

Sports

Bills beat Chiefs in grudge match, Bucs down Dolphins

Falcons beat Jets in London; Patriots bounce back

LOS ANGELES: The Buffalo Bills avenged their defeat in last season's American Conference title game on Sunday with a convincing 38-20 NFL victory over the Chiefs in Kansas City. Buffalo quarterback Josh Allen out-duelled counterpart Patrick Mahomes in a game that included a weather delay of more than an hour, torching the vaunted Chiefs offense for 315 yards and three touchdown passes.

Allen also rushed for 62 yards and a TD as Mahomes delivered one of his worst NFL performances. He threw two interceptions, the second — off the hands of Tyreek Hill — was returned 26 yards for a third quarter touchdown that swelled the Bills' lead to 31-13. Mahomes also gave up a fumble late in the fourth quarter that extinguished all hopes of an unlikely Chiefs rally.



Cowboys thump hurting Giants

Outstanding Brady

The defeat dropped the Chiefs to 2-3, the first time since 2015 that they have been below .500. To make matters worse, Chiefs running back Clyde Edwards-Helaire departed the game with a right knee injury in the third quarter. With the Chiefs languishing in last place in the AFC West division, Buffalo improved to 4-1 with a their fourth straight victory to solidify their hold on the top spot in the AFC East.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers, who beat the Chiefs in last season's Super Bowl, also improved to 4-1 with the help of another outstanding performance from quarterback Tom Brady and a record-setting day for receiver Antonio Brown.



KANSAS CITY: Josh Allen #17 of the Buffalo Bills leaps over the defense of L'Jarvis Snead #38 of the Kansas City Chiefs during the second half of a game at Arrowhead Stadium on Sunday in Kansas City, Missouri. — AFP

There was no letdown for the Super Bowl champion Bucs as they returned home after Brady's emotional win against his old team, New England, in Massachusetts last week. Brady completed 30-of-41 passes for 411 yards and five touchdowns in a 45-17 victory over the Miami Dolphins, despite injuring his right thumb early in the contest. Two of those scoring passes were to Brown, who became the fastest player in NFL history to reach 900 receptions when he made his first catch on Sunday, off a 10-yard first-quarter toss from Brady.

Brown, 33, reached the mark in his 143rd NFL game to beat Hall of Fame receiver Marvin Harrison, who did it over 149 games in a 13-season career with the Indianapolis Colts. "It's pretty amazing," Brady said of Brown's feat. "I've played with some great quarterbacks," said Brown, an 11th-year pro. "(Ben) Roethlisberger. Tom Brady. It's a blessing."

Mike Evans also caught two touchdown passes for the Bucs, who trailed the Dolphins 10-7 in the first quarter before Brown and Brady heated up. On a third and three yards play from their own 37-yard line, Brown

beat Pro Bowl cornerback Xavien Howard up the middle, caught a short pass from Brady and raced for a 62-yard touchdown. In the second quarter Tampa Bay capped a 77-yard drive with a four-yard touchdown pass from Brady to Brown in the end zone.

Elsewhere, Matt Ryan completed 33-of-45 passes for 342 yards and two touchdowns to spark the Atlanta Falcons over the New York Jets 27-20 at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London. Greg Joseph kicked a 54-yard field goal on the final play to give Minnesota a 19-17 home victory over winless Detroit.

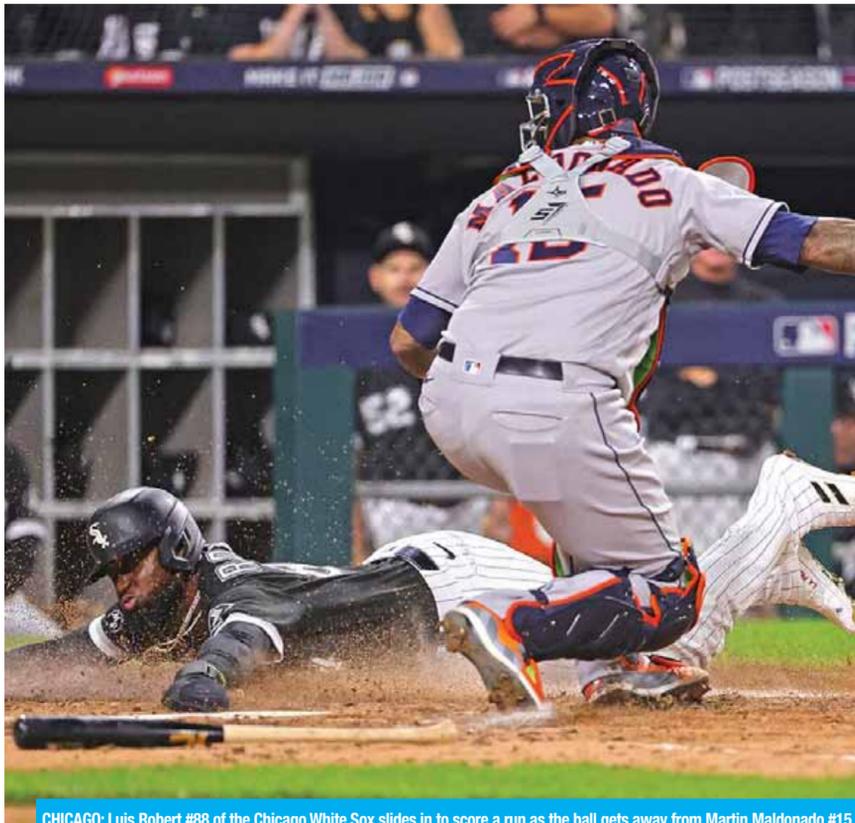
The Patriots bounced back from their loss to the Bucs as Nick Folk kicked a 21-yard field goal with 15 seconds remaining to give New England a 25-22 victory at Houston. In Cincinnati, Green Bay's Aaron Rodgers threw for 344 yards and two touchdowns in the Packers' 25-22 over-time triumph over the Bengals.

