

Mexican blames contaminated meat for positive test

Alvarez tests positive ahead of Golovkin showdown

LOS ANGELES, March 6, (AFP): Mexican middleweight Saul "Canelo" Alvarez, prepping for a May 5 title rematch with Gennady Golovkin, has tested positive for banned clenbuterol, his promoters blaming tainted meat.

A voluntary drug test showed Alvarez had trace amounts of the drug in his system and Golden Boy Promotions said in a statement on Monday the level was "consistent with meat contamination that has impacted dozens of athletes in Mexico over the last years."

"These values are all within the range of what is expected from meat contamination," Golden Boy quoted Daniel Eichner, director of the WADA-accredited SMRTL lab that conducted the tests, as saying.

The promotion company headed by Mexican ring great Oscar de la Hoya said it had notified the Nevada State Athletic Commission and Golovkin's promoter Tom Loeffler.

"We're waiting to get a ruling from the Nevada commission," Loeffler told AFP.

"Whenever you have a positive test, it's never a good thing. But we'll wait until we get the information."



As of now, Alvarez has changed from our side. Gennady is still training and hoping that the fight continues, but we'll leave it up to the commission."

Undefeated Golovkin and Alvarez fought to a split draw in a September 16 thriller that ended amid some controversy.

While one judge scored the fight for Golovkin and one had it even, there was widespread astonishment at the card of judge Adalade Byrd, who marked it 118-110 in favor of Alvarez.

"This is a fight that Gennady has wanted," Loeffler said. "He was begging Canelo for the first fight and naturally wanted the second fight after the controversy with the judges in

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the first.

"He's certainly not looking to get out of this fight for any reason. But at the same time, there's a reason why testing is in place. But we just have to wait for the results and see how that shakes out."

Golden Boy said Alvarez will immediately move his training camp from Mexico to the United States "and will submit to any number and variety of additional tests" deemed necessary in the build up to the May bout.

Alvarez said the positive result "surprises and bothers me".

"I will submit to all the tests that require me to clarify this embarrassing situation and I trust that at the end the truth will prevail," he said.

Tainted meat has been blamed before for positive clenbuterol tests in Mexico, where it is sometimes used to fatten cattle.

The World Anti-Doping Agency warned athletes at the 2011 Pan American Games in Guadalajara to be careful about what they ate during the event.

FIFA, world football's governing body, concluded that contaminated meat resulted in positive tests of 109 players at the Under-17 World Cup in Mexico that year, when five members of Mexico's national team also tested positive.

Pacquiao eyes next fight in May or June

MANILA, March 6, (AFP): Philippine boxing idol Manny Pacquiao said his next opponent would be either world champion Lucas Matthysse or Danny Garcia in Malaysia in May or June, after rejecting an undercard offer to face Mike Alvarado.

Pacquiao told ABS-CBN television in an interview aired Tuesday that his camp had narrowed the choices down to World Boxing Association welterweight champion Matthysse, of Argentina, or the American former WBA super-welterweight and World Boxing Council welterweight champ Garcia, who was unbeaten until last year.

"Definitely, Malaysia is where we will fight. If not May, this coming June, maybe third week of June, so the preparation will not conflict with my work," said Pacquiao, who is also a senator.



Manny Pacquiao

PITTSBURGH, March 6, (AP): Justin Schultz took a pass from Phil Kessel and buried it in the wide-open net 2:36 into overtime to give the Pittsburgh Penguins a 4-3 win over the Calgary Flames on Monday night.

Tristan Jarry made several key stops for the Penguins early in the extra period, and Schultz's fourth goal of the season helped Pittsburgh improve to 10-1 in overtime at home this season.

Evgeni Malkin scored his 37th goal for the Penguins and added an assist. Kris Letang and Chad Ruhwedel also scored for Pittsburgh. Jarry finished with 35 saves as the Penguins pulled within one point of Washington for first in the

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crowded Metropolitan Division.

Mark Giordano, Mikael Backlund and Troy Brouwer scored for the Flames, who outplayed the two-time defending Stanley Cup champions for long stretches before dropping their fourth straight. Jon Gillies stopped 28 shots but had no chance when Kessel slid a cross-ice pass to a wide-open Schultz.

Sabres 5, Maple Leafs 3

In Buffalo, NY, Ryan O'Reilly and Zengus Girgensons scored 2:05 apart in the second period, and Buffalo sent Toronto to its fourth straight loss.

Sam Reinhart, Jason Pominville and Johan Larsson also scored for Buffalo. Rasmus Ristolainen had two assists on consecutive shots from the right point that were deflected in during the opening four minutes.

The Sabres improved to 7-5-2 in their last 14, a stretch in which the Eastern Conference's last-place team continues playing havoc with playoff contenders. Buffalo has now defeated each of the Atlantic Division's three top teams, including Boston twice, over the past three weeks.

Leo Komarov had two goals and Mitch Marner also scored for Toronto. The Maple Leafs dropped to 0-2-2 in their past four to match their longest skid of the season.

Oilers 4, Coyotes 3, OT

In Edmonton, Alberta, Oscar Klef-



Detroit Red Wings' Dylan Larkin gets a glove to the face in a collision with Minnesota Wild's Nate Prosser (top), in the first period of an NHL hockey game on March 4, in St Paul, Minn. (AP)



Buffalo Sabres forward Benoit Pouliot (67) is taken down by Toronto Maple Leafs forward Thomas Plekanec (19) during the third period of an NHL hockey game, on March 5, in Buffalo, NY. (AP)

NHL Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, March 6, (RTRS): Results and standings from the NHL games on Monday.

