

# Caps sink Pens to win division title

## Devils boost playoff chances

**PITTSBURGH, April 2, (AP):** Philipp Grubauer made 36 saves and the Washington Capitals celebrated star Alex Ovechkin's 1,000th career regular season game by clinching their third straight division title with a 3-1 win over the Pittsburgh Penguins on Sunday night.

Ovechkin was held without a point but it hardly mattered. T.J. Oshie, Dmitry Orlov and Tom Wilson scored for Washington while Grubauer kept the NHL's best power play in check as the Capitals assured themselves home-ice advantage through the first two rounds of the postseason.



Ovechkin

The Penguins have the top power play in the league but went 0 for 5 with the man advantage. Patric Hornqvist picked up his 27th of the season late in the third period to avoid a shutout. Matt Murray stopped 31 shots but couldn't quite match Grubauer.

A night after earning a playoff berth for a franchise-record 12th straight year, Pittsburgh lost at home in regulation for just the second time since Jan. 4.

Ovechkin downplayed his milestone game beforehand, half-jokingly saying it didn't matter much. The 32-year-old knows his career has been equally defined by his 603 goals and his team's inability to make a deep playoff run.

The Capitals have won 10 of 12 to create some breathing space in the cramped and crowded Metropolitan division.

### Devils 2, Canadiens 1

In Montreal, Taylor Hall scored a short-handed goal late in the third period to lift New Jersey.

Nico Hischier tied the score early in the third and Keith Kinkaid stopped 25 shots in his sixth consecutive start for the Devils. New Jersey increased its lead to seven points on Florida for the last playoff spot in the Eastern Conference. The Devils, vying for their first trip to the postseason since reaching the Stanley Cup Final in 2012, have

three games remaining — two fewer than the Panthers.

Daniel Carr scored for the Canadiens, who have already been eliminated from playoff contention. Carey Price finished with 30 saves while playing his 556th game with Montreal, pulling into a tie with Jacques Plante for most games by a goaltender in franchise history.

### Predators 4, Lightning 1

In Tampa, Florida, Filip Forsberg had two goals and an assist to lead the Nashville past Tampa Bay.

Forsberg returned to the Predators' lineup after being held out of Saturday's loss to Buffalo for maintenance.

### ICE HOCKEY

Craig Smith and Ryan Johansen also scored to help Nashville move closer to clinching the Presidents' Trophy with the league's best record. Juuse Saros finished with 29 saves.

Tampa Bay, which went 0 for 5 on the power play, played the final two periods without captain Steven Stamkos, who left the game with an undisclosed lower-body injury.

Ondrej Palat scored for the Lightning, and Andrei Vasilevskiy finished with 21 saves while lost his third consecutive game.

The Lightning fell to 5-6-0 in the past 11 games and sit two points behind Boston for the top spot in the Eastern Conference.

### Flyers 4, Bruins 3, OT

In Philadelphia, Claude Giroux scored his second goal with 1:21 left in overtime and Philadelphia Flyers recovered from blowing a late lead to inch closer to returning to the playoffs after a one-year absence.

Travis Konecny added a dazzling goal and an assist, Nolan Patrick also scored and Petr Mrazek made 36 saves for the Flyers. Philadelphia who opened an eight-point lead over idle Florida, the last team that can overtake it for a playoff spot in the Eastern Conference the Flyers have three games left and the Panthers five.

Patrice Bergeron tied it with 3.8 seconds left in regulation for the Bruins. With the goaltender pulled, Bergeron got his 30th goal on feed from Brad Marchand after the Flyers twice failed to clear the puck.

Noel Acciari and David Pasmak scored and Anton Khudobin stopped 20 shots for



Anaheim Ducks' Josh Manson (right), chases the puck as Colorado Avalanche's Nathan Mackinnon (center), is shoved by Ducks' Hampus Lindholm of Sweden, during the first period of an NHL hockey game on April 1 in Anaheim, California. (AP)

the Bruins, who lost Brandon Carlo and Riley Nash to injuries a day earlier.

### Ducks 4, Avalanche 3, OT

In Anaheim, California, Ondrej Kase scored 1:34 into overtime to cap Anaheim's comeback from a two-goal deficit.

