

Sports

# Nationals clinch playoff berth with doubleheader sweep

## Blackmon homers in 16th to lift Rockies past Giants

WASHINGTON: Trea Turner hit a sixth-inning grand slam, and the Washington Nationals rallied past the Philadelphia Phillies 6-5 on Tuesday night, sweeping a doubleheader and clinching a National League playoff berth. Washington entered the nightcap with its magic number at two. When Daniel Hudson retired the Phillies in the ninth for his second save of the day, the Nationals stayed on the field. Minutes later, the Pittsburgh Pirates defeated the Chicago Cubs 9-2, and Washington was celebrating being back in the playoffs after a one-year absence. Yan Gomes also homered for the Nationals, who lead the Milwaukee Brewers by one game for home-field advantage in the wild-card game. Turner had three hits in the first game, a 4-1 Washington win. The Phillies were eliminated from playoff contention with the defeat in the opener.

### DIAMONDBACKS 3, CARDINALS 2 (19 INNINGS)

Ildemaro Vargas lined a walk-off single with two outs in the 19th inning to give Arizona a victory over St. Louis in Phoenix, breaking the Cardinals' six-game winning streak in the longest game in Arizona franchise history. Kevin Ginkel (3-0) pitched the top of the 19th for the victory in a game that lasted 6 hours, 53 minutes, the longest in Chase Field history. The Diamondbacks used 30 players and 13 pitchers, both franchise records. The Cardinals employed 24 players, including 11 pitchers, as their lead over Milwaukee in the National League Central was trimmed to 2 1/2 games with four to play. Dexter Fowler led off the game with a homer, and Paul Goldschmidt also went deep for St. Louis.

### ASTROS 3, MARINERS 0

Gerrit Cole pitched seven shutout innings on a historic night as Houston continued its mastery of host Seattle and moved 1 1/2 games ahead of the New York Yankees in the race for the best record in the majors and home-field advantage throughout the playoffs. Cole (19-5) allowed only two hits and struck out 14 without issuing a walk. He matched his career high for victories set in 2015 with Pittsburgh and surpassed the Astros' franchise record for single-season strikeouts (313), set by J.R. Richard in 1978. Cole now has a major-league-leading 316 strikeouts. Alex Bregman hit his 40th home run of the season for the Astros, who are 17-1 against Seattle this season. Ryan Pressly struck out three in the eighth inning, and Roberto Osuna pitched the ninth for his 37th save.

### DODGERS 6, PADRES 3

Max Muncy hit the first grand slam of his career, and eight Los Angeles pitchers — starting with Rich Hill — yielded just three runs on five hits as the visiting Dodgers defeated San Diego. With the victory, the Dodgers are now assured of finishing the regular season with the best overall record in the National League. Los

Angeles took a 5-0 lead before San Diego scored three times in the fifth. Hill, who was wearing a brace to protect his left knee, worked two innings, as expected. He allowed no runs and no hits while compiling five strikeouts against two walks. Kenley Jansen pitched a scoreless ninth to pick up his 31st save.

### RAYS 2, YANKEES 1 (12 INNINGS)

Ji-Man Choi homered to lead off the 12th inning and Tampa Bay defeated New York in St. Petersburg, Fla., to remain a half-game ahead of Cleveland for the second wild-card spot. The Rays earned their 18th win in 24 games when Choi lifted a 2-2 slider from Cory Gearrin (1-3) over the right-field fence. It was Choi's 18th homer and second career walk-off homer. Yankees third baseman Gio Urshela exited in the seventh after being hit in the left hand an inning earlier. He remained in the game to run the bases after being hit, and then played a half-inning on defense at third before being substituted.

### ROCKIES 8, GIANTS 5 (16 INNINGS)

Colorado belted five home runs, including a tiebreaking, three-run shot by Charlie Blackmon in the 16th inning, to earn a win at San Francisco. The teams set a major league record by using a combined 25 pitchers, 13 of them Giants. Garrett Hampson homered twice for the Rockies, who also got long balls from Ian Desmond and Trevor Story. Pitcher Madison Bumgarner, Buster Posey and Evan Longoria hit home runs for San Francisco.

### ANGELS 3, A'S 2

Albert Pujols' fifth-inning sacrifice fly snapped a tie and helped lift Los Angeles to a win over Oakland in Anaheim, Calif. Dillon Peters (4-3) tossed five innings of two-run ball, getting help from four relievers who combined to shut out the A's over the final four innings. Hansel Robles pitched the ninth for his 23rd save. Oakland has lost two in a row for the first time since Aug. 31-Sept. 1. The Athletics' lead in the three-team race for the two American League wild cards was reduced to just a half-game over the Rays and one game over the Indians.

