

Daily

Sports

NHL: Western Conference Final Game 1 recap

by Ben Berg
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The NHL Western Conference Final began Sunday night with the Dallas Stars jumping out to a 1-0 lead in the best-of-seven series against the Vegas Golden Knights. The Stars entered the conference finals coming off a Game 7 victory against the Colorado Avalanche and a first-round series with the Calgary Flames. Meanwhile, Vegas came off a Game 7 victory against the Vancouver Canucks and a first-round matchup with the Chicago Blackhawks.

On Sunday night, Stars captain Jamie Benn's shot was blocked at the hash marks by a Vegas player, but Stars defenseman John Klingberg picked up the rebound and sent a wrist shot past goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury for the 1-0 lead at 2:36 of the first period. In a tightly contested, defensive-minded game, that early goal would prove to be the game-winner as the Stars held on for the 1-0 shutout victory.

The Dallas Stars, though far from the favorite coming into the playoffs, are a tough team to beat right now. They can score goals in bunches and don't allow many in their own net either. They currently have five players with 12 or more points in their 17 playoff games, with defenseman Miro Heiskanen's 21 (5G, 16A) leading all players left in the playoffs. Likewise, they are scoring on 27.3% of their power play opportunities, which is the highest mark of any remaining playoff team. They are also getting excellent goaltending from their



Dallas Stars players celebrate their 1-0 win over the Vegas Golden Knights after an NHL Western Conference final playoff hockey game, in Edmonton, Alberta, Sunday, Sept. 6, 2020. PHOTO BY JASON FRANSON, THE CANADIAN PRESS VIA AP

backup-turned-starter Anton Khudobin, who took over for an injured Ben Bishop in the first round. Khudobin has gone 9-5 in the playoffs, with a .914 save percentage, while leading his team to within three games of the Stanley Cup Final.

Though Vegas has also gotten excellent goaltending throughout the postseason, they are mired in a scoring slump they'll need to escape if they want to go to the Stanley Cup Final for the second time in their three seasons. In their past four games

this postseason, the Golden Knights have scored only two non-empty net goals, and only one was at 5-on-5. Both goals came from defenseman Shea Theodore, who leads Vegas in scoring with 16 points in 16 playoff games. Though their best player, Mark Stone, has been stellar in the playoffs with 15 points and outstanding defensive play, Vegas needs more offense from their other star forwards William Karlsson (3G, 5A), Jonathan Marchessault (3G, 6A) and Max Pacioretty

(5G, 2A). Despite having trouble scoring, their goalies have been stellar thus far. Starter Robin Lehner has gone 8-4 with a .918 save percentage while Marc-Andre Fleury has gone 3-1 with a .910 save percentage. Though Lehner was outstanding against the Canucks in the second round with three shutouts in seven games, Fleury drew the Game 1 start because he was more well-rested. Vegas is likely to turn back to Lehner for Game 2.

Game 2 is on Tuesday, Sept. 8 at 8:00 p.m. EST.

LEAGUE OF LEGENDS: VINDICATION

by Ashton Stansel
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There are moments in sports when you can see a game being won. A quarterback makes a game-winning touchdown pass, a baseball is hit for a grand slam or a basketball player goes for a three-point shot at the buzzer. Those are the big moments, the win-or-lose attempts that go down in history. But what gets forgotten are all the moments that led to that one. It's the smaller plays; the passes that got the quarterback to the position he was in. The shots that kept the basketball game close until that game-winning basket. There are ten, twenty, fifty moments in a game that change its entire course.

In North American and European League of Legends this weekend, there were numerous moments where you could almost see the game hanging on a thread, where one step forward or backwards from any team would be the difference between victory and defeat, between going down in history for being a team who won it all, or for being a team who only almost did.

In Europe, it was once again the Caps Show. The Summer MVP, Caps spent most of his split carrying G2 through difficult game after difficult game, giving incredible performances on carry champions like LeBlanc and Zoe. In the lower bracket finals on Saturday, his performances on Zoe and Syndra were key to getting G2 a hard-fought 3-2 series win over Rogue. While his team did show some impressive plays (Perkz had solid performances on both Ashe and Senna, and Wunder showed off good Shen play), it was clear throughout the series that Caps was the winning moment for G2. If he showed up, they could take it all. If he didn't, they almost certainly would have been defeated.

