division						
Metropolitan Division							Las Vegas	47	21	5	248	200	99
Washington	42	24	7	229	217	91	San Jose	41	23	9	225	201	91
Pittsburgh	42	27	5	243	225	89	Anaheim	38	24	12	210	197	88
Columbus	41	28	5	210	206	87	Los Angeles	40	27	7	212	186	87
Philadelphia	37	25	12	222	220	86	Calgary	35	30	10	204	226	80
New Jersey	37	28	8	219	221	82	Edmonton	32	36	5	208	234	69
Carolina	31	31	11	197	232	73	Arizona	25	37	11	179	231	61
NY Rangers	32	33	8	211	236	72	Vancouver	25	39	9	187	240	59
NY Islanders	31	32	10	235	263	72	Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L).						

UAE champions 'determination' tag for Special Olympians

ABU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates, slated to become the first Arab country to host the Special Olympics in 2019, is championing an alternative label for those with special needs: "People of Determination". Arab athletes used to being called "special needs"—or even derogatory terms like "retarded" in their home countries—were surprised and excited this week to see welcome signs with the new label at the 9th Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional Games in Abu Dhabi. The term, seen everywhere from handicapped accessible boardwalks to the Abu Dhabi exhibition centre, is one the UAE hopes will catch on beyond its borders. Matar Saeed al-Naimi, president of the health committee for the 2018 MENA competition, says the games also offer a venue to educate local society.

Groups of Emirati elementary school age children were a fixture at the MENA games, brought in with their teachers to attend various sports events. "They are still young and they are the future, so it is very important for the UAE to teach this generation who are the 'people of determination' and what they are capable of doing," Naimi told AFP. "The goal is a united society," he said. On Tuesday, the final day of competitions, a basketball match between Iraq and Syria ended with tears, cheers and finally a group photograph. "I'm happy, very happy. I don't know how to describe it," said Naim Asmar, a member of the victorious Syrian basketball team.

Asked whether he preferred they be labeled as special needs or as people of determination, the athlete responded unequivocally. "People of determination," he said over and over. "It means we have willpower! We might even have more than regular people," he said pointedly. The team coach, Yasser al-Yassine, was also thrilled. "This term is like a push for them—they understand what it means. It's very motivating. It says, 'I am a person of determination, so let's go! I will do, I will train, I will play. If I can't play, I'll at least participate.' "It's a wonderful concept," said Yassine, whose team was participating in an international competition for the first time in six years.

'No difference between us'

Syria's team coach said his players—three from Damascus, three from Aleppo and two from Homs—face challenges in society even as the country's war has wound down in their own cities. The confidence they gain at regional competitions and local games is hard won—and easily lost. "There's society, the school, the neighborhood—the streets. So maybe I have them once, twice or three times a week for an hour and a half. All the confidence we built in an hour and a half can be destroyed in five minutes," said Yassine. "They need to have each other's backs." While the men's teams from Syria and Iraq shook hands, women's teams from Pakistan and Algeria faced off on the opposite court. Kamilia Nihad Metidji, a 26-year-old volunteer with the Algerian team, said the "people of determination" label had surprised her.

"I was very happy that they call them this because I find that—with this word—there is no difference between us and them; between the healthy and the handicap—," she said, stopping short to correct the terminology: "The people of determination," she continued. "It gives them self-worth; it's super. It means they don't have to feel different." Metidji said she volunteered with the special needs athletes because she wanted them to "feel like there's no difference between us". "I want to give them courage: to show them they can accomplish something; they can win games, they can win medals - they can do everything we do."—AFP



ABU DHABI: Athletes compete in a basketball match during the 9th Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Special Olympics in Abu Dhabi on March 19, 2018. — AFP