

**25** Wales open Rugby WCup campaign with six-try win over Georgia

**26** England drop Bairstow from Test squad for NZ series

**27** Neymar saves PSG to send French champions three points clear



## Astros beat Angels to clinch AL West

Indians tied for wild card after ripping Phillies



HOUSTON: Jared Walsh #25 of the Los Angeles Angels slides into third base with a triple in the second inning against the Houston Astros at Minute Maid Park in Houston, Texas. —AFP

**HOUSTON:** George Springer homered in each of his first three plate appearances, shouldering the load until the Houston Astros broke free with a six-run fifth inning in their 13-5 victory over the visiting Los Angeles Angels on Sunday. The Astros clinched the American League West with their 102nd win, their ninth full-season division title and third in a row. Houston completed its home schedule with a club-record 60 victories and finished 32-6 at home against AL West foes, with perfect marks against Seattle and Texas. Springer slugged two home runs off Angels right-hander Jose Rodriguez (0-1) and a third off left-handed reliever Jose Suarez. He lined the first pitch of the bottom of the first inning into the Crawford Boxes in left field for his 12th leadoff home run this season and 36th overall. Justin Verlander (20-6) notched his second career 20-win season despite laboring over five innings, allowing two runs on six hits and two walks. His five strikeouts leave him six shy of 3,000 in his career with just one start left this season.

### RED SOX 7, RAYS 4

Christian Vazquez hit a three-run homer in the first inning to lead Boston to a win at St. Petersburg, Fla., trying to play spoilers as Tampa Bay battles for a wild-card spot. Red Sox right-hander Nathan Eovaldi (2-0) pitched six innings, allowing three runs on seven hits. He walked two, struck out six and didn't allow a hit after a leadoff single in the fourth. Joey Wendle and Brendan McKay homered for the Rays, who enter the final week of the regular season in a three-way battle with Oakland and Cleveland for the AL's two wild-card playoff berths. The Rays and Indians are tied for the second wild-card spot, two games behind the A's.

### RANGERS 8, ATHLETICS 3

Shin-Soo Choo, Willie Calhoun and Elvis Andrus all homered within Tanner Roark's first 20 pitches and right-hander Lance Lynn equaled his career-best with 12 strikeouts, allowing visiting Texas to salvage one win in their three-game series against Oakland. The loss, in their final home game of the season, leaves the Athletics atop the AL wild-card standings with six games to play. After having been held to a total of three runs and 10 hits in the first two games of the series, the Rangers bombed Roark for four runs in the first inning, getting an immediate spark when Choo belted the first pitch of the contest for his 23rd home run.

### INDIANS 10, PHILLIES 1

Oscar Mercado hit a tiebreaking three-run homer in the fifth inning to help lift Cleveland to a win in the rubber game of a three-game series against visiting Philadelphia. Yasiel Puig had a three-run double and Franmil Reyes added a two-run homer as the Indians added six runs in the seventh inning. Carlos Santana finished with three hits and two runs for Cleveland,

which ends the regular season this week with three games in Chicago against the White Sox and then three in Washington. Indians starter Adam Plutko went 4 1/3 innings, allowing one run and four hits. He struck out three and walked two. Carlos Carrasco (6-7) followed with 2 2/3 innings of shutout relief. Scott Kingery had two hits and a run for Philadelphia.

### TWINS 12, ROYALS 8

Nelson Cruz hit the 400th home run of his career and Miguel Sano hit two home runs to lead host Minnesota past Kansas City, handing the Royals their 100th loss. Cruz, who hit his first major league homer against the Twins at the Metrodome while he was with the Texas Rangers on July 31, 2006, became the 57th member of the 400-homer club in the fourth inning when he hammered a Gabe Speier fastball 412 feet into the second deck in right-center to give the Twins an 8-6 lead. It also was the 40th home run of the season for Cruz, marking the fourth time in his career he has reached that milestone. He is the third Twins player to do it, joining Hall of Famer Harmon Killebrew, who did it seven times, and Brian Dozier (2016).

### MARLINS 5, NATIONALS 3

Jon Berti lined a go-ahead, two-run double in the seventh inning as host Miami ended its 11-game losing streak to Washington with a win in its final home game of the season. In seeing its two-game winning streak snapped, Washington fell into a virtual for the top wild card in the National League with Milwaukee. The Brewers are a percentage point behind the Nationals, and Washington has two more games remaining than does Milwaukee. Neither starting pitcher got a decision. Washington's Austin Voth allowed just one run on three hits in five innings, and Miami's Pablo Lopez was touched for three runs on six hits, also in five frames.

### BREWERS 4, PIRATES 3

Eric Thames drove in three runs with a pair of homers and Orlando Arcia added a solo shot as Milwaukee, playing its regular-season home finale, continued its torrid September with a 4-3 win over Pittsburgh. The Brewers' win, coupled with Washington's 5-3 loss in Miami, pulled them into a tie with the Nationals for the National League's top wild-card spot. Milwaukee's Brandon Woodruff, an 11-game winner, made his second start since returning from the injured list and worked two perfect innings with three strikeouts and three groundouts. Six Milwaukee pitchers recorded 14 strikeouts.