It wasn't decided until after five consecutive missed field goals starting with 2:12 to play in the fourth quarter. Mason Crosby finally connecting on a 49-yarder after three misses to win for Green Bay. Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow was taken to hospital as a precaution after the game with a possible throat contusion. Burrow, who took a hard hit early, completed the game, throwing two touchdowns and two interceptions.

Cowboys cruise

It was a bruising day for the New York Giants, who were beaten 44-20 by the Dallas Cowboys and saw star running back Saquon Barkley depart on a cart in the first quarter with an ankle injury. Giants quarterback Daniel Jones took a helmet-to-helmet hit from Jabril Cox and after struggling to stand up left the game with what was later confirmed as a concussion, and wide receiver Kenny Golladay was ruled out with a knee injury after halftime.

Elsewhere, the Arizona Cardinals maintained the league's only unbeaten record with a 17-10 victory over the San Francisco 49ers and the Chargers ended the Cleveland Browns' three-game winning streak with a 47-42 victory in a shoot-out in Los Angeles. — AFP



CHICAGO: Luis Robert #88 of the Chicago White Sox slides in to score a run as the ball gets away from Martin Maldonado #15 of the Houston Astros at Guaranteed Rate Field on Sunday in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

White Sox stay alive in playoffs, Red Sox push Rays to brink

LOS ANGELES: The Chicago White Sox stayed alive in the Major League Baseball playoffs, roaring back from four runs down to beat the Houston Astros 12-6 in their American League division series on Sunday. Facing elimination at their home ballpark, the White Sox rallied once, lost the lead and rallied again to cut the deficit in the best-of-five series to 2-1.

The Astros had arrived in Chicago eyeing a sweep after winning the first two games in Houston. Houston's Kyle Tucker doubled in two runs in a three-run second inning and smacked a two-run home run in the third as Houston took a 5-1 lead.

But Yasmani Grandal hit a two-run homer off Houston starter Luis Garcia to trim the deficit to 5-3. And Leury Garcia hit a three-run home run off Astros reliever Yimi Garcia to put the White Sox up 6-5. Houston responded, Alex Bregman driving in a run with two out in the fourth inning to knot the score at 6-6. In the bottom of the fourth, Jose Abreu put Chicago back in front with a run-scoring single that sent Luis Robert to third base.

Houston brought in relief pitcher Zack Greinke, who induced Grandal to ground out. Astros first baseman Yuli Gurriel threw to home plate on the play, but the ball deflected off Grandal's arm, allowing Robert to score. Houston argued the play in vain and Abreu, who had advanced to third on the play, scored on a hit from Eloy Jimenez.

"I think we made a statement," Grandal said after the White Sox padded their lead with three runs in the eighth. "We were down by four, but you've got to play the whole game. We've been doing this all year. We had big comebacks and the fact that we did it there, I feel like we have the momentum back — and that's all we need."

Rays on brink

In Boston, Christian Vazquez crushed a walk-off two-run home run over the Green Monster outfield wall to lift the Red Sox to a 6-4, 13-inning win over Tampa Bay that pushed the defending American League champion Rays to the brink of elimination.

The victory gave Boston a 2-1 lead in the best-of-five series, making Monday's game at Fenway Park a must-win for the Rays. The Red Sox withstood a trademark late challenge from the Rays, who rallied for two runs in the eighth inning to tie the game, then squandered chances in the 10th and 11th innings. Boston also got a lucky break in the top of the 13th, when it appeared that a hit from Tampa Bay's Kevin Kiermaier had scored Yandi Diaz from first base with a hard-hit ball to the warning track. But the ball bounced off Boston rightfielder Hunter Renfroe and back over a low rightfield wall, and after the umpires discussed it, Diaz was sent back to third base and Kiermaier to second as the play was ruled a ground-rule double. MLB rules stipulate a ball that deflects off a player and into foul territory is a ground-rule double.

