

Sports

Red Sox beat Indians, tie franchise wins record

Yanks flex home run muscle in outscoring Orioles

BOSTON: Tzu-Wei Lin delivered the tie-breaking RBI infield single in the seventh inning Friday night and hit his first major league homer in the ninth as the Boston Red Sox beat the Cleveland Indians, 7-5, in the opener of a three-game series between division champions at Progressive Field. The Red Sox, who clinched the American League East on Thursday, improved to 105-49 despite fielding a lineup that included only two regulars—third baseman Rafael Devers and AL MVP candidate J.D. Martinez. Boston needs just one win to clinch the best record in MLB for the season. The Red Sox's 105th victory tied the franchise record for wins, set by the 1912 team. The Indians, who will be locked into a first-round postseason date with either the Astros or Oakland Athletics as soon as the Red Sox win the top seed, have lost three of five since clinching their third straight AL Central title last Saturday.

YANKEES 10, ORIOLES 8

Aaron Hicks became the fifth Yankee to reach 25 homers, CC Sabathia rebounded from his shortest outing in over three years by pitching six effective innings, and New York moved closer to clinching a wild-card spot by holding on for a victory over visiting Baltimore. The Yankees lowered their magic number to clinch a wild-card spot to two after nearly blowing a 6-0 lead. Hicks extended the Yankees' lead to 6-0 lead with two outs in the fourth when he reached the second deck in right field by hitting a 3-1 fastball from Yefry Ramirez (1-7). The switch-hitting outfielder hit New York's 249th homer, putting them 14 away from the major league record set by Seattle in 1997.

A'S 7, TWINS 6 (10 INNINGS)

Khris Davis led off the bottom of the 10th inning with his second home run of the game, delivering Oakland a walk-off victory over visiting Minnesota. A ninth walk-off win of the season kept Oakland 6 1/2 games ahead of Tampa Bay in their battle for the second wild-card spot in the American League. The A's remain 3 1/2 games back of the Astros for the AL West lead. Davis' game-winner, his 45th homer of the season, came on the third pitch of the 10th inning by Matt Magill (3-3), who had stranded the potential winning run at third base to end the ninth. A's closer Blake Treinen (8-2), who worked two perfect innings, was credited with the win.

ASTROS 11, ANGELS 3

Yuli Gurriel slugged a pair of home runs, including a first-inning grand slam, and drove in seven, and Gerrit Cole worked seven strong innings as reigning World Series champion Houston clinched a postseason berth with a win over visiting Los Angeles. The Astros secured their 12th postseason appearance in club history and shaved their magic number to six to win the American League West for a second consecutive season. Houston (96-57) reached 96 victories for just the fifth time in franchise annals. The Astros finished 96-66 in 1986 before winning a club-record 102 games in 1998, 97 in 1999, and 101 last season.

CARDINALS 5, GIANTS 3

Pinch hitter Matt Adams stroked a tie-breaking, two-run double with two outs in the eighth inning, sending St. Louis to a victory over visiting San Francisco. The win kept the Cardinals 1 1/2 games ahead of Colorado in the race for the second wild-card spot in the National League. St. Louis also made up a game on the Cubs for the division lead, but remain three games back of the Brewers. After the Giants had scored twice in the seventh to forge a 3-3 tie, Harrison Bader drew a two-out walk from San Francisco's fourth pitcher, Mark Melancon (0-2), in the eighth. After Yairo Munoz singled Bader into scoring position, left-hander Tony Watson replaced Melancon and served up Adams' difference-making double to left field.

ROCKIES 6, DIAMONDBACKS 2

First baseman Ian Desmond drove in three runs, two on a single to cap a four-run eighth inning, and visiting Colorado received seven strong innings from right-hander German Marquez for a victory over Arizona. DJ LeMahieu had two hits, and Charlie Blackmon extended his hitting streak to 13 games, the longest active streak in the majors, as the Rockies broke a three-game losing streak to remain 1 1/2 games behind St. Louis for the second NL wild-card spot. Colorado also moved within 1 1/2 games of the Dodgers for the NL West lead after L.A. lost to San Diego. Marquez (13-10) gave up a two-run homer to David Peralta in the first inning but did not permit another runner past second base while extending his streak of quality starts to 11.

PADRES 5, DODGERS 3

Hunter Renfro and Freddy Galvis hit home runs, while left-hander Eric Lauer went five strong innings as San Diego won at Los Angeles. The Dodgers entered with seven victories in their last eight games to take over first place in the National League West, but the last-place Padres held off a late rally. Lauer (6-7) was in control against the Dodgers for a third time this season. The rookie gave up one run on four hits with two walks and five strikeouts. He has now given up just two runs over 19 2/3 innings against the Dodgers this season. Kirby Yates picked up his 10th save.