### BREWERS 4, REDS 2

Ryan Braun belted a solo homer among his two hits as visiting Milwaukee inched closer to a postseason berth with a victory over Cincinnati. Yasmani Grandal ripped an RBI double and rookie Keston Hiura added a sacrifice fly in a two-run third inning for the Brewers, who won for the 16th time in their past 18 contests and moved five games ahead of the Chicago Cubs for the final National League wild-card spot. Josh Hader struck out Kyle Farmer with runners on second and third base in the ninth to secure his 36th save of the season. The Brewers posted their fifth consecutive victory.

### TWINS 4, TIGERS 2

Williams Astudillo and Eddie Rosario each had two-run hits in a four-run seventh inning, and Minnesota inched closer to its first American League Central title in nine years with a victory at Detroit. The Twins, who improved to 12-5 against Detroit this season, lowered their magic number for clinching the division to two. Jake Odorizzi (15-7) held the Tigers to one run on two hits and a walk while striking out seven in six innings. He was removed after 93 pitches due to hamstring tightness. Taylor Rogers got the last three outs for his 29th save.

### INDIANS 11, WHITE SOX 0

Jose Ramirez belted a grand slam and a three-run home run in his return to the lineup from injury and Mike Clevinger pitched seven shutout innings for visiting Cleveland. The Indians remained one-half game behind the Tampa Bay Rays for the second American League wild-card spot. Ramirez went 2-for-3 with seven RBIs as Cleveland outlasted Chicago 12-6. Yasiel Puig had three hits, while Roberto Perez and Mike Freeman had two apiece. Clevinger improved to 13-3 while earning his first win against the White Sox this season, scattering five hits, one walk and 10 strikeouts in seven innings. In three starts versus Chicago in 2019, Clevinger has yielded two

earned runs in 21 innings, a 0.86 ERA.

### ROYALS 9, BRAVES 6

Bubba Starling's two-run double capped a five-run third inning Tuesday night that lifted host Kansas City past Atlanta. Not only did the Braves lose for the third time in as many meetings with the 100-loss Royals, but they also saw 41-homer man Ronald Acuna Jr. leave due to right hip tightness. Danny Duffy (7-6) got the win for Kansas City after allowing three runs and five hits over five innings, walking two and striking out five. Julio Teheran (10-11) lasted just 2 1/3 innings, allowing six hits and six runs with one walk and one strikeout for Atlanta.

### METS 5, MARLINS 4 (11 INNINGS)

Brandon Nimmo drew a bases-loaded walk in the 11th inning as New York mounted a late comeback and stayed alive in the National League wild-card race with a win over visiting Miami. Had the Mets lost, they would have been eliminated by virtue of their defeat and wins earlier in the day by Washington and Milwaukee. New York will be eliminated from contention with one more loss or one more win by the Brewers. The Mets trailed 4-0 entering the seventh inning, when J.D. Davis hit a leadoff double and Michael Conforto followed with a two-run homer. — Reuters



WASHINGTON: Anthony Rendon #6 of the Washington Nationals slides safely past the tag of Edgar Garcia #66 of the Philadelphia Phillies after a wild pitch during the eighth inning of game one of a doubleheader at Nationals Park in Washington. — AFP

## Dennis hits back to retain world time-trial title

HARROGATE: Australia's Rohan Dennis retained his title at the cycling world championship time-trial yesterday by blowing away the competition in Yorkshire. Dennis was last man out on the 54km route to Harrogate and was far too good as he stormed to the finish line 1min 08sec ahead of Belgian teenager Remco Evenepoel with Italy's Filippo Ganna claiming bronze.

"It was an absolutely perfect day," Dennis told the BBC. "I have a lot of people to thank and it's just good to repay them on the day when it really matters." Victory was even sweeter for Dennis this year after a difficult season.

The 29-year-old controversially threw in the towel at the start of a classic climb on the Tour de France's 12th stage in July, missing out on the time-trial at the Tour the next day. Dennis was reportedly unhappy with his bike for the time-trial at the Tour, but his behaviour stunned his team, Bahrain Merida, who then left him out of their squad for the Vuelta a Espana.

However, Dennis appeared fresh rather than rusty having not ridden since the Tour as he steadily increased his lead across the course. "It's been a tough year, a lot of talk since Tour de France about what I'm doing, so it's really special to back up this year," added Dennis.



HARROGATE: Silver medalist Belgium's Remco Evenepoel (L), gold medalist Australia's Rohan Dennis (C) and bronze medalist Italy's Filippo Ganna (R) celebrate on the podium after the Elite Men Individual Time Trial, over 54 kms from Northallerton to Harrogate, at the 2019 UCI Road World Championships in Harrogate, northern England yesterday. — AFP

"To come here in the best possible shape and defend this title to show I'm still here to race, still here to win, and I've still got more to give in this sport." Injuries to Chris Froome and Tom Dumoulin, along with the absence of Geraint Thomas, opened the door for 19-year-old Evenepoel to back up his European time-trial title earlier in the year.