### CARDINALS 3, CUBS 2

Paul Goldschmidt hit the decisive ninth-inning double as visiting St. Louis rallied past Chicago to clinch at least a wild-card playoff berth as the Cardinals will return to postseason play for the first time since 2015. They swept the Cubs in a four-game series at Wrigley

Field for the first time since 1921. The Cardinals lead the NL Central by three games over the Milwaukee Brewers, who beat the Pittsburgh Pirates 4-3 on Sunday. The reeling Cubs suffered their sixth consecutive loss and fell out of the division race. They are four games back in the NL wild-card race behind the Brewers and Nationals.

### METS 6, REDS 3

Michael Conforto hit a three-run homer to cap a four-run first inning as New York won the rubber game in Cincinnati to remain on the fringes of the NL wild-card race. The Mets sit 4 1/2 games out of both wild-card spots and finish the season with seven home games against the Miami Marlins and Atlanta Braves. The Reds host the Brewers in a three-game series beginning Tuesday night. Reds starter Trevor Bauer (11-13) retired the first two batters he faced before Pete Alonso doubled and scored on Robinson Cano's double. After Wilson Ramos was hit by a pitch, Conforto homered to right for his first round-tripper since Sept. 12, a span of 31 plate appearances.

### YANKEES 8, BLUE JAYS 3

Luis Severino pitched five dominant innings, and New York hit three homers, recording an easy victory over visiting Toronto in its final regular-season home game. Severino (1-0) allowed three hits, struck out nine and walked none in his second start after being activated from the injured list Tuesday. After throwing 67 pitches in four innings that day against the Los Angeles Angels, Severino was stretched out to 80 on Sunday. He threw 54 of those pitches for strikes, including the first 11 of the game. Aaron Judge hit a solo homer, Brett Gardner added a three-run homer and DJ LeMahieu hit a two-run homer as the Yankees raised their season total to 298. Giancarlo Stanton added a sacrifice fly and Luke Voit hit an RBI single as the Yankees won for the 12th time in their past 18 games.

### DODGERS 7, ROCKIES 4

Hyun-Jin Ryu hit his first career home run and went seven strong innings as Los Angeles reached 100 victories by rallying to defeat visiting Colorado in the Dodgers' final home game of the regular season. Cody Bellinger added his second grand slam of the season in a five-run fifth inning, and his 46th home run overall, as Los Angeles finished 59-22 at home this season. At 100-56, the Dodgers reached 100 victories for the second time in the past three seasons and just the fourth time in their Los Angeles history. The Dodgers also reduced their magic number for clinching the best record in the NL to one.

### GIANTS 4, BRAVES 1

Rookie Logan Webb pitched six strong innings to help San Francisco end a three-game losing streak by beating Atlanta in the Braves' final home game of the

regular season. The 22-year-old right-hander allowed one run on two hits and two walks with seven strikeouts, which matched his career high, in his first career appearance against Atlanta. Webb had struggled in his three previous starts, going 0-2 with a 10.22 ERA. Atlanta finished with a 50-31 record at home and will complete the regular season on the road with two games at Kansas City and three at the New York Mets. The Braves will be without first baseman Freddie Freeman against the Royals, however, after Freeman left Sunday's game in the seventh inning with right elbow pain. Braves manager Brian Snitker told reporters after the game Freeman will stay behind in Atlanta for that series.

### ORIOLES 2, MARINERS 1

Chris Davis hit a solo homer in the bottom of the seventh inning to give Baltimore a win over visiting Seattle, giving Davis a nice moment in a trying season in front of his home fans. In winning their final home game of the season, the Orioles finished with a 25-56 record at Oriole Park at Camden Yards and took two of three to win a series for the first time since late August. Davis blast, which cleared the wall in right-center, drew a huge ovation from the fans. It was just 11th homer and 35th RBI of a season in which he is batting just .176.

### TIGERS 6, WHITE SOX 3

Jeimer Candelario hit a two-run homer, Willi Castro delivered his first career homer and host Detroit salvaged the finale of a three-game series against Chicago as Victor Reyes supplied two hits, including a solo homer, and scored twice. Gordon Beckham contributed a solo homer and Dawel Lugo added three hits for the Tigers. Detroit starter Matthew Boyd (9-11) pitched the minimum five innings to collect the victory. Boyd, who missed his last start while attending to a family matter, gave up three runs on eight hits and struck out six. Joe Jimenez pitched the ninth for his eighth save. Eloy Jimenez had a two-run homer for the White Sox. Reynaldo Lopez (9-15) allowed five runs on nine hits in four innings.

### PADRES 6, DIAMONDBACKS 4 (10 INNINGS)

Infielder Seth Mejias-Brean hit a two-run home run with no outs in the bottom of the 10th inning to give San Diego a walk-off win over Arizona and avoid a sweep at home. The win was the first for interim manager Rod Barajas, who took over on Saturday after the firing of manager Andy Green. Greg Garcia opened the 10th with an opposite-field double into the left-field corner off Diamondbacks right-handed reliever Yoan Lopez. Mejias-Brean, who earlier hit a run-scoring single as the Padres overcame an early 4-0 deficit, then drove a 1-1 pitch into the left field seats for his second homer in his ninth game since making his major league debut on Sept. 3. — Reuters