

25 Thomas hopes for chance to 'channel inner Koepka'



26 Thumb injury leave India star Dhawan's World Cup in doubt



27 Ramos and Morata on the spot as Spain cruise past Sweden



Roord heads late Dutch winner

'We were looking for a win and Kiwis were looking for a draw'



LE HAVRE: Netherlands' midfielder Jill Roord (C) celebrates after scoring a goal during the France 2019 Women's World Cup Group E football match between New Zealand and the Netherlands, yesterday, at the Oceane Stadium in Le Havre, northwestern France. —AFP

LE HAVRE: Jill Roord came off the bench and headed home from close range in added time yesterday to give the Netherlands a 1-0 women's World Cup victory over New Zealand in Le Havre.

The victory lifts the European champions into a tie with Canada atop Group E. "I think we can play better than we did today. But we were looking for a win and New Zealand were looking for a draw, and I'm very glad we finally got what we wanted," said Dutch coach Sarina Wiegman. "I'm very relieved, of course."

The Football Ferns, stout in defence and sharp on the counter attack, were left with nothing but disappointment. "The players will be absolutely devastated

but we're a resilient group and I'm pretty confident we'll bounce back," said New Zealand coach Tom Sermanni.

The stars of a lively match were the two goalkeepers, Sari van Veenendaal for the Netherlands and New Zealand's Erin Nayler. Both were busy and both, at different stages, underwent on-field treatment after brave saves.

The Dutch had almost 70% of possession and almost three times as many goal attempts but New Zealand went painfully close three times. "The Dutch were the dominant team but we created some great chances," said Sermanni.

In the first half, Olivia Chance hit the bar and Rosie White drew a sprawling save from Van Veenendaal with a long-range strike. Early in the second half Sarah Gregorius, who is of Dutch descent, shinned a volley into the ground that gave Van Veenendaal time to lunge to her right and claw the ball round the post.

At the other end, centre-backs Rebekah Stott and Abby Erceg coped well with the physical presence of Dutch forward Vivianne Miedema and the lively skills of the attackers around her. When the Dutch did carve a clear chance, they were frustrated either by Nayler or some anxious finishing, until the final moments.

"We found it tough to create openings," said FIFA's

player of the match Lieke Martens. "New Zealand defended well and it was not our best match, that's clear." The Dutch swung one more hanging cross to the far post where Lineth Beerensteyn bullied Ali Riley into a tame header back across the goal and Arsenal's Roord guided the ball past the advancing Nayler.

"We can't go away from the game saying we have regrets, we have disappointment," said Sermanni, who has coached four of the nations in this year's World Cup. "We've got to look at the positive things we did."

Later in the day Group F kicks off with Chile facing Sweden in Rennes and the USA and Thailand end the first set of games in Reims. —AFP

Warriors edge Raptors to keep title hopes alive

TORONTO: Clutch 3-pointers by Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson enabled the defending champion Golden State Warriors to edge Toronto 106-105 on Monday and sustain their hopes of winning a third consecutive NBA Finals. But any joy from the victory was dimmed by a right Achilles injury to Kevin Durant only 12 minutes into his first game after being sidelined for a month by a right calf injury.

Curry scored 31 points while Thompson added 26 as the Warriors pulled within 3-2 in the best-of-seven championship series, forcing a sixth game Thursday at Oakland, California, with game seven if needed in Toronto on Sunday.

"Do or die," Curry said. "It wasn't pretty in the second half but we just made the shots." Durant's long-awaited return ended with the All-Star forward being helped off the court. "You could kind of just feel the life just go right out of us," Warriors forward Draymond Green said. "But to Steph's credit, he rallied the troops."

"He talked to everybody, went around the huddle and just told everybody to stay locked in and do this for Kevin. And I think we did a good job of coming together." Durant, the 2017 and 2018 NBA Finals Most valuable Player, departed the arena on crutches but became an inspiration to his teammates.

"We do it for Kevin," Thompson said. "He wants us to compete at the highest level and we'll think of him

every time we step on the hardwood." Durant posted on Instagram: "I'm hurting deep in my soul right now. I can't lie, but seeing my brothers get this win was like taking a shot of tequila. I got new life."