BREWERS 8, PIRATES 3

Travis Shaw, Mike Moustakas and Erik Kratz hit homers in a six-run sixth inning for Milwaukee in a win at Pittsburgh. Keon Broxton also homered, and Jesus Aguilar added an RBI double for the Brewers, who moved to within 1 1/2 games of the first-place Cubs in the National League Central. The Brewers kept a three-game lead for the first NL wild-card spot. Josh Bell and Corey Dickerson hit homers for Pittsburgh (77-75), which had its five-game winning streak squashed.

WHITE SOX 10, CUBS 4

Daniel Palka and Kevan Smith hit home runs to highlight a 19-hit attack as the White Sox cruised to a victory over the visiting Cubs. Palka's two-run homer in the sixth off reliever Dillon Maples was his fifth in five games and



CLEVELAND: Josh Donaldson #27 of the Cleveland Indians rounds the bases on a solo home run during the fourth inning against the Boston Red Sox at Progressive Field on Friday in Cleveland, Ohio. — AFP

27th of the season, tops for any rookie in the majors. It also was his team-record fourth pinch-hit home run this season. Ryan LaMarre, Yoan Moncada and Wellington Castillo each had three hits, and LaMarre and Smith each drove in three runs for the White Sox. Reynaldo Lopez (7-9) allowed one run and five hits over seven innings to pick up the win. He struck out eight and didn't allow a walk.

BRAVES 6, PHILLIES 5

Johan Camargo's two-run two-out single in the seventh inning capped a five-run rally and helped boost Atlanta to a come-from-behind win over visiting Philadelphia. The win allowed the Braves to extend their lead in the National League East to 7 1/2 games over the Phillies. Atlanta lowered its magic number to two. The Phillies broke open a 1-1 tie by scoring three runs in the top of the seventh, but Atlanta surged back for its 35th comeback victory.

RAYS 11, BLUE JAYS 3

September callup Austin Meadows had three hits and three RBIs, Tommy Pham added two RBIs and Tampa Bay overcame two home runs by Lourdes Gurriel Jr. to win at Toronto. The Rays (86-67) have split the first two games of a four-game series with the Blue Jays (70-84) as they try to keep their flickering playoff hopes alive. Randal Grichuk also homered for Toronto. Diego Castillo allowed one run on the first Gurriel homer in the first inning as the Rays' opening pitcher. Jalen Beeks (5-1) allowed two hits

and two runs over the next three innings.

RANGERS 8, MARINERS 3 (SIX-PLUS INNINGS)

Adrian Beltre homered and drove in five runs as Texas defeated visiting Seattle in the rain-shortened debut for interim manager Don Wakamatsu. The Rangers fired Jeff Banister, the 2015 American League Manager of the Year, earlier in the day. Banister was replaced for the rest of the season by Wakamatsu, who managed the Mariners in 2009-10. Beltre, a former Mariner, hit a three-run homer in the first inning and a two-run single in the third, both off right-hander Erasmo Ramirez, to give the Rangers a 5-0 lead. The home run was the 14th of the season for Beltre and the 476th of his career, moving him past Stan Musial and Willie Stargell for 30th place in major league history.

METS 4, NATIONALS 2

New York ace Jacob deGrom continued his record-breaking season—and his push for the National League Cy Young Award—by beating Washington on the road. DeGrom (9-9) yielded one run on three hits and one walk, while striking out eight over seven innings. The right-hander lowered his MLB-leading ERA to 1.77 and extended his major league single-season record of allowing three runs or fewer to 28 consecutive starts. With one more expected start, deGrom will look to earn a 10th victory and finish above .500. The fewest wins by any starting pitcher to win the Cy Young is 14 by Felix Hernandez of the Seattle Mariners in 2010. — Reuters

Jadeja shines in Dubai on return to one-day arena

DUBAI: India left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja could not have envisaged a better comeback on his return to international limited-overs cricket, shrugging off a 14-month absence by taking four wickets against Bangladesh in an Asia Cup triumph on Friday.

The 29-year-old is a regular in the test side, particularly on home soil, but last played a one-day against West Indies in July 2017 and had been overlooked for white-ball cricket since. Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who topped the world rankings for test bowlers alongside Jadeja last year, has suffered a similar fate in short-form cricket due to the success of wrist-spinners Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav. "During my earlier comebacks the gap was never so long. I will always remember this comeback because I returned to the team after a gap of almost 480 days." Jadeja said after being named man of the match following his 4-29 display. "I was playing only tests but the last two-three series were away and I was not getting many opportunities. I was telling myself that my job is to perform whenever I get an opportunity. 'That's what is in my control and that's how I was motivating myself. I was thinking how I can improve my game in away conditions.'"

