

Sports

# Bo Horvat's overtime winner gives Canucks 2-0 lead in playoff series

## Flames outlast Stars, take 2-1 series lead

**EDMONTON:** Bo Horvat's second goal of the game was the overtime winner as the Vancouver Canucks regrouped from blowing a third-period lead to beat the St. Louis Blues 4-3 on Friday in Edmonton and take a 2-0 lead in their opening-round Western Conference playoff series. The defending champion Blues, who sat atop the Western Conference when the league paused in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, have yet to win a game since play resumed. Horvat took a breakaway feed from Quinn Hughes and buried a shot at 5:55 of the extra frame to stun the Blues. St. Louis' Jaden Schwartz collected the tying goal with 6.4 seconds remaining in regulation to force overtime when a point shot from David Perron went off his leg and into the net. Officials originally waved off the goal due to a high stick, but the call was overturned after a review.

York, which beat Washington in Toronto to take a two-games-to-none lead. The Islanders hold a 2-0 series edge in the first round for the second straight year. New York swept the Pittsburgh Penguins last spring. Nick Leddy and Matt Martin scored the first two goals in the second for the Islanders, who received insurance goals late in the third from Cal Clutterbuck and Anders Lee. New York goalie Semyon Varlamov made 23 saves. Alex Ovechkin scored twice while goalie Braden Holtby recorded 27 saves for the Capitals, who are down two games to none in a series for the first time since the first round of the 2018 playoffs. That time, Washington



Last hurrah



**EDMONTON:** Bo Horvat #53 of the Vancouver Canucks scores the game winner at 5:55 of overtime against Jordan Binnington #50 of the St. Louis Blues in Game Two of the Western Conference First Round during the 2020 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at Rogers Place. — AFP

### FLAMES 2, STARS 0

Mikael Backlund and T.J. Brodie both scored while goaltender Cam Talbot sparkled in net as Calgary beat Dallas in Edmonton to take a 2-1 advantage in their opening-round Stanley Cup playoff series. Talbot made 35 saves — 16 of them in the second period alone — to record his fourth career playoff shutout and second this postseason. Backlund opened the scoring for the Flames with a short-handed tally amidst a one-sided second period that was dominated by the Stars. It was the 10th consecutive game in which the Stars surrendered the first goal.

### ISLANDERS 5, CAPITALS 2

Brock Nelson's breakaway go-ahead goal capped a frantic flurry early in the second period of Game 2 of the Eastern Conference quarterfinals for New

won the next four games against the Columbus Blue Jackets and went on to win the Stanley Cup.

### AVALANCHE 3, COYOTES 2

Andre Burakovsky scored the go-ahead goal with 2:53 remaining in the third period to lift Colorado to a victory over Arizona in Game 2 of their Western Conference first-round series in Edmonton. Nathan MacKinnon and Tyson Jost also scored, and Philipp Grubauer made 30 saves for the Avalanche, who have secured a 2-0 lead in the best-

of-seven series. Clayton Keller and Michael Grabner replied for the Coyotes. Darcy Kuemper turned aside 25 shots in the defeat.

### CANADIENS 5, FLYERS 0

Tomas Tatar and Jesperi Kotkanen each scored twice and goaltender Carey Price stopped all 30 shots he faced Friday as Montreal blanked Philadelphia to even their Eastern Conference first-round series 1-1 in Toronto. The shutout was the

seventh of Price's playoff career, and his second of this postseason. He blanked Pittsburgh on 22 shots in a 2-0 win in the qualifying round. Joel Armia also scored and Max Domi had three assists for the Canadiens. The Flyers had won their first four games of the postseason before the shutout. Goaltender Carter Hart allowed four goals on 26 shots before leaving in the second period. Center Travis Konecny left the game in the third period after blocking a shot off his left foot. — Reuters

## Miami's Jones stretchered off in NBA loss to Pacers

**MIAMI:** The Indiana Pacers beat Miami 109-92 on Friday in a preview of their upcoming NBA playoff clash that took a frightening turn when Heat forward Derrick Jones Jr. was stretchered off the court. With top players from both teams sitting out in anticipation of their already-booked first-round playoff series next week, Doug McDermott led the Pacers with 23 points in a victory that officially gave Indiana the Eastern Conference fourth seed to Miami's No. 5.