So it was still tied 4-4 when Vazquez came to the plate against Rays relief pitcher Luis Patino in the bottom of the 13th and delivered a towering shot. "I was just watching all the at-bats before me," Vazquez said. "He was throwing a lot of fastballs. He's got a heavy fastball so I was ready for that fastball in the middle — to drive it." — AFP

Expansion Kraken expect to be competitive from day one

LOS ANGELES: Jason Botterill spent seven seasons playing in the National Hockey League including stints in non-traditional hockey markets like Atlanta and Dallas where they had to build contenders from the bottom up. So when the NHL's newest expansion franchise, the Seattle Kraken, went looking for front office talent, Botterill was a natural choice to be their new assistant general manager.

"I was a part of Atlanta the first year. I have seen different organizations from their infancy," Botterill told AFP. "Compared to Atlanta we (Kraken) had more players available at the expansion draft. I saw us develop loyal passionate fans in the Dallas area. We are at a big advantage in our market here. There are already a lot of knowledgeable hockey fans in Seattle. They have had a successful junior team here for long time. That will help us from the get go."

The Kraken are the NHL's 32nd team and will compete in the Pacific Division. They open the regular season today in Las Vegas against the Golden Knights. When it came to brand new teams in the NHL, losing used to be the norm. That is until the Golden Knights rewrote the playbook for expansion teams and made it all the way to the Stanley Cup finals in their inaugural 2017-18 season. So will the Kraken be like the Golden Knights or fall back into what expansion teams used to be and take their lumps like the 1974-75 Washington Capitals, who won just eight games all season. Botterill says what the Kraken lack in star power this season they will make up for in depth and versatility.

'Versatile line-up'

"You look at some of the players we acquired (Jordan) Eberle, (Jaden) Schwartz and (Mark) Giordano. We were looking for guys with good high end hockey sense," Botterill said. "We don't have a (Connor) McDavid or a (Nathan) MacKinnon. It will be important to find depth throughout our lineup. We tried to put a premium on the versatility of players to create this lineup." Seattle's roster is a mixture of veterans and young talent. The player with the most experience is Giordano, who spent 15 years with the Calgary Flames. The 38-year old veteran is looking forward to a fresh start with a new team.

"It's a pretty cool experience for all of us," Giordano told NHL.com. "Most years you come back to a team, there's 13, 14 guys that you played with the

year before. This year, none of us have played together." Former Edmonton Oiler forward Eberle said training camp was much different than other teams he played on and it came with an added level of excitement. "All the guys were here earlier than I've seen groups on other teams come in," he said. "We were all here two weeks in advance of camp. That bonding was huge."

Former Philadelphia Flyers general manager Russ Farwell said the Kraken wasted no time getting their name out in the community. "The city is really excited," said Farwell, who runs the major junior Seattle Thunderbirds club. "They have done a wonderful job of marketing the team. You see their logo everywhere. I think they will make it work."

Fairweather town

Once the initial novelty of a new NHL franchise wears off, Farwell said the Kraken success will hinge on whether they are able to deliver a winning team. "This is a bit of a fairweather town. It depends on how they do," Farwell told AFP.

Farwell was surprised the Kraken didn't make more deals around the time of the expansion draft. Botterill said the Kraken, who paid a \$650 million expansion fee, made up for a lack of trades by signing free agents. "Ron (GM Francis) did a great job of overseeing that," Botterill said. "It is a different environment from when Vegas came in. We didn't have the same number of trades as Vegas, but we were more aggressive from our free agency standpoint."

"It is difficult to predict with an expansion team but with the resources we had, the players we got in free agency and players we got in the expansion draft, we think we are going to be competitive from day one."

Season ticket holder John Harrison said the Kraken have taken the city by storm. "This city is crazy for the Seattle Seahawks and eventually it is going to be the same thing for Kraken," said Harrison. "They will have a rabid fan base which will support them and even help them win games."

Harrison said two things working in favor of the Kraken are a downtown rink and Seattle's reputation as one of the US's major tech hubs. "Downtown Seattle is growing and getting more pricey. The season ticket base is people who work for Amazon and Google. People in their 30s, living downtown," he said. — AFP



CALGARY: In this file photo taken on September 29, 2021 the Seattle Kraken celebrate after defeating the Calgary Flames 2-1 in shootout during an NHL preseason game at Scotiabank Saddledome in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. — AFP