Jadeja's heroics with the ball helped India restrict Bangladesh to 173 and they chased down the target with 82 balls and seven wickets to spare with stand-in captain Rohit Sharma remaining unbeaten on 83.

With India on a run of overseas tests in which they generally employ a lone spinner, opportunities had dried up for Jadeja, who is also a brilliant fielder and more-than-capable lower-order batsman.

He was a non-playing member of the touring party for three tests in South Africa in January, waiting until Afghanistan's inaugural test against India in June for his next appearance. Jadeja also warmed the bench in England for the first four tests before being included in the fifth and final match earlier this month. He made an unbeaten 86 in the first innings and took seven wickets as India lost by 118 runs in a 4-1 series defeat.

He was then a late call-up to the Asia Cup squad after all-rounder Hardik Pandya was injured against Pakistan and left-arm spinner Axar Patel hurt his finger during practice. — Reuters



SYDNEY: Sutherland's Steve Smith, and Australia's ex-captain, plays a shot during a domestic cricket match against Mosman at Glenn McGrath Oval in Sutherland, a suburb in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

Smith, Warner make smashing return to Australian cricket

SYDNEY: Disgraced cricketers Steve Smith and David Warner made stunning returns to Australian cricket yesterday, with the pair both notching up big scores in front of some of the largest grade-level crowds the country has seen. Former captain Smith looked as though he had not a missed beat, with a classy 85 of 92 deliveries for Sutherland against Mosman in New South Wales grade cricket. He was greeted with loud applause from hundreds of fans when he walked out to the pitch at Sydney's Glenn McGrath Oval, supporters delighted to see a return of his trademark fidgeting at crease. "It's awesome to see him playing," Sutherland teammate Shane Watson told Cricket Australia's official website. "I'd prefer him to be playing for Australia, but the support that he got, the warm applause when he scored runs and also when he got out shows that

everyone is supporting him."

Some 30 kilometres (19 miles) north at Coogee Oval, former Australian vice-captain Warner smashed a century from 98 balls in his Australia return for club side Randwick-Petersham against St George. The impressive innings included a huge six hit out of the ground, to the delight of hundreds of onlookers crammed into the small ground.

"It's great to have him back," cricket fan Kim Perry told AFP. "He's a great entertainer for Australian cricket." Both players took time out in between innings to pose for photos and chat with fans, on a charm offensive as they seek redemption for their part in the ball-tampering scandal against South Africa in March.

The pair are serving one-year suspensions from international and state cricket for the scandal, while opener Cameron Bancroft was banned for nine months. "I think they will probably welcome them (Smith and Warner) back after they've done their time. Not before," said 82-year-old cricket fan Don Sounders.

Smith and Warner are expected to spend more time at their respective grade-level clubs in New South Wales this summer if they decide not to join the new Twenty20 competition in the UAE. — AFP

Pakistan and Afghanistan players fined in Asia Cup

DUBAI: Pakistan's paceman Hasan Ali and Afghanistan's Asghar Afghan and Rashid Khan have all been fined yesterday for violating the players' code of conduct, the International Cricket Council said yesterday.

Pakistan narrowly beat Afghanistan by three wickets in a highly charged Asia Cup Super Four match in Abu Dhabi on Friday, with Shoaib Malik hitting a six and four in the last over.

"Hasan, and Afghanistan's duo of Asghar and Rashid have all been fined 15 per cent of their match fees. They have also received one demerit point in separate incidents during the match on Friday," the ICC said.

"After the match, all the three players pleaded guilty to the offences and accepted the sanctions proposed by Andy Pycroft of the Elite Panel of ICC Match Referees and, as such, there was no need for a formal hearing."

The ICC said: "Rashid was charged and fined for giving a sendoff to Asif Ali in the 47th over of Pakistan's innings by holding up a finger and staring at the batsman, an action that could have provoked an aggressive reaction from the departing batsman."

"Hasan and Asghar were found guilty of 'conduct that is contrary to the spirit of the game and using language, actions or gestures which disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction from a batsman upon his/her dismissal during an International Match.'"

"While Hasan and Rashid have received demerit points for the first time, it is the second occasion that Asghar has been handed a demerit point within a 24-month period. "The incident involving Hasan happened in the 33rd over of Afghanistan's innings when he threatened to throw the ball towards striker Hashmatullah Shahidi after fielding off his own bowling. "As regards the incident involving Asghar, the Afghanistan captain brushed his shoulder with the bowler Hasan in the 37th over as he passed him while taking a run." — AFP