With all games being played in the NBA's quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida, the higher seed and its "home court" advantage was of little import, making the injury to Jones much more of a concern for Miami.

"It just takes the air out of the building," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said of seeing Jones go down hard in the third quarter after he crashed into Indiana's 2.1m, 113kg Georgian center Goga Bitadze as he tried to round a screen.

Jones was on the floor for several minutes before he was placed on a stretcher with a neck brace, the Heat saying later Friday that MRI and CT scans showed he had a neck strain. "He got jarred in the shoulder-neck area," Spoelstra said. "Obviously a little bit more than a stinger."

It was precisely the scenario all the teams wrapping up regular season action on Friday were trying to avoid, with the first-round playoff series matchups virtually set. The only thing left to be decided by this weekend's play-in series is whether Memphis or Portland will claim the final Western Conference berth and take on the West-leading



**LAKE BUENA VISTA:** Aaron Holiday #3 of the Indiana Pacers passes the ball against Kyle Alexander #17 and Kendrick Nunn #25 of the Miami Heat during the second half of a NBA basketball game at AdventHealth Arena at ESPN Wide World Of Sports Complex in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. — AFP

Los Angeles Lakers.

"Even as competitors, you don't want it on either side," Spoelstra said. "You just want to be able to have everybody available for the playoffs."

Spoelstra had held out Jimmy Butler, Bam Adebayo, Goran Dragic, Jae Crowder and Andre Iguodala. The Pacers, who were without T.J. Warren, Victor Oladipo and Myles Turner, led much of the game, buoyed by 23 points from Doug McDermott.

Six Pacers players scored in double-figures. That included Malcolm Brogdon, the only regular Pacers starter in the lineup, who scored 16. Second-year forward Alize Johnson got his first career start and produced a double-double of 11 points and 17 rebounds.

Pakistan were in danger of being dismissed for under 200 at 176-8. But Mohammad Abbas gave Rizwan staunch support with two off 20 balls during a stand of 39 before he was lbw to Stuart Broad. Fortunately for the umpires, in a series being played behind closed doors because of the coronavirus, there were no angry spectators present when they decided it was unsafe to continue.

"We're a little bit frustrated we didn't get a chance to finish them off," said England great James Anderson, whose return of 3-48 left him just seven shy of becoming the first pacesman to take 600 wickets in Tests.

"The light has been gloomy all day but it's one of those when it didn't seem like the batsmen were struggling too much." Anderson was sceptical about using a different coloured ball to keep Test-match play going under floodlights, suggesting instead that officials be given a "bit more leeway" in their use of light meters.

### 'RIGHT TO GO OFF'

Meanwhile new-ball colleague Broad sympathised with umpires Michael Gough and Richard Kettleborough. "It's a tricky one because player safety is very important," said Broad after a return of 3-56 in 25 overs saw him become the seventh England bowler to take three wickets in seven consecutive Test innings.

"As bowlers you're keen to bowl all the time," especially in conditions like today. "The officials were right to bring us off...all of our fielders were saying we wouldn't want to bat in this, this is quite dark," he added.

In overcast conditions ideally suited to England's four-man pace attack, Pakistan creditably did not lose a wicket in the hour's play that was possible in a morning session curtailed by rain to be 155-5 at lunch. — AFP

### RAPTORS BEAT NUGGETS

Reigning champions Toronto, the second seeds in the East, closed out the regular season with a 117-109 victory over the Denver Nuggets. Norman Powell led the Raptors with 15 points and Spanish big man Marc Gasol added two points for Toronto, who opted to rest stars Kyle Lowry, Pascal Siakam and Fred VanVleet. Serge Ibaka and OG Anunoby also missed the game, with Raptors coach Nick Nurse saying both were still battling knee injuries. Nuggets stars Nikola Jokic and Jamal Murray played just 10 minutes apiece, Jokic scoring two points and Murray 11 with reserve point guard Monte Morris scoring 16. — AFP

## Serena falls to Rogers at US Open tuneup

**WASHINGTON:** Serena Williams suffered her first loss since 2012 to a rival outside the WTA's top 100, falling to fellow American Shelby Rogers in a Friday quarter-final at the Top Seed Open.

Rogers, ranked 116th, outlasted ninth-ranked Williams 1-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7/5) after two hours and seven minutes, finishing the 23-time Grand Slam champion with a service winner.