On Sunday, G2 played in the Grand Finals against the upper bracket winners, Fnatic. Fnatic defeated G2 last weekend in the upper bracket finals, meaning they were the favorite heading into the finals to face off one last time this split. Despite this, G2 beat Fnatic in three consecutive games, claiming their fourth LEC title in a row. The games in the finals were not blowouts; Fnatic had plenty of moments in every game where it looked like they had a chance. They were never able to capitalize on these moments and turn them into wins, momentum and victory.

This was in large part thanks to Caps once again dominating, ending the series with a truly terrifying 27/9/19 KDA. He claimed the player of the series award and his sixth title in a row, since he won two-in-a-row on Fnatic before joining G2 for this four-in-a-row streak with Europe's kings. Now, G2 turns their eyes towards Worlds, looking to replicate their impressive 2019 run and maybe, just maybe, actually finish it out.

See LEAGUE, p. 9

NBA Weekend Roundup: Keeping things close

by Conner Gilson
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This weekend carried some major implications for the NBA Playoffs. In the Eastern Conference, the Heat and Celtics had the opportunity to take commanding leads of their respective series, while in the Western Conference, the Lakers, Rockets, Nuggets and Clippers were all looking to take the early lead. But six games later at the time of writing, three series are deadlocked and only one (sorry Bucks fans) looks to be over, setting the table for an incredibly intriguing and decisive week.

The Bucks-Heat series kicked off the festivities on Friday, with Miami holding a 2-0 lead on the No. 1 seeded Bucks. Through three quarters though, it looked like Milwaukee had finally figured out the matchup, as they entered the fourth with a 12-point lead. But after deciding to sit reigning MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo — who had injured his ankle earlier in the game — to start the final quarter, things took a turn for the worst for Milwaukee. The Heat caught fire early and never looked back, posting an insane 40-13 quarter, and stretching their series lead to 3-0 on the back of another 30-piece from Jimmy Butler.

The two teams met again Sunday, and with the series on the line, Antetokounmpo came out swinging. The Greek Freak scored 19 points in his first 11 minutes played, but after a collision with the Heat's Andre Iguodala,

reaggravated his ankle injury and was forced to leave the contest. With Antetokounmpo out, it was Khris Middleton who stepped up and willed the team to keep it close against a complete Miami offense, highlighted by an insane 23-point third quarter that cut the Bucks' deficit to three. A back and forth final quarter saw Middleton and Heat rookie Tyler Herro go toe-to-toe trading buckets, but it was the Bucks who came out on top in OT to at least force a fifth game. Antetokounmpo is questionable for that matchup, diagnosed with a sprained ankle.

Next up on Friday was the first meeting of the highly touted Rockets-Lakers series. The Rockets' historically small lineup facing off against a team composed of LeBron James, Anthony Davis and Javale McGee was poised to turn some heads, and did not disappoint.

In their first meeting Friday, the Lakers had no answer for James Harden and Russell Westbrook. The three-time scoring champion poured in 36 points and five assists while Westbrook added 24 points and another six assists on his own. Their small-ball lineup got whatever they wanted on offense, simply outplaying LeBron and the Lakers en route to a 112-97 victory. But we saw LA stumble out of the gate against the Blazers as well, so no one was ready to count them out just yet, and rightly so.

See LAKERS, p. 9



Milwaukee Bucks' Khris Middleton looks to pass around Miami Heat's Jae Crowder during overtime of an NBA conference semifinal playoff basketball game Sunday, Sept. 6, 2020, in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. PHOTO BY MARK J. TERRILL, AP

WHAT TO KEEP AN EYE ON THIS WEEK

Games we're watching this week



Lakers



Rockets

Teams we're paying attention to



MIAMI HEAT

Athletes we're paying attention to

Giannis Antetokounmpo

INSTAGRAM OF THE DAY



@MLB
Back-to-back Cy Youngs and eyes on a third. Will Jacob deGrom end up in Cooperstown?

