

sports

Canucks get revenge on Kings

Canwest News Service

VANCOUVER - Like a rubber ball, the Vancouver Canucks came bouncing back Friday from their pratfall in southern California earlier this week.

The Canucks' offence was good early and it was good late as coach Alain Vigneault's skaters knocked off the Los Angeles Kings 4-2 before the 249th consecutive sellout at GM Place.

Alex Burrows and Mats Sundin, the latter on a five-on-three power play, staked the Canucks to a 2-0 first-period lead - Vancouver out-shot L.A. 20-3 in the opening 20 minutes - but Vancouver squandered it in the third before Henrik Sedin put it away with a pair 30 seconds apart.

The victory was the Canucks' eighth straight on home ice and kept them a point up on the surging Columbus Blue Jackets in the Western Conference playoff chase. More importantly, it moved Vancouver eight points above the playoff bar and only four behind the Chicago Blackhawks, who were the Jackets' latest victim.

The Canucks appeared in control of matters until Alexander Frolov and Anze Kopitar scored 26 seconds apart in the third.

Sedin replied with his first of two 1:28 after Kopitar's tying tally, a soft one on Roberto Luongo from a bad angle.

Groves DQ'd

RICHMOND (CP) — Sometimes the performance is more important than the reward, and that logic is how Kristina Groves can reconcile losing out on a world title after skating one of the best races of her life.

The Ottawa native paid a steep price for a slight touch of a puck dividing the lanes on a turn during the women's 1,500 metres Friday, suffering an automatic disqualification for her transgression.

That meant her golden skate at the world single distances speed-skating championships went for naught despite a dominant time of one minute 57.75 seconds, leaving both teammates and competitors calling her the true champion.

"You know what? It doesn't matter," Groves said of losing the gold. "I skated so well in that race and had such a great time, I had such a big margin over second place, the feeling I get in that race trumps anything else that happens afterwards."

The result bumped German star Anni Friesinger up to gold at 1:58.66, Ireen Wust of the Netherlands to silver in 1:58.83, and Christine Nesbitt of London, Ont., to bronze at 1:58.88.

Raptors fail to halt skid

TORONTO (CP) — The losses continue to mount for the Toronto Raptors. Richard Hamilton scored 24 points, while Rodney Stuckey added 17 as the Detroit Pistons beat Toronto 99-95 in overtime on Friday, sending the Raptors to their seventh consecutive loss.

Chris Bosh had 27 points and 10 rebounds for the Raptors (23-43), who were missing starting centre Andrea Bargnani for most of the night.

Jose Calderon had 20 points, including the basket with nine seconds left in regulation that sent the game into overtime, and his 11 assists gave him the Raptors all-time franchise record. The Raptors, who have yet to win in March.

Goal rush for Roughnecks

EDMONTON (CP) — Dane Dobbie led the way with seven goals and four assists as the Calgary Roughnecks extended their lead in the National Lacrosse League's West Division with a 22-10 stomping of the Edmonton Rush on Friday night.

The list of scorers for Calgary was a lengthy one with Scott Ranger potting four, Kaleb Toth and Josh Sanderson with three, Curt Malawsky with a pair and Tracey Kelusky, Jeff Shattler and Andrew McBride recording single goals.

Roughnecks defensive specialist Jeff Moleski of Prince George picked up one assist.

The Roughnecks improved to 7-2 on the season and went a game and a half ahead of Portland for top spot in the West.

Martin maintains his winning streak

Bill Graveland
The Canadian Press

CALGARY — Kevin Martin will get a chance for back-to-back titles at the Canadian men's curling championship.

For the second straight night, the Alberta skip won the battle of the titans against Ontario skip Glenn Howard - this time scoring a single point in the extra end to win 7-6.

The teams were tied at 4-4 after seven ends and while Howard had to settle for a single in the eighth end, Martin replied with a deuce in the ninth to take a 6-5 lead going into the 10th.

Howard drew for a single point to even the score and forced the extra end.

The result has Martin going directly to Sunday's final.

"I told the guys after the game you know we're not going to win every one like that but enjoy them," said Martin after the game.

"They made every shot. Glenn was making those freezes for fun and the only deuce we got had to be two raise backs. We're even teams and that's why it's so much fun."

Howard is going to have to get a third crack at Martin by going through the back door. He said there was little to choose from between the two teams.

"I thought Kevin got the breaks that game. He had a few key rubs and a few key shots but it was a fantastic game and a crowd pleaser and I thought the shot making was exceptional again," said Howard, who believes he has what it takes to beat Martin if they meet again in the final.

"Absolutely. I thought we outplayed them. If not I guess he's going to go undefeated," he said.

Howard will play in Saturday's semifinal against the winner of the morning playoff game between Newfoundland and Labrador's Brad Gushue and Jeff Stoughton of Manitoba.

"The bottom line is we've got to get there (the final). We've got a huge game against either Jeff or Brad. Kevin Martin's a distant thought right now. We've got a huge game



Manitoba skip Jeff Stoughton, centre, watches the rock as second Rob Fowler, left, and lead Steve Gould sweep while on the way to an 8-3 win over Quebec Friday morning at the Tim Hortons Brier.

CP photo

against two phenomenal curlers and we've got our hands full."

Stoughton was forced into a tiebreaker Friday afternoon to pick up the final playoff spot and came away with a 6-3 victory over Quebec's Jean-Michel Menard.

"They weren't very aggressive in the first five ends so we were able to get a couple of deuces off them from ends that weren't really developing that well," said Stoughton. "We know tomorrow there will be a heck of a lot more rocks in play."

Stoughton dumped Gushue 8-3 in their round-robin meeting Thursday morning.

"I'm pretty excited about it. I think we had a bad showing yesterday and it would be nice to go out and play the way we're capable of playing against them," said Gushue, the 2006 Olympic gold medallist.

Stoughton has had an up-and-down Brier, but comes into today's playoff game on a modest three-game winning streak.

"It's certainly better than going 7-and-0 and losing your last four to go into the playoffs that's for sure," said Stoughton.

"But there's another team out there that's on a heck of a roll (Alberta) and hopefully we can get to them eventually but we've got to get past Brad first," he said.

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