Andrew Cogliano had a goal and an assist, and Adam Henrique and Ryan Kesler also scored for the Ducks, who moved into third place in the Pacific Division. Anaheim is one point ahead of Los Angeles with three games remaining for both

teams. Kase was looking to shoot all the way on a 2-on-1 break and won it by going to the short side over Jonathan Bernier's right shoulder.

Ryan Miller made 19 saves after replacing John Gibson at the start of the second period, helping the Ducks to

their fifth straight home win. Gibson, who made 10 saves before departing, appeared to be shaken up late in the first when Gabriel Landeskog was cross-checked by Kesler into the goalie, who was being evaluated for an undisclosed injury.

## American puts end to Masters final agony

# Isner outlasts Zverev for Miami crown

MIAMI, April 2, (AFP): John Isner finally put an end to his ATP Masters final agony on Sunday, winning the Miami Open for the first time by beating Germany's Alexander Zverev 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 6-4.

The 14th seed had lost his previous three major tour final appearances in 2012, 2013 and 2016 but came back from a set down to beat Zverev in two hours and 29 minutes.

The victory capped a superb tournament for Isner, who endured a difficult start to 2018 which included an early-round exit at Indian Wells in his lead-in to Miami.

### TENNIS

"I couldn't have scripted this. I came into this tournament, I won one ATP [World Tour] match all year and was playing very poorly," Isner said.

"I won my first match in three sets and that's how tennis goes — you start to gain a little confidence and next thing you know things start to roll your way."

Isner is the first US player since Andy Roddick in 2010 to lift the Miami title.

Isner will also reclaim a career high world ranking of ninth after the victory, the 13th title of his career.

"It's up to me now to keep pushing forward," he said. "To get over the

hump in tournaments like this is a big thing mentally for me.

"We cleared that hurdle this week. I went into every match super fresh and loose. I will be a force if I can continue to play freely."

Both Zverev and Isner were faultless in their service games and the first set predictably went the distance

before fourth seed Zverev prevailed when Isner sprayed a backhand wide.

The break, however, finally came for Isner at 4-4 in the second set and when Zverev, who missed the chance to return to number three in the world with this defeat, failed to hold at 5-4 in the third, Isner sealed the best win of his career with an ace.

The German, whose frustrations boiled over when he smashed his racket on the ground after that critical break, proved his billing as one of stars of the future by making his third Masters final and now heads to Spain where Germany play in the quarter-final of the Davis Cup.

"I missed more shots today than I did the whole tournament. I played badly from the baseline but it's not easy against John," said Zverev who admitted he will have just one day of practice before taking on the Spaniards in Valencia. "He always makes it difficult."

"I kind of lost the match myself but I have known him since I was 14 so although I am never happy to lose, I am happy for him that he's won his first Masters."

It was a fitting way for American players to say goodbye to Key Biscayne, home of the Miami Open for the last 32 years, before the move to Hard Rock Stadium next year. Florida born Sloane Stephens won the women's title on Saturday before Isner stepped up to the plate 24 hours later.

"With the atmosphere and the support, it was amazing," said Isner.

"You just can't replicate that and for me to come out the winner in the last men's single match ever here is unique."



John Isner of the United States celebrates to the crowd after his three set victory against Alexander Zverev of Germany in the men's final during the Miami Open Presented by Itaú at Crandon Park Tennis Center on April 1 in Key Biscayne, Florida. (AFP)

## Conte confident of future at Chelsea

## NHL Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, April 2, (RTRS): Results and standings from the NHL games on Sunday

Philadelphia 4 Boston (OT) 3

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

W L OTF GF GA Pts

Boston 49 17 12 261 201 110

Tampa Bay 52 23 4 283 228 108

Ottawa 47 25 7 267 226 101

Florida 39 30 8 232 236 86

Detroit 30 38 11 207 242 71

Montreal 28 39 12 199 252 68

Ottawa 27 40 11 210 274 65

Buffalo 25 41 12 187 260 62

Metropolitan Division

W L OTF GF GA Pts

Washington 47 25 7 247 230 101

Pittsburgh 45 29 6 263 246 96

Columbus 44 29 6 231 217 94

Philadelphia 40 25 14 238 235 94

New Jersey 42 28 9 238 236 93

Carolina 35 33 11 220 247 81

NY Rangers 34 36 9 228 256 77

NY Islanders 32 37 10 253 288 74

Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L)