TWEETS OF THE DAY



Cara Jeffrey

@cara_jeffrey

I hope that one day someone talks about me the way that Keith Hernandez talks about Michael Conforto

SNY

@SNYtv

Players with an OPS > 1.000, 30+ RBI, and at least half of their hits going for extra bases:

Mike Trout

Dom Smith

Follow The Daily Campus @dcSportsDept

Ty's Premier League Predictions

by Ty Reeves | CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | ty.reeves@uconn.edu

5TH PLACE: MANCHESTER UNITED

The Premier League season is just five days away as multiple teams look to compete to earn the title of Premier League Champion. Over the next five days, I will go through which teams I believe are locks to finish in the top five this season. To start off, I have Manchester United finishing in fifth place. Now, many people may say I'm crazy, but this isn't Project Restart. This is a full-length season: Premier League play, multiple competitions and Champions League football, which means there's a ton of soccer to be played. The real question is, does United have the legs to last them all season?

Last season was successful in the eyes of Manchester United. They finished in the top four in the Premier League, securing Champions League football and the arrival of Bruno Fernandes. Who knew United fans would be so excited for fourth place after bantering Arsenal fans for years upon years for the same placement? It looks like United is finally heading in the right direction.

I have United finishing fifth for a couple of reasons. The main reason is the lack of quality in their defensive third. Now, most supporters will say they have a "world-class" center back in Harry Maguire, but to me, he has not lived up to the 80-million euro price tag United paid for him. Not to mention, the defender's activities off the field have not helped him. Maguire was recently arrested in Greece for aggravated assault, resisting arrest and bribery. He is facing a suspended jail sentence of 21 months, but has come out and said he was a victim of police brutality. Maguire has recently arrived back at the Manchester United training ground as the outcome of the situation is still uncertain.

The center back position is somewhere United needs to improve, with their depth in that position being subpar. It looks like Chris Smalling will be joining Italian club Roma on a permanent deal after spending the past season with the club on loan. Maguire and Victor Lindelof look set to be the starting duo for the season opener with Eric Bailly attempting to force his way back into the team.

Now those are three experienced defenders that know the league well, but as I stated earlier, it's a long season. Injuries occur and fitness levels drop. At some point, two out of those three won't be fit to play, so who's next on the depth chart? No other than the meme god himself Phil Jones. As experienced as Jones is, he is known more for his mistakes than for his play as a defender. After Jones, United's last option is Marcos Rojo. The Argentinian has been at Manchester United for the last six years and hasn't made a huge impact on the squad. To say the least, United needs to improve their center back play if they want to last down the stretch.

It seems United have found their right back for years to come in Aaron Wan-Bissaka. The 22-year-old racked up the most tackles in the Premier League last season and showed he's one of the best one-on-one de-

fenders. However, the Red Devils still have uncertainty at the left back position. Luke Shaw has dealt with injury problems and has shown he struggles with one-on-one defending at times. Youngster Brandon Williams came into the light last season and looks to challenge for the starting spot, but the 20-year-old lacks experience and has a tendency to get caught out in attacking positions.

Going forward, any fan of the game should get excited looking at United's midfield and attack. Bruno Fernandes came in and made an instant impact on the United squad, while the transfer rumors surrounding World Cup winner Paul Pogba have seemed to disappear as the Frenchman looks to stay at United. To add some depth in the midfield, Manchester United added Donny Van De Beek from Dutch club Ajax. With Nemanja Matic, Scott McTominay, Fred and Juan Mata, United has more than enough quality midfielders to last them through the season.

The Red Devils' attack is something the club should be excited about going forward. Striker Anthony Martial had his best season yet as a Red Devil. The 24-year-old had 23 goals and 12 assists for United, showing that he is ready to take over as their number nine following the departure of Romelu Lukaku. Winger Marcus Rashford also had a very productive season for the club, tallying 22 goals and 11 assists across all competitions. Wonder kid Mason Greenwood forced his way into the first team and showed why he deserves to be a consistent pick in the Ole Gunnar Solskjaer team. The 18-year-old tallied 15 goals across all competitions for the club in his first season of consistent first-team football.

Manchester United's lack of signings in the transfer window is eye-catching as United are known for spending money. The club has spent nearly 850 million euros since Sir Alex Ferguson retired in 2013. On top of their lack of productivity in the transfer window, I'm not a fan of Solskjaer's tactics. With the amount of speed and creativity on his team, the way he lines up his squad is questionable. He will also have to make a tough decision regarding who will get the number one shirt this season.

David De Gea struggled throughout the season, making mistakes he is not accustomed with. He will have to work to get back into form as goalkeeper Dean Henderson looks to challenge for first-team play. The English keeper was sent out on loan this past season, where he impressed at Sheffield United. Several teams have looked into the opportunity of purchasing Henderson from United, but it doesn't look like he will be on the way out anytime soon.