Pittsburgh	4	Calgary (OT)	3	Edmonton	4	Arizona (OT)	3
Buffalo	5	Toronto	3	Vancouver	4	NY Islanders (OT)	3
Ottawa	3	Dallas (OT)	2				

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	
Tampa Bay	45	17	4	240	182	84
Boston	40	15	8	209	158	88
Toronto	39	22	7	223	195	85
Florida	32	25	6	189	199	70
Detroit	26	29	10	170	193	62
Montreal	25	29	11	167	200	61
Ottawa	23	32	10	177	227	56
Buffalo	21	34	11	159	214	53

Metropolitan Division

W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	
Washington	37	21	7	203	193	81
Pittsburgh	38	25	4	219	203	80
Philadelphia	34	21	11	197	193	79
New Jersey	33	25	8	193	199	74
Columbus	33	28	5	176	186	71
Carolina	29	26	11	176	198	69
NY Islanders	29	29	9	216	241	67
NY Rangers	30	30	6	189	209	66

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

Western Conference

Central Division

W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
42	14	9	214	168	93
39	17	9	220	175	87
37	22	7	204	190	81
37	23	6	195	174	80
35	24	6	205	193	76
35	26	5	180	176	75
28	30	8	188	195	64

Pacific Division

W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
42	18	5	225	180	89
35	22	9	196	184	79
33	21	12	186	183	78
36	25	5	192	165	77
32	25	10	188	199	74
28	34	4	187	219	60
25	32	9	180	217	59
20	34	11	158	213	51

lift Vancouver over New York.

Darren Archibald scored on a penalty shot, and Jake Virtanen also had a goal as Vancouver snapped a three-game skid. Jacob Markstrom stopped

31 shots.

Josh Bailey, John Tavares and Jordan Eberle scored for New York, which lost a season-worst seventh straight game. The Islanders remain

five points behind Columbus for the second wild card in the Eastern Conference playoffs.

Jaroslav Halak made 19 saves for the Islanders.

Cards, DeJong agree to six-yr extension

Mariners close to reunion with Suzuki

WASHINGTON, March 6, (RTRS): The Mariners and Ichiro Suzuki are close to finalizing a one-year deal for the franchise icon to return to Seattle, according to multiple reports Monday.

USA Today first reported the Mariners will bring back the 44-year-old Suzuki, who played in Seattle from 2001-12 during which he was a 10-time All-Star selection and won 10 Gold Gloves. He was the 2001 American League MVP and Rookie of the Year, and in 2004 set the major league season record for hits with 262 when he batted .372.

The Mariners are looking to add depth to their outfield with three of their top four outfielders currently dealing with injury issues. Seattle announced earlier Monday that left fielder Ben Gamel will miss four to six weeks with a strained right oblique muscle, jeopardizing his availability for Opening Day.

Suzuki spent the majority of his 17-year major league career in Seattle, signing with the Mariners in 2001 when he was 27 to begin his major league career after he had 1,278 hits while playing nine years in Japan. The Mariners traded him to the Yankees in midseason of 2012, and he spent 2-1/2 years in New York and the last three seasons in Miami. He has a career .312 batting average and 3,080 hits in the majors.

The St. Louis Cardinals and shortstop Paul DeJong agreed to a six-year, \$26 million contract extension.

"Paul moved quickly through our minor leagues and he had a breakout season last year and has shown all the attributes we look for in a player," Cardinals president of baseball operations John Mozeliak said in a statement. "We are excited to know that Paul is someone we can build around, and we look forward to seeing him in a Cardinals uniform for years to come."

The deal, one of the largest ever for a player with less than a full year of

service time, also includes two options years and a total possible value slightly above \$50 million. The 24-year-old DeJong batted .285 with 25 home runs and 65 RBIs in 108 games for St. Louis in 2017 and finished second to the Los Angeles Dodgers' Cody Bellinger in the National League Rookie of the Year Award voting.

San Diego first baseman Eric Hosmer has made struck gold in the Golden

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State, but that isn't keeping him from criticizing teams across baseball for a trend he sees as a contributing factor to veteran free agents' inability to land a new deal this offseason.

In a story by USA Today's Bob Nightengale, the Padres' new \$144 million Man said that while he is very happy with his offseason, he sees a lot

of "red flags" with the slow pace to the hot stove league.

"(Commissioner Rob) Manfred says the integrity of the game is first and foremost, that's what we want to protect," Hosmer said. "But the way the process went down this year, something is wrong with it. I don't think all of the teams are trying to be competitive or doing everything they can to protect the integrity of the game. If that was the case, why are guys like (former Colorado star) Carlos Gonzalez and (former Royals teammate) Mike Moustakas still on the market? That raises a lot of red flags. When you've got guys that are proven at this level, and have done it for many years at this level that are still on the market looking for jobs, that just tells you something isn't right about it."

Houston Astros manager A.J. Hinch said that Justin Verlander will start Opening Day for the reigning World



Pittsburgh Pirates' Francisco Cervelli (left), makes the catch to force out Atlanta Braves' Ozzie Albies at home on a bases-loaded infield ground ball during the fifth inning of a spring baseball exhibition game, on March 5, in Kissimmee, Fla. (AP)

Chicago Cubs pitcher Jon Lester is looking to Windy City basketball legends to help with his notorious struggles to throw to bases: Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen.

During spring training in Arizona this month, Lester is working on bouncing throws to bases, primarily first, after years of issues with making what seems to be among the easiest of throws, particularly for a pitcher.

"We've been working on the Jordan-Pippen bounce pass," Lester said. The 34-year-old lefty said he has been working on the technique with Cubs third-base coach Brian Butterfield.