Nashville 4 Tampa Bay 1

New Jersey 2 Montreal 1

Washington 3 Pittsburgh 1

Anaheim 4 Colorado (OT) 3

Western Conference

Central Division

W L OTF GF GA Pts

Nashville 51 17 11 258 204 113

Winnipeg 48 20 10 260 207 106

Minnesota 43 25 10 239 221 96

Colorado 42 28 9 249 228 93

St. Louis 43 29 6 215 208 92

Dallas 40 31 8 224 216 88

Chicago 32 37 10 223 245 74

Pacific Division

W L OTF GF GA Pts

Las Vegas 50 22 7 263 213 107

San Jose 44 25 10 243 217 98

Anaheim 41 25 13 224 212 95

Los Angeles 43 28 8 229 194 94

Calgary 36 33 10 209 241 82

Edmonton 34 39 6 227 255 74

Vancouver 30 40 9 208 253 69

Arizona 28 40 11 201 248 67

## 'Mind the gap'

## Spurs solidify status as London leading lights

LONDON, April 2, (AFP): In the time it took Tottenham Hotspur to register their first league win at Stamford Bridge since 1990, Chelsea had won 22 trophies.

That was a fact the home fans weren't slow in reminding their visitors before kick-off of Spurs' 3-1 win on Sunday, as a huge banner declared Chelsea the "Pride of London".

Less than two hours later, though,

### SOCCER

it was undeniable who are the current kings of the capital as Spurs, shorn of Harry Kane from the start and having fallen a goal behind, still roared back to take all three points thanks to Christian Eriksen's wonder strike and a quickfire Dele Alli double.

This was a hugely symbolic win for

Spurs. Victory opened up an eight-point lead over fifth-placed Chelsea with just seven games of the Premier League campaign left to almost set the seal on a third straight season of Champions League football to come at their new 62,000 capacity stadium.

Moreover, it was a statement of intent, the type of win manager Mauricio Pochettino highlighted as necessary to foment a "winning mentality".

"This wasn't just a game, it was a game-changer, for Tottenham, and Chelsea, too," wrote Martin Samuel in the Daily Mail.

Tottenham have now beaten Manchester United, Liverpool, Chelsea and Arsenal this season. Real Madrid were also vanquished at Wembley in November and how Pochettino will rue three minutes of madness that cost them a place in this week's Champions League quarter-finals having dominated Juve-

tus, two-time finalists in the past three seasons, over two legs in the last 16.

The stick often used to beat Pochettino is that for all the progress under the Argentine, Spurs are still to win a trophy in four years under his leadership.

That elusive silverware could still come in the FA Cup this season, but even if it doesn't, a landmark Easter Sunday win was further evidence of their status as the rising side in London.

"Mind the gap, as they say in London, where Spurs are undeniably the capital's top team and Chelsea are left to reflect and rebuild yet again," said The Telegraph.

Pochettino has had to battle past rivals with far greater resources to establish Spurs as top four regulars, but even that shackle could begin to loosen by the resources of the new stadium.

"After four years together, the club has moved on in everything: not just in football, but about facilities. Next season we'll have a new stadium and it could be fantastic," added Pochettino.

"I'll share my ideas with the club and see how we can improve."

Holding onto Pochettino despite interest from Real Madrid and Paris Saint-Germain remains every bit as important as not kowtowing to big bids for the likes of Kane and Alli -- as Spurs so often have in their recent past when Madrid came calling for Gareth Bale and Luka Modric.

Another managerial change at Chelsea, meanwhile, now seems an inevitability no matter what comes of their FA Cup run despite Conte's unconvincing protestations that he "wasn't worried" about his job.

Chelsea have proved the exception to the widely held rule that stability breeds success.