With so much talent in the midfield and attack, I still don't see United finishing higher than fifth. The Red Devils will need their defense to stay healthy throughout a very long, grueling season, and I just don't see that happening. The Red Devils open up the season home at Old Trafford on Sept. 19 against Crystal Palace.



4TH PLACE: ARSENAL

Project Mikel Arteta has started in London as the former Arsenal player looks to bring the club back to its former glory. So far, since his move from Pep Guardiola's right-hand man to the manager of the Gunners, Arteta has won the FA Cup and the English Community Shield. Not to mention, he's won more silverware in August than Spurs have won in the last decade. Arteta has proven he's the man for the job and that he will sculpt the club in his image, but the team still has a long way to go. With their current team, fourth is where I see them finishing, but you never know with Arsenal.

Arsenal had their worst season in the past 25 years, finishing eighth in the league and missing out on Champions League football. Through the ups and downs, and three different managers, the Gunners still found a way to grab some silverware and qualify for Europa League football. Now the club needs to get players in and convince some players to stay in order to take the next step towards Arteta's goal: Winning the Champions League.

Arsenal's defensive weakness haunted them the entire season, as it seemed no matter who was on the pitch they continued to struggle. David Luiz, Rob Holding and Sokratis all showed their flaws throughout the year. Shkodran Mustafi was frozen out of the team for most of the season as he was seen as the biggest defensive liability on the team. It wasn't until Arteta took over that the defensive shape changed, and now he has gotten the most out of his defenders. Arteta has played with the 3-4-3 formation, with three center-backs and two wing-backs.

The three have usually been Luiz, Holding and outside-back Kieran Tierney, while Hector Bellerin and Ainsley Maitland-Niles have operated as the wing-backs. With young defender William Saliba returning from his loan spell at AS Saint-Étienne in France and the purchase of Gabriel Magalhães from French team Lille OSC, Arsenal hope to keep progressing in their defensive play. With either of those players sliding into the back three, Tierney has the opportunity to move to wing-back.

A task dispatched to Arteta is using the current funds he has to bring in players that will benefit his team. COVID-19 has shaken the transfer market to its core. Practically no team in football, excluding Chelsea, has been able to spend tons of money in the market because no one has the funds. Therefore, Arteta will have to sell a couple of players in order to get the players he needs. Ar-

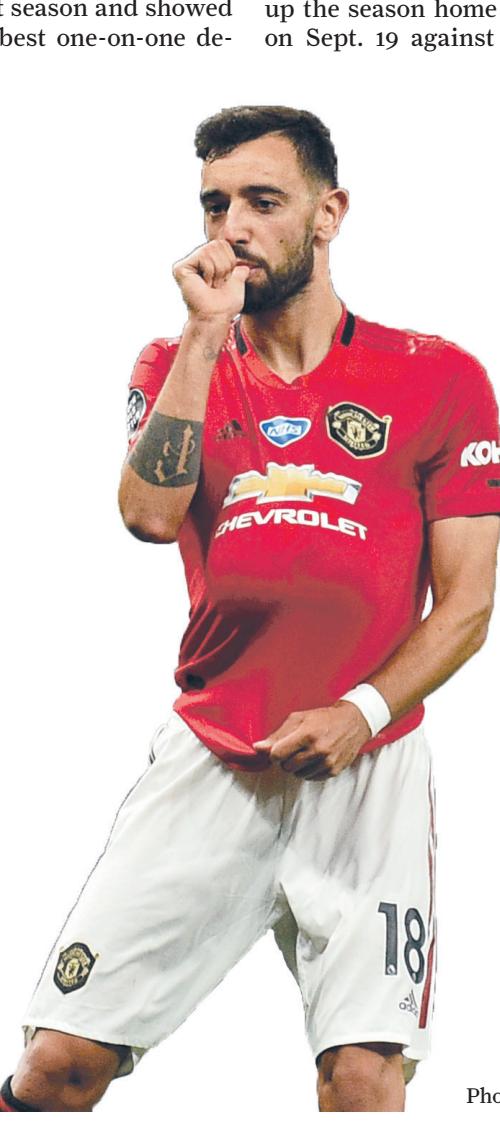
senal released midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan, who signed for Italian giants Roma and midfielder Lucas Torreira who looks to be on his way out to Italy as well after struggling at the club. There have also been transfer rumors of striker Alexandre Lacazette. The most intriguing rumor has been Hector Bellerin leaving the club for 30 million euros.