Evenepoel was comfortably the best of the rest as he finished 46 seconds ahead of Ganna. Four-time world champion Tony Martin could only manage ninth, while Vuelta winner Primoz Roglic was caught on the finish line by Dennis despite starting three minutes ahead of the winner as the Slovenian finished down in 12th. — AFP

## Coleman battling sceptics in Doha after testing controversy

DOHA: Christian Coleman arrives at the World Championships as the heavy favourite for 100m gold after an impressive season that has seen him clock a world-leading 9.81sec.

But while the 23-year-old has left most of his rivals trailing firmly in his slipstream this year, he may find sceptics harder to shake off. In the eyes of many, Coleman, the 2017 World Championships silver medallist over 100m, is extremely fortunate to even be competing in Doha.

In August, the athletics world was rocked by news that Coleman had registered three drug-testing

"whereabouts" failures in a 12-month period — an offence usually regarded as equivalent to a failed drug test and followed by a ban of up to two years.

Yet with Coleman facing the very real possibility of a suspension that would have barred him from competing at the World Championships and next year's Olympics, the case collapsed this month because of a technicality.

At first glance, it appeared to be an open and shut case. Coleman had recorded his first whereabouts failure on June 6 last year, before two more offences in January 16 and April 26 this year.

However the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) abruptly withdrew the charges against Coleman on September 2 after a review of the rules regarding how the 12-month window should be calculated.

### 'NOBODY'S PERFECT'

Under an obscure regulation in the International Standard for Testing and Investigations (ISTI) guidelines, Coleman's first missed case in June last year should have been backdated to the first day of that

quarter, making the formal date of the first offence April 1, 2018. That meant the dates of the three offences fell outside the required 12-month time frame for a doping offence to have occurred — leaving Coleman in the clear and free to compete in Doha.

Coleman responded to the news by demanding an apology from USADA, accusing the anti-doping body of smearing his reputation and insisting he had always been a clean athlete.

"I have never failed a drug test and never will," Coleman said. "It's a shame on USADA that this was public knowledge, that they didn't know their own rules — that they expect athletes to know the rules but they can't follow their own."

Coleman explained away the three whereabouts failures as simply innocent mistakes, blaming his anxiety and last-minute schedule changes for his failure to update his location information.

"People don't realise how easy it is to miss tests," Coleman said. "People out there calling me an idiot, or I've gotta be stupid to miss tests. I don't know what people look at athletes at, but nobody's perfect. People make mistakes." — AFP

## Battered Bellamy soon back to the water but in a boat

BRIDGETOWN: Endurance athlete Cameron Bellamy, still recovering from the exertions of the longest open ocean swim in history, is keen to get back in the water but will return to his rowing roots for his next adventure.

The 37-year-old South African spent days in hospital after enduring severe sleep deprivation, acute overheating, "salt mouth" and extreme fatigue. He is still battling with his tongue and lips after 56 hours and 26 minutes in the water as he swam from Barbados to St Lucia from Sept 13-15.

At 151.7 km (94 miles) it was the longest distance for an open ocean swim. However, Bellamy says he cannot claim to have beaten Chloe McCardell's world record of 124.4km set in the Bahamas five years ago because of the currents that assisted him towards the end of the race and for the fact he wore a protective suit for three hours after being stung by a jellyfish.

"The toughest aspect of this swim was the heat, both water and air. On the second day leading up to the middle part of the swim there was absolutely no wind, the air temperature must have been in the mid 30 degrees Celsius and water temp around the same," he told Reuters in a telephone interview.

"I was incredibly dizzy and weak and if it wasn't for the encouragement of my support crew, who instantly noticed my plight and acted by handing me a lot more ice in my drinks and shortening my time between feeds, I think I might not have made it further."

"Once I had St Lucia in my sights, after swimming through a relatively cooler second night, it was a different story. I knew I could make it and pushed myself further than I could ever have imagined."

"With about one kilometre to go, the tide was against us and it meant an agonising push to a rocky outcrop attached to the shore beneath a majestic cliff. An amazing place to complete the swim."

He was hospitalised straight away, treated for severe muscle breakdown and toxicity of his blood, swelling of mouth area, and sunburn. He was discharged after 48 hours and has spent the last week relaxing in Barbados before heading to his home in San Francisco on Wednesday. Bellamy will submit his achievement to the Barbados Amateur Swimming Association and Marathon Swimmers' Federation for ratification but now has another feat on his mind - something he will start working on straight away.

"It's something that is in the advanced planning stages but I'll be going back to my rowing roots," he said, hoping to finalise details in the coming months. — Reuters