

Sports

Flaherty fuels Cardinals to NL Central title, shuts down Cubs

Wild pitch in 13th leads Rockies past Brewers

ST LOUIS: Jack Flaherty pitched seven strong innings as the host St. Louis Cardinals captured the National League Central title with a 9-0 victory over the Chicago Cubs on Sunday. The Cardinals (91-71) will play the Atlanta Braves in the NL Division Series on Thursday. The second-place Milwaukee Brewers will face the Washington Nationals in the wild-card game Tuesday. The third-place Chicago Cubs (84-78) ended a disappointing season with a farewell loss for manager Joe Maddon, whose contract was not renewed after his five-year run. The Cubs announced his departure before the game. Maddon led the team to postseason play in his first four seasons and won one World Series title, the franchise's first since 1908.

NATIONALS 8, INDIANS 2

Kurt Suzuki hit a two-run homer in the third inning and Washington added four more runs in the sixth against visiting Cleveland for its season-high eighth straight win. Suzuki gave the Nationals a 3-1 lead when he hit his 17th home run of the season, a two-out, two-run blast. John Ross (4-4) gave up one run in six innings to get the win for the Nationals, who will host the Milwaukee Brewers on Tuesday in the National League wild-card game. Gerardo Parra hit a two-run double in the sixth inning to make it 7-1, and he singled home the Nationals' final run in the eighth.

ROCKIES 4, BREWERS 3 (13 INNINGS)

Sam Hilliard scored on a wild pitch in the bottom of the 13th inning, and Colorado beat Milwaukee in Denver to sweep the three-game series. Dom Nunez homered, and Pat Valaika had two hits for the Rockies (71-91), who avoided finishing in last place a year after challenging the Los Angeles Dodgers for the National League West title. Bryan Shaw (3-2) pitched the top of the 13th to get the win. Jake Faria (0-1) took the loss for the Brewers.

RANGERS 6, YANKEES 1

Lance Lynn allowed one run on two hits over 7 1/3

innings to pick up his 16th win of the season as Texas played its final game at Globe Life Park in Arlington, Texas. Shin-Soo Choo doubled, walked three times and scored two runs. Ronald Guzman had two RBIs, and Elvis Andrus and Jose Trevino each had two hits for Texas, which will move across the street and play in Globe Life Field next season. Masahiro Tanaka (11-9) took the loss and allowed two runs (one earned) on five hits over three innings in his first relief appearance in 164 major league games.

DODGERS 9, GIANTS 0

The Dodgers finished off a three-game sweep of the Giants, spoiling manager Bruce Bochy's going-away party. Bochy retired after 25 seasons as a manager, including 13 with San Francisco, which won three World Series championships during his tenure. For the Dodgers, the win was the 106th on the season, setting a franchise record. Will Smith smacked a two-run home run and eight pitchers, including Clayton Kershaw in relief, combined on a three-hit shutout. Reliever Dustin May (2-3) got the win, while Derek Rodriguez (6-11) took the loss. Rodriguez didn't make it out of the second, charged with five runs on five hits in 1 2/3 innings. He walked two and struck out two.

RED SOX 5, ORIOLES 4

Mookie Betts sprinted home from first base on a Rafael Devers single in the bottom of the ninth inning to allow host Boston to avoid a three-game sweep by Baltimore in each team's season finale. Betts' mad dash after the ball deflected off shortstop Richie Martin and into right field. Orioles right fielder Stevie Wilkerson appeared to not notice Betts trying to score. An inning prior, Wilkerson had robbed Jackie Bradley Jr. of what would have been a go-ahead two-run home run with an incredible leaping grab in right that saw Wilkerson roll over the top of the bullpen wall after making the catch. Despite the win, Boston was unable to hold onto a 4-3 lead taken in the seventh inning that would have made a 20-game winner out of Eduardo Rodriguez. Matt Barnes served up a game-tying single to Jonathan Villar in the eighth inning.



ST LOUIS: Members of the St. Louis Cardinals celebrate winning the National League Central Division after beating the Chicago Cubs at Busch Stadium in St. Louis, Missouri. — AFP

BLUE JAYS 8, RAYS 3

Teoscar Hernandez hit a three-run homer, Breyvic Valera added a solo shot, Justin Smoak drove in three runs with two doubles and Toronto downed visiting Tampa Bay. The Rays (96-66) lost their final two games of the regular season after clinching a wild-card spot Friday. Tampa Bay visits the Oakland Athletics on Wednesday to play the American League wild-card game. The Blue Jays (67-95) finished the season by going 12-6. Right-hander Clay Buchholz (2-5) earned the win, allowing one run, four hits and one walk while striking out six in five innings.