Arsenal is looking for players to help in the midfield area. Arteta made it a priority to bring back Dani Ceballos from Spanish giants Real Madrid to help stabilize the midfield and to bring some sort of creativity to the field. Granit Xhaka looks set to continue his role as the anchor of the midfield for the Gunners. Arteta is targeting Atlético Madrid midfielder Thomas Partey this summer to come in and be that box-to-box midfielder the team needs. The Ghanaian has been linked with a move to London all summer, but the teams are in a deadlock about the price.

The Gunners have also had talks of signing Houssem Aouar from French team Lyon, with his most recent bidding at 31 million euros. Young star Matteo Guendouzi has been rejected by the club, as they are not interested in his services. As the season starts in less than a week, Arsenal hopes to make some moves quickly to prepare for the league.

In my opinion, the most important thing Arteta needs to focus on for a successful season is to unlock the attack's full potential. Arsenal's attack is star-studded with captain Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang leading the way. The Gabon international scored a team-leading 29 goals last season in all competitions for the Gunners. With a new season coming, Arteta hopes that Lacazette, Nicolas Pepe, Bukayo Saka and new signing Willian can provide a much-needed boost. Success this season will be huge for Arsenal, as they have a new contract on the table for Aubameyang. The striker has only one year remaining on his current contract and is attracting interest from teams around the world.

People may say Arsenal finishing fourth is a longshot, or that they don't have the talent to finish that high. All I have to say in response is Aubameyang and Arteta. As I've said before, if Aubameyang is on the field, anything is possible for Arsenal. Arteta has proven he deserves to be a manager and has shown he can compete with the top teams in the league. He has Arsenal playing his way and if they keep this good form up, who knows what they can accomplish. Arteta and Arsenal open up league play against Fulham Saturday, Sept. 12.



Photos courtesy of AP

Photo of the Day | Sweet, sweet, sweet victory ... yeah



The UConn women's basketball team beat the Cincinnati Bearcats in March to claim their seventh-straight and final American Athletic Conference championship. PHOTO BY KEVIN LINDSTROM, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

From The Capitol: Gabriel Torres becomes Hartford's hero in Loudon clash

by David Sandoval
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Hartford Athletic met Loudon United for the final time on Saturday where the Boys in Green looked to return to winning ways in Dillon Stadium. Despite a rocky start in the opening minutes, Hartford managed to come out on top, winning 2-1.

Hartford changed a couple of things ahead of Saturday's clash. One notable change was the return of Cheno Guzmán after being out for a couple matches. Second was the formation, as head coach Radhi Jaidi decided on a 4-4-2 form instead of his usual 3-5-2.

With a record of 2-0-1 against Loudon, Hartford were eager to get a good result. To their surprise however, things started to go a bit downhill when Arthur Rogers went down from a collision in the opening seconds of the match. Despite coming back on the field a couple minutes later, Hartford's defense let its guard down and conceded a goal in the fourth minute. Keeper Parfait Mandanda kicked the ball to the opposite end of the field, but couldn't target any of his players and ended up giving the ball away. Defender Allexon Saravia started off Loudon's counterattack as he lobbed the ball to midfielder Christian

Sorto. To surprise Mandanda, Sorto passed to the left to Josh Fawole who netted the ball into the bottom of the goal.

Hartford tried to respond with a great chance in the 11th minute. Captain Danny Barrera received the ball from Guzmán and crossed up the field to Alex Dixon. Already marked and not able to do much, Dixon passed the ball outward to Guzmán who was quickly marked by two Loudon defenders. Guzmán passed to Tyreke Johnson who finally managed to get a shot after a bit of footwork past the defenders, but it was deflected off Loudon keeper Simon Lefebvre and converted into a corner kick.

Hartford had another good chance to try to level the match only a couple minutes later. Pressing the Loudon defense, Guzmán passed to Dixon as the two ran up the field. Not able to do much, Dixon passed to Nicky Downs who simply

passed back and crossed the ball to Guzmán who was waiting by the far post. Guzmán tried to quickly smash the ball in, but the Loudon keeper was quicker and deflected the ball. Barrera attempted to take a shot off the

Rogers passed the ball to Gabriel Torres who attempted to make a run, but was quickly marked. Torres passed back to Rogers who took a couple steps forward and launched the ball toward the left side of Loudon's goal. The Loudon keeper couldn't deflect the ball, and it was game on.