He also breathed life into Golden State's title quest, Curry said. "We understand the moment and I think we can rally, considering how the second half went," Curry said. Durant, Golden State's top playoff scorer with 34.2 points a game, will have an MRI today.

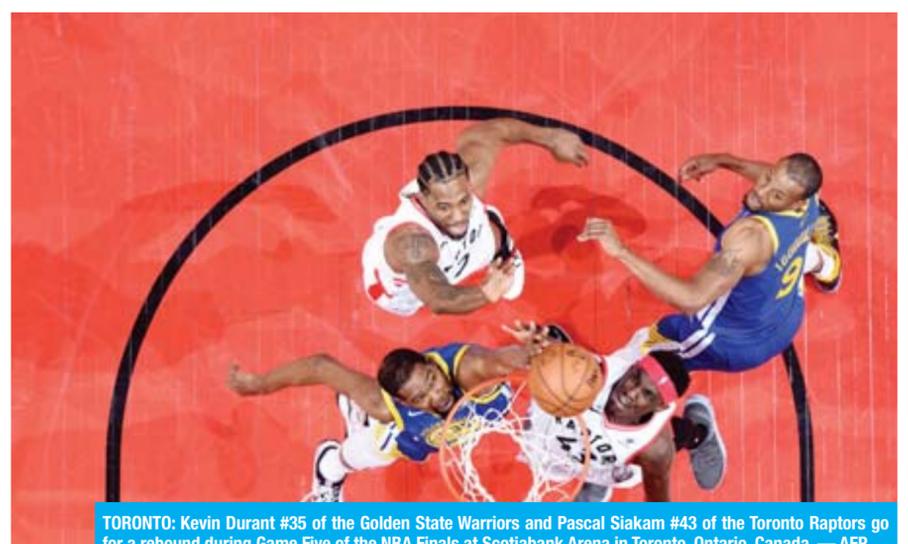
"On the one hand I'm so proud of them, just the amazing heart and grit they showed, and on the other I'm just devastated for Kevin," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "So it's a bizarre feeling we all have right now, an incredible win and a horrible loss at the same time."

The Warriors seek their fourth title in five seasons while the Raptors suffered an agonizing near-miss in their bid for the first title in their 24-season history. History remains on the Raptors' side. Only once in 34 prior situations has a team led the NBA Finals 3-1 and lost the title, that being in 2016 when LeBron James-led Cleveland rallied to defeat Golden State.

Kawhi Leonard, who led Toronto with 26 points, sank a back-to-back 3-pointer and jumper to give the Raptors, who trailed by 14 points in the third quarter, their largest lead at 103-97 with 3:28 remaining.

"In this day and age, up six with three minutes to go, doesn't mean a whole lot," Raptors coach Nick Nurse said. "I felt good at that point. Just needed to make a couple more plays." Golden State answered with Thompson and Curry sinking 3-pointers and Thompson nailing another that put Golden State ahead to stay at 106-103 with 57 seconds to play.

Kyle Lowry cut the lead to the final margin with 30 seconds remaining and, after Golden State's DeMarcus Cousins was whistled for a foul trying to set a screen,



TORONTO: Kevin Durant #35 of the Golden State Warriors and Pascal Siakam #43 of the Toronto Raptors go for a rebound during Game Five of the NBA Finals at Scotiabank Arena in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. —AFP

the Raptors had one last chance to swipe the title. But the Warriors double-teamed Leonard and Green blocked a Lowry corner 3-point shot at the buzzer.

"It has got to be the greatest," Green said when asked to compare the win to others in Golden State's history. "Down six with a couple minutes to go in an elimination for these guys to win a championship, we could have thrown in the towel. We could have folded,

but we didn't."

Durant had missed nine playoff games but he briefly made the Warriors look like the team that dominated the past two NBA Finals. Disaster struck 2:14 into the second quarter when Durant planted his right foot and pulled up, then sat on the court and grabbed his leg. Durant was helped off the court, his dramatic comeback over far too soon. —AFP