"It's every kid's dream growing up to be able to do something like that," Rogers said. "Weird circumstances. Weird surroundings. But a win is a win." The US Open hardcourt tuneup event at Lexington, Kentucky, is being staged in a quarantine bubble due to the COVID-19 pandemic that had kept Williams idle since a February Fed Cup appearance.

Top seed Williams had not lost to a player outside the top 100 since falling to France's Virginie Razzano in the first round of the 2012 French Open.

Williams, who ousted sister Venus on Thursday, was playing matches to prepare for the US Open, which starts August 31. She will seek a seventh title on the New York hardcourts to match Margaret Court's all-time record of 24 Grand Slam crowns.

"I have only good things to take," Williams said. "I can play a lot better."

Rogers reached her first WTA semi-final since Rio in 2016. She'll face 63rd-ranked Swiss left-hander Jil Teichmann, who ousted American Catherine Bellis 6-2, 6-4. —AFP

## Pakistan's Rizwan shines on frustrating day against England

**SOUTHAMPTON:** Mohammad Rizwan was left frustrated when having shone for Pakistan with a fine unbeaten fifty in the second Test against England at Southampton on Friday, he was forced to leave the field for bad light.

Pakistan were 223-9 at stumps on the second day, with Rizwan 60 not out just as he started to up the tempo of his innings with only last man Naseem Shah for company. Even though the Ageas Bowl floodlights were on, the umpires took the players off the field 10 minutes after tea with bad weather, as it did on Thursday, causing several interruptions.

This was the latest example of bad light stopping play in a Test even when floodlights are in use. Whereas batsmen could once stay on even if 'offered' the light by the umpires, since 2010 the match officials alone decide to halt a Test should they deem the conditions too dark.

### 'READY TO PLAY'

"I was ready to play but the decision rests with the umpires, and they have the responsibility to ensure no one gets injured," Rizwan told reporters after marking Pakistan's Independence Day with a second fifty in eight career Tests following his 95 against Australia in Brisbane in November. "They have to go by the light meter. It's the same for both teams," added the wicketkeeper, who impressed behind the stumps during Pakistan's three-wicket defeat in last week's first Test at Old Trafford.

## Europa League no longer a consolation prize for European giants

**COLOGNE:** The Europa League may not be able to match the riches and glamour of the Champions League, but the presence of Manchester United and Inter Milan in the semi-finals is further evidence that Europe's giants are increasingly taking the competition seriously.

United and Sevilla, who face off in Sunday's first semi-final, have already benefited from the introduction of a place in the Champions League for the Europa League winners in 2015, but with Ukrainian champions Shakhtar Donetsk facing Inter in the other semi-final tomorrow, all four sides remaining have already secured their places in the Champions League next season.

Instead, it is the prestige of a European trophy and prize money that is driving the ambitions of the semi-finalists despite the eerie atmosphere with all games behind closed doors in northern Germany.

"I think it's so important to win because every player needs to understand how it is to win a trophy for Manchester United," said Bruno Fernandes, whose extra-time penalty saw the English giants squeeze past FC Copenhagen in the quarter-finals.

"I think if we finish with a trophy, it will not be perfect, but it will be a good year for us because Manchester United needs to come back again to win some trophies and fight for the European competitions." United have not won a trophy since they lifted the Europa League for the first time in 2017.

Sevilla are the kings of this competition, winning it five times since 2006, but have not claimed any silverware since they last lifted the Europa League in 2016.

Inter have made giant strides towards closing the gap to Juventus in Antonio Conte's first season in charge, but are also seeking their first trophy since 2011.

### PRIZE MONEY PEAKS INTEREST

The presence of United and Inter means there will be more previous Champions League winners in the Europa League semi-finals than UEFA's premier club competition in Lisbon. But European football's governing body has peaked the interest of the continent's biggest clubs with increased prize money in the Europa League in recent seasons.

Spanish and English clubs have combined to win the competition for the past eight years. The 560 million euros (\$660 million) distributed among clubs in the Europa League is still just a quarter of the 2 billion euro pot for the Champions League, but provides a significant financial boost, particularly with the coronavirus pandemic squeezing clubs' finances on matchday income.

Chelsea pocketed 46 million euros for winning the competition last season, whilst those dropping into the Europa League from the Champions League as Inter and Shakhtar did this season stand to win even more. — AFP