Chances from Loudon in the remainder

of the first half

should've seen

the DC United-

owned team

score two

more times,

but crosses

from Fawole

couldn't

find any-

one to fin-

ish the

play and a

strike from

Alioune

Ndour grazed

the outside of

Hartford's net.

Hartford also

saw a couple more

shots on target from

Torres and Barrera, but

they were saved by the keeper

and went wide respectively.

In the opening minutes of

the second half, Guzmán al-

most put Hartford in the lead.

Barrera lobbed the ball up the

field to Guzmán with defend-

ers Saravia and Timothy Mehl around him, but Saravia tried to head the ball out while colliding with his keeper. With an empty net, Guzmán went for the easy shot, but was blocked at the last second by defender Adam Lundegard.

Aside from Guzmán's chance, the second half remained fairly even on both sides until the 76th minute. With a throw-in from Alex Lara a minute earlier, Barrera passed the ball back to Lara, who crossed it into the penalty area where Torres struck the ball off the volley and into the net, taking a 2-1 lead. Hartford had another good chance to score a few minutes later when a free kick was taken by Markus Naglestad, but the ball was off by a few feet.

Hartford almost increased their lead after a Naglestad free kick went straight to the keeper, but couldn't contain it. The ball fell to the feet of Guzmán, who struck from inches away, but the referee ruled the goal out due to Barrera unfairly knocking the ball out of the Loudon keeper's hands.

Hartford's next match will be on the road Saturday where they will face the Pittsburgh Riverhounds for the second time this season. Looking ahead at the schedule, Hartford's second to last home match will be on Sept. 16 against the New York Red Bulls II.

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Tim Covers Obscure Sports Leagues No One Asked Him To: Kontinental Hockey League

by Tim Keaten
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The Russia-based Kontinental Hockey League started play on Sept. 2 with a game in Moscow between Red Army Moscow (CSKA) and Ak Bars Kazan. The KHL is running a full regular season this year, extending into February. The Russian Federation and most other states with teams represented in the KHL have handled the spread and containment of COVID-19, so unlike North American sports leagues, there are fans in the stands. The opening day game at CSKA arena had about half of the 12,000 seats with fans in them. You can buy tickets to any arena in the KHL and see an ice hockey game in person, something unthinkable to many of us right now.

The week before the regular season play started, the league's four Moscow-based teams took to the ice for the Moscow City Mayor's Cup.

The Mayor's Cup has been a regular preseason tournament featuring Red Army Moscow, Vityaz Podolsk, Dinamo Moscow and Spartak Moscow. Vityaz is the first team based outside of Moscow to compete in this tournament, as the team is based in Podolsk, a suburb of Moscow. This tournament presented interesting challenges for the teams, as all four had bouts of COVID-19 spread through their ranks during preseason training. CSKA went into the tournament with no pre-season games nor training camps. Sergey Sobyanin,

deflection, but it went wide.

The third time was the charm as Hartford's third chance on goal was successful and leveled the score. Arthur

larity of the situation during his opening ceremony.

"Probably,

many of us did not

expect that we would

start this

hockey season

this way.

Everybody

was afraid that

the pandemic

would prevent

us from doing it,

prevent the ath-

letes, the fans, but

we have overcome the

pandemic."

After a few days of play,

Vityaz Podolsk came out on

top with an undefeated run to the Mayor's Cup. Vityaz faced

all three teams in the tourna-

ment, with two of the games

ending in overtime. The se-



mayor of Moscow, City, spoke about the irregu-

NBA Playoffs weekend rundown

LAKERS, cont. from p. 12

In Game 2, the Lakers adjusted their game plan to shut down the Rockets backcourt. Lasering in on the two All-Stars, the Lakers held James Harden to 6-12 shooting while Westbrook shot a measly 4-15 in the game. A third-quarter push spearheaded by Harden put the Rockets back in the picture, but LeBron and Davis were ready for the challenge, combining for 62 points in a 117-109 win to even the series at one. The two teams will meet again on Tuesday for Game 3.