Conte looks set to be the third coach of the Roman Abramovich era to lose his job a year after winning the Premier League.

## Pardew leaves rock-bottom West Brom

LONDON, April 2, (RTRS): Alan Pardew became the second manager to leave bottom-of-the-table West Bromwich Albion this season when he departed on Monday after four months in charge at the English Premier League club.

West Brom, beaten 2-1 at home by Burnley on Saturday, have lost their last eight league matches, leaving them seven points adrift at the bottom of the table and 10 short of safety with six matches to play.

Pardew, appointed at the end of November with West Brom two points above the bottom three, was in charge for 21 matches in all competitions, managing three wins with only one of those in the league.

"West Bromwich Albion and Alan Pardew have agreed to mutually part company following discussions between both parties," the club said on their website, adding that assistant head coach John Carver would also be leaving.

"The club would like to thank Alan and John for their efforts and wish them well in their future endeavours."

First-team coach Darren Moore will take over until further notice.

Pardew, former manager of Reading, Charlton Athletic, West Ham United, Southampton, Newcastle United and Crystal Palace, replaced Tony Pulis after he was sacked.

The 56-year-old, an FA Cup runner-up with West Ham in 2006 and Crystal Palace 10 years later, was the tenth managerial casualty of the Premier League season.

West Brom, owned by Chinese investment group Yunyi Guokai (Shanghai) Sports Development Ltd, have had a turbulent season and also sacked chairman John Williams and chief executive Martin Goodman in February.

Mark Jenkins became the club's new chief executive, taking back the role he held until 2016.

Also in February, West Brom players Jonny Evans, Gareth Barry, Jake

Livermore and Boaz Myhill apologised in a club statement after being questioned by police over the theft of a taxi in Barcelona, where the team were holding a warm-weather training camp.

Pardew said they had broken a team curfew and he felt let down.

Chelsea boss Antonio Conte has no concerns over his immediate future at the club despite their hopes of qualifying for next season's Champions League suffering a critical blow with a home loss to Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday.

Spurs came from behind to win the Premier League encounter 3-1, recording their first triumph at Stamford Bridge since 1990.

The result has left last season's champions Chelsea eight points adrift of Spurs in fifth place but Conte said he would continue to give everything as long as he remained in charge.

"No, I'm not worried. Honestly, I think that I'm giving — he players are giving — everything this season," Conte told reporters.

"We are working very hard to try to have a good season, but I think that, in the end, we are deserving this season. It means that our value is this."

"I have my opinion but I'm very tired of always repeating the same things. I don't want to create problems. If we are in this position, we deserve to be in this position."

The Italian manager was reported by the British media to have been at odds with the club over the need to strengthen the squad in the transfer window



Pardew

earlier this season.

When asked whether a top-four spot was the most important factor into deciding whether a coach stays at Chelsea, Conte said: "I don't know. You have to ask the club, not me."

"Yes (I have got the maximum from my players this season). Yes, I'm sure. We are working very well, very hard, and the commitment of the players is top. Despite this, you stay in this position. We must be a bit worried about this."

Chelsea, who were knocked from Champions League by Barcelona in the round-of-16, could still end the season with some silverware as they take on Southampton in the FA Cup semi-

### SOCCER

nals on April 22. Spurs face Manchester United in the other tie.

West Ham United manager David Moyes has hailed Joao Mario for making an immediate impact at the club but is yet to take a decision on whether the club will sign the midfielder on a permanent deal at the end of the season.

Portugal international Mario, who arrived at West Ham from Inter Milan in a January loan move, scored his first goal in Saturday's crucial 3-0 victory over Southampton in the Premier League.

"To come to the Premier League (in January) and perform is not easy," Moyes told British media.

"What goes amiss is that he's a real hard worker, covers the ground, gives us some other things as well."

"He brings a little bit of flair, good on the ball, a bit of natural talent. What we've needed from him — when (Mauricio Lanzini) was injured in January — was to give us a goal, or an assist, and today he came up with the goods."



Tottenham Hotspur's English midfielder Dele Alli (center), shoots to score their second goal during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur at Stamford Bridge in London on April 1. (AFP)