ASTROS 8, ANGELS 5

George Springer homered, doubled and singled twice to lead Houston past Los Angeles Angels in the regular-season finale for both teams in Anaheim, Calif. Starting pitcher Gerrit Cole won his 20th game, and Aledmys Diaz and Yuli Gurriel also homered for Houston, which finished the regular season 107-55 for the best record in the majors and secured home-field

advantage throughout the postseason. The 107 victories are the most in franchise history and mark the club's third consecutive 100-win season. From the franchise's inception in 1962 through 2016, the team had only one 100-win season (102 in 1998).

METS 7, BRAVES 6 (11 INNINGS)

Dominic Smith, making his first plate appearance in more than two months, hit a three-run walk-off home run in the 11th inning as New York completed a season-ending, three-game sweep of division champion Atlanta. The Mets finished 86-76, a nine-game improvement over last season. The Braves, who won their second straight National League East crown, will face the NL Central champion St. Louis Cardinals in the NL Division Series beginning Thursday. Luis Guillorme singled leading off the 11th, and Wilson Ramos singled with one out before Smith, who hadn't batted since July 26 due to a left foot injury, stepped up with two outs against Grant Dayton (0-1) and homered beyond the right field fence. — Reuters

World Cup host Qatar sees climate controlled stadiums as the future

DOHA: On a late September evening in Qatar a persistent 35 degree Celsius heat hung outside the 2022 World Cup host's newly-built Al Janoub stadium, but down on the pitch the temperature was a cool 21 degrees.

Qatar, a tiny Gulf state known for its scorching desert climate, says it has designed an energy-efficient cooling system that can make its open-air stadiums usable even in summer temperatures that soar well into the 40s.

Soccer's next global showpiece tournament was moved to November and December to avoid Doha's intense summer heat, but Qatar decided to stick with the chilled stadiums in order to have future venues that would be usable year-round.

Al Janoub, a 40,000-seat venue made to resemble the sail of a dhow, or traditional wooden sailboat, was opened last May and is the first to showcase the new cooling system. "You're living inside a micro, climate-controlled bubble," said Saad Abdul-Ghani, a Qatar University mechanical engineering professor who led the design, as he waved a bright orange thermometer to demonstrate the roughly 14-degree drop.

The stadium was the first of seven in Qatar to be completed ahead of the tournament. The other six are slated to

be ready by the end of 2020 and an eighth, Khalifa International Stadium, was renovated and opened in 2017.

Along the pitch dozens of soccer ball-sized nozzles blow out chilled air, while tiny angular ducts beneath the seats keep the stands at 24-26 degrees. Sensors around the stadium keep track of different zones and adjust the flow from a control room.

When asked the price tag of the cooling system, Abdul-Ghani said: "a good amount of money", without providing a figure. Doha has put the tournament at the centre of a national development plan aimed at diversifying its energy economy and projecting itself on to the world stage through sport.

Qatar World Cup organising committee officials have said the country is spending \$6.5-7 billion on all stadiums and training facilities combined.

Thani Khalifa Al Zarraa, the project manager for Al Janoub Stadium, said the cooling system increased the cost of construction by two to three times, to around \$6,000-7,000 per seat, suggesting a stadium cost of about \$240-280 million.

CLIMATE SOLUTION

Despite the chilled stadiums, Qatar has said its World Cup will have the



DOHA: This picture taken on September 25, 2019 shows a view of air-condition vents to be used to blow cold air at Qatar's new Al-Janoub Stadium in the capital Doha. — AFP

smallest carbon footprint of any before it. Nasser Al Khater, CEO for FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, said Doha's compact tournament will eliminate the need for domestic flights and a new metro system will further cut emissions.

Abdul-Ghani said the system, which has been left patented for others to adopt, requires about a fifth of the energy typical to cool spaces of the same size, such as airport terminals or closed baseball fields, because it continuously recycles air into small zones.

"The Americans, Mexicans and Canadians will surely look at this because of thermal stress on players," Abdul-Ghani said, referring to the host nations of the 2026 World Cup. The 2026 tournament will be expanded to 48 teams as opposed to 32 and matches will be played across the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Candidate cities include Miami, Atlanta, Orlando, Dallas, Houston and others which are notoriously hot and humid in the summer. — Reuters

Kuwait shooters continue to win more medals

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Shooters continued their winning ways despite fierce competition by Asian shooters as Kuwait shooter Jarrah Mohammad Al-Shuwaier won the bronze medal of the double trap, while the team of Jarrah Al-Shuwaier, Nasser Al-Miqled and Saad Lafi won the bronze medal also at the conclusion of the ninth Asian Clay Target Tournament that was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Kuwait already won 6 medals (2 gold, 2 silver and 2 bronze).

Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi lauded the achievements of shooters, who carry hopes to make world achievements in the name of Kuwait.

He said this championship is one of the important events on the way of preparing shooters for the 14th Asian Championship to be held in Qatar in November where qualification for Tokyo 2020 will be determined.

Al-Osaimi dedicated these achievements to HHH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-



Jaber Al-Sabah, HHH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, government and people of Kuwait.

Al-Osaimi also commended the support of honorary president of KSSC Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Hmoud Al-Sabah, and Public Authority for Sports and its Director General Dr. Humoud Fulaitch Al-Shimmari for their continued support of Kuwait shooting.

Qatar to test new stadium during Club World Cup

DOHA: Qatar will inaugurate the third of its eight World Cup stadiums when the Education City ground hosts the Club World Cup semi-final tie on December 18, FIFA said yesterday. The 40,000-seat venue seven kilometres outside central Doha will also host the third-place play-off and the final of the tournament which gets underway on Dec 11. The inaugural game will see Liverpool, as European champions, face either CONCACAF Champions League winners Monterrey, Al Sadd of Qatar or minnows Hienghene Sport of New Caledonia who are Oceania champions.

The 2022 hosts have so far inaugurated the newly-built Al-Janoub stadium in May, as well as the Khalifa International stadium which opened in 1976 and was relaunched in 2017 after a full refurbishment. "With all three venues located a maximum of 12 km from central Doha, the FIFA Club World Cup 2019 will provide a glimpse of Qatar's compact nature ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2022," FIFA said in a statement.

"Taking place around the same time of the year and with matches kicking off from 17:00 local time (1400 GMT), this year's tournament will also give teams and fans alike the chance to experience Qatar's mild winter." Average temperatures are expected to range between 15 and 24 Celsius, it added.

Hassan Al-Thawadi, the secretary general of Qatar's Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, said following Al-Janoub's opening in May that two further new stadiums would be ready "by the end of this year (or) first quarter" 2020. The exact date would depend on the timing of events to launch the two venues, he added. "By 2021 all our stadiums will be ready," he said. — AFP

Binotto faces Ferrari headache after Russia implosion

SOCHI: Ferrari team chief Mattia Binotto had every reason to read the riot act yesterday after the Italian team handed an unexpected triumph to Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes in Sunday's Russian Grand Prix. As he reviewed events at the Sochi Autodrom and scanned Italy's reaction to Ferrari's largely self-inflicted defeat, Binotto may also have felt a chronic driver headache coming on.

Ferrari have developed the fastest car but it is Mercedes and Hamilton who are heading for the titles again. The classic partnership of old master, in the form of four-time champion Sebastian Vettel, and young pretender, Charles Leclerc, has been heating up all season as Leclerc outperforms his venerable teammate.

On Sunday, it boiled over from a sporting duel into a more fierce and personal rivalry. The dispute, or misunderstanding depending on your viewpoint, cost Ferrari a victory and a probable one-two and handed both prizes to their rivals as Hamilton came home ahead of Valtteri Bottas.

Vettel, who benefitted from a slipstream provided by Leclerc on the opening lap to take the lead, defied team orders by ignoring instructions to let the younger man go by — arguing that he would be threatened by Hamilton if he did and adding that he had taken the initiative with his own speed.

Many critics on social media accused him of deceit. "I stuck to the agreement," said Vettel, revitalised in Sochi after his first win in 13 months a week earlier in Singapore. "I spoke with Charles before the race and it was all quite clear."

Leclerc, who criticised Ferrari for giving Vettel an "under-cut" pit-stop in Singapore that enabled him to take control and victory, was circumspect in his criticism. "There was no reason to take risks because we planned to swap back and that's why I didn't fight him," he explained, adding that he needed to discuss the incident in more detail with the team.

Leclerc had started from his fourth consecutive pole position and Ferrari knew he deserved better — thus calling him in four laps earlier than the leader to have a tyre advantage. It worked, but when Vettel suffered an engine failure, a Virtual Safety Car (VSC) intervention handed a free pit-stop and victory to Hamilton, leaving Leclerc to rescue a podium finish for Ferrari on a day when their reliability, strategy and team management failed.

Seasoned Italian reporters suggested it revealed 'open war' between the drivers with Corriere dello Sport referring to the 'growing arrogance' of Leclerc and 'old' Vettel's proud perfectionism. Tuttosport described the mood as 'poisonous' and called on Binotto to 'finally set a clear strategy.'

Genial and softly-spoken, Binotto on Sunday evaded any confrontation on the division between his drivers. "It went as we agreed and we thought it was right to ask Seb to swap," he explained. "We did it, in the end, at the pit stop." — AFP