Back in the Eastern Conference, the Celtics and Raptors met for Game 4 of their series Saturday, with the Celtics holding a 2-1 lead. With momentum on their side after O.G. Anunoby's buzzer beater in Game 3, the Raptors put together a great team effort to knot the series back at two. Five players scored in double figures headlined by a 22/11/7 game by Kyle Lowry, but even when the offense wasn't clicking, the defense stepped up in its place.

After shooting over 40% from 3-point land in their first two games, the Celtics looked ice cold in Game 3, going 13-40, including a combined 3-17 brick show by Jaylen Brown and Kemba Walker. The shooting slump is sure to pass but with the series tied at 2-2, the next game will play a crucial part in who makes it to the conference finals and who gets sent packing.

Wrapping up Saturday's games was the Clippers-Nuggets series in which the Clippers held a 1-0 lead. After going seven games with the Jazz and getting absolutely dismantled in Game 1, many people had begun to overlook the Nuggets as a contender. However, since Gary Harris' return they have been a different monster, as seen in Game 2.

It took one quarter for Denver to turn heads, dropping 44 points on the backs of Jamal Murray and Nikola Jokic. The two were



Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James (23) passes the ball during the second half of an NBA conference semifinal playoff basketball game against the Houston Rockets Sunday, Sept. 6, 2020, in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. The Lakers won 117-109. PHOTO BY MARK J. TERRILL, AP

trading buckets like clockwork and formed a perfect duo to tear down the Clippers defense early on. LA made adjustments and slowed them down, but the 19-point deficit they faced after one was too great to overcome, resulting in a Nuggets win and yet another even series, now tied at 1-1. Jokic earned the game MVP, dropping 26 points and 18 rebounds in the win, just one day re-

moved from calling himself slow.

But it wasn't only the Joker's performance that was a surprise, as Kawhi Leonard seemed to struggle for the first time in this game. After being among the most efficient scorers in the playoffs from the midrange and inside, Kawhi scored just 13 points on 4-17 shooting. This tells you just how deep the Clippers actually go, as they had six other players

go for double digits in Kawhi's absence, but still came up just short. They remain many fans and analyst's favorite to go all the way, so it should be interesting to see how they bounce back in Game 3.

NBA action continues this week, in what will likely be the deciding games for a couple series as we inch closer to the season's conclusion. This upcoming week's basketball is must-watch TV.



Houston Rockets' Russell Westbrook (0) takes a fall during the second half of an NBA conference semifinal playoff basketball game against the Los Angeles Lakers Sunday, Sept. 6, 2020, in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. The Lakers won 117-109. PHOTO BY MARK J. TERRILL, AP

Mariners win 6th straight, sweep Rangers with 8-4 victory

SEATTLE (AP) — Dylan Moore hit a solo home run and added a three-run double, Kyle Seager hit a two-run home run and the surging Seattle Mariners beat the Texas Rangers 8-4 on Monday for their first six-game winning streak since July 2019.

Seattle completed a four-game sweep of the Rangers, who have lost six straight. The Mariners are 11-3 after an 8-19 start, on their longest winning streak streak since July 24-30 last year against Detroit and Texas.

"Just worried about getting better every day. I said it the other day you've got to get it to .500 and we're not there yet," Seattle manager Scott Servais said. "We're just learning about ourselves every day out there."

Moore drove in a career-high four runs, homering in the third inning and clearing the bases with a two-out double into the left-field corner in the fourth. It was Moore's sixth home run this season.

Seager gave Seattle an early lead for the second straight day with his seventh homer, a two-run drive off Kolby Allard (0-5). Seager also hit a

two-run homer in the first inning in Sunday's victory.

Moore and Seager provided plenty of offense for Marco Gonzales (5-2), who was coming off his second career complete game.

"I think you're seeing a burst of confidence from a large majority of this team that's finally feeling comfortable, finally feeling like they have a good rou-

tine down in the big leagues and going out there and really searching for wins," Gonzales said. "We're a very united group and we have been since day one here. I'm excited to see what this last stretch of baseball holds for us because we are playing great baseball right now."

Gonzales allowed two runs and four hits in seven in-

nings with seven strikeouts. He retired the first 10 batters before Isiah Kiner-Falefa's single. Shin-Soo Choo added another single and Joey Gallo hit a two-run, two-out double.

That was the only trouble Gonzales faced. He retired eight of his final nine after Gallo's double. Gonzales has thrown at least seven in four

of his past six starts and won his third straight decision.

"He does not back off. He doesn't throw 95 (mph), but it doesn't matter," Servais said. "He can execute pitches. His ball has really good life and finish to it, and he really sequences pitches just outstanding throughout the course of the game."



Texas Rangers' Shin-Soo Choo, left, touches home plate to score before Seattle Mariners catcher Luis Torrens, right, can make a tag on a two-run double by Rangers' Joey Gallo off Mariners starting pitcher Marco Gonzales. PHOTO BY STEPHEN BRASHEAR, AP

Jets GM Douglas won't be happy 'until we win the Super Bowl'



In this Feb. 25, 2020, file photo New York Jets general manager Joe Douglas speaks during a news conference at the NFL football scouting combine in Indianapolis. PHOTO BY MICHAEL CONROY, AP

NEW YORK (AP) — Joe Douglas is not about to start patting himself on the back after a busy offseason.

Sure, the New York Jets general manager made several moves to help the team get better. He also knows they're still very much a work in progress.

"I'm not going to be happy until we win the Super Bowl," Douglas declared Monday, echoing what every NFL GM says around this time of year.

He set out after last season to fix one area of the Jets that was a glaring weakness a year ago: the shaky offensive line. Douglas signed center Connor McGovern, tackle George Fant and guard Greg Van Roten in free agency, and drafted tackle Meekhi Becton with the No. 11 pick.

Paired with returning leftguard Alex Lewis, the starting unit has had to try to quickly mesh on the

field after doing so through remote meetings in the offseason because of the coronavirus pandemic.

What Douglas witnessed this summer was a small victory, albeit without preseason games.

"I will say that I've been impressed with the professionalism and the maturity and the mentality that our offensive line has shown through training camp," Douglas said.

That's as close to a touchdown dance as you'll hear from Douglas these days, though.

He was in a tough spot when he was hired in June 2019 after Mike Maccagnan was abruptly fired as general manager. With Adam Gase already in place as coach, Douglas tried to make improvements late in the offseason and camp — including acquiring Lewis from Baltimore — but now has he been able to

truly begin putting his stamp on the makeup of the Jets' roster.

"I think when I first got here and I got up in front of you guys in the opening press conference, I had a clear vision — we had a clear vision — and Adam and I shared that vision of what we wanted this team to look like," Douglas said.

"I feel like we've been on the same page in getting the right type of people in this building, in this locker room, and I think you're starting to see that come to fruition this camp."

Still, outside expectations are generally low entering this season. Many think the Jets will take a step back from last year's 7-9 finish. Critics cite a perceived lack of overall talent, with quarterback Sam Darnold and running backs Le'Veon Bell and Frank Gore being the most recognizable names on the active roster.

LEAGUE OF LEGENDS RECAP

LEAGUE, cont. from p. 12

In North America, for a few hours, it looked like history might be repeating. To set the stage, you need to look back to the 2019 LCS Spring finals. TSM was taking on Team Liquid, who had won the last two LCS seasons in a row and were a favorite coming into the season. TSM, on the other hand, had struggled in the 2018 season and missed Worlds after a gauntlet loss to Cloud9. But in the Grand Finals, TSM was up 2-0 over Team Liquid, and it looked good for the decorated North American veterans.

But Team Liquid came back. They won the next three games in impressive fashion, claiming their third LCS win in a row and completely wrecking TSM—especially their ADC Zven, who was picked off near the Baron during game five in a play that effectively handed Team Liquid the series victory.

On Sunday, TSM took on FlyQuest. TSM jumped out to an early lead, winning games one and two, but once again FlyQuest took games three and four, putting TSM on the ropes. It looked like history was repeating, like TSM was once again going to collapse just inches from the finish line, inches from a split victory for the first time since franchising.

But this time, TSM showed up. They fought back in Game Five, drafting aggressive champions and letting their star midlaner, Bjergsen, carry them to success after several years of downsliding and failures for the LCS's most winning organization. This time, at the end of Game Five, it was TSM who were victorious. It didn't look the same as their first six split victories; there was no crowd cheering them on. It was just them, and their support staff, but it was enough. TSM claimed the first North American seed at the World Championship. Perhaps more importantly, it was vindication for TSM, for Bjergsen, that they once again were on top of the mountain. They reclaimed their crown, and they'll take it all the way to Worlds.