

thursday — (all times are kuwait local)

11:00 handball ..... bein sports hd  
 11:02 soccer ..... bein sports 7hd  
 12:30 handball ..... bein sports hd  
 14:15 cricket ..... bein sports 13hd  
 16:45 soccer ..... bein sports 8hd  
 17:00 soccer ..... bein sports 5hd  
 18:50 soccer ..... bein sports 12hd  
 18:52 soccer ..... bein sports 11hd

# Sports

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## Blues reach first Final since 1970

### Sharks out

WASHINGTON, May 22, (RTRS): The worst team in the entire NHL a few days into the new year completed an astounding turnaround Tuesday as the St Louis Blues advanced to the Stanley Cup Final for the first time since 1970.

The club that fired its coach in November and sat dead last in the NHL when the sun rose on Jan 3 dispatched the San Jose Sharks in a six-game Western Conference Finals, capped by a 5-1 home-ice victory on Tuesday.

The Blues will meet the Boston Bruins in the championship round.

"A lot of us felt we were in games

### ICE HOCKEY

and close and couldn't find a way to win them," St Louis captain Alex Pietrangolo said. "We had some good honest conversations and knew we had to be better. We looked each other in the eye, and we did it."

The Blues dominated the undermanned Sharks in the clincher. They now will open the Stanley Cup Final on Monday in Boston, facing the same team they met the last time they went this far. That series was memorialized by Bobby Orr's winning overtime goal for Boston that he celebrated by going airborne.

David Perron collected a goal and an assist Tuesday, and Ryan O'Reilly posted three assists in the victory.

"It was a special moment for all of us," said Blues rookie goalie Jordan Binnington, who stopped 25 shots. "We're excited and looking forward to the next round."

The Sharks, who are potentially facing major turnover before next season, were without a trio of key players. Forwards Joe Pavelski and Tomas Hertl were injured in Game 5, while defenseman Erik Karlsson was



San Jose Sharks right wing Joonas Donskoi (27), of Finland, closes in on the nets St Louis Blues goaltender Jordan Binnington (50) and defenseman Jay Bouwmeester (19) follow during the second period in Game 6 of the NHL ice hockey Stanley Cup Western Conference Final series on May 21 in St Louis. (AP)

sidelined due to an apparent groin injury, and the hosts took advantage.

Perron opened the scoring just 92 seconds into the clash and Vladimir Tarasenko netted a power-play goal with 3:44 remaining in the opening frame to stake St Louis to a 2-0 lead.

Dylan Gambrell — who drew into the San Jose lineup due to the injuries — scored his first NHL goal at the 6:40 mark of the second period

to put the Sharks on the board and give them life.

However, St Louis' Brayden Schenn quashed those hopes six minutes later when he buried a rebound for the power-play goal that snapped his goal drought at 13 games. Tyler Bozak and Ivan Barbashev iced the game with third-period goals.

St Louis won the last three games in the series, all coming after their

controversial Game 3 overtime loss in which the winning goal was scored despite an obvious hand pass. That game appeared to galvanize the Blues, even if they outwardly shrugged it off at the time.

"My feeling was if we're going to win the next game we were going to win the series because we took that road," Perron said. "I'm glad we approached it that way."

The Blues outscored the Sharks 12-2 in the final three games.

"Their team is a hard team. I think the two hardest, heaviest teams are in the final," Sharks coach Pete DeBoer said. "Everyone talks about skill and all the small players, and there is room for that, but I don't think it's an accident. They're heavy, hard and organized. There wasn't any room out there."

Certainly not any room for a Sharks comeback.

"I was proud of our group tonight," DeBoer added. "I don't think the score reflected the work we put in. I know what the scoreboard said at the end of the night, but I felt we made them earn it. We showed up in tough circumstances and got efforts from everybody. That's all you can ask."

### Leonard struggles

## Raptors down Bucks, level East Finals

TORONTO, May 22, (RTRS): Kawhi Leonard carried the Toronto Raptors through most of the postseason.

However, after Leonard played 52 minutes in Toronto's double-overtime win on Sunday and was noticeably favoring his left leg, Raptors guard Kyle Lowry said teammates knew Leonard was limited Tuesday and that the rest of them "had to step up."

The Raptors did, especially Lowry, who scored 18 points in the first half to set the tone and finished with 25 points as the Raptors defeated the visiting Milwaukee Bucks 120-102 to even the best-of-seven Eastern Conference Finals at two games apiece.

Game 5 is Thursday in Milwaukee. The winner of the best-of-seven series will advance to meet the Golden State Warriors in the NBA Finals.

"We have had to rely on (Leonard) so much, and when everybody steps up, it

takes the load off him," Lowry said.

Raptors coach Nick Nurse added of Leonard's health, "I mean, yeah, we were concerned. I think (Leonard) is fine. I think he's — you know, he logged a lot of minutes. He's certainly tired, like a lot of guys in this series are. You know, he looks OK to me."

"I think there's a number of guys out there that aren't 100 percent on both sides of the ball. But, again, he's got tremendous will. He's got tremendous desire, and there's one time I was trying to give him an extended rest there, and he didn't really want it. So he must be OK."

Leonard contributed 19 points and seven rebounds in 34 minutes.

Norman Powell added 18 points off the bench for the Raptors. Serge Ibaka and Marc Gasol each scored 17 points, and Fred VanVleet had 13 points. Ibaka also grabbed 13 rebounds.

Powell, Ibaka and VanVleet led a

strong showing by Toronto's bench that made the difference.

"I'm going out there and trying to impact the game where I see that I can," Powell said. "Just take what the defense is giving me and just stay confident in my reads. Just try to follow the game

### BASKETBALL

flow. We're just playing for one another. We were talking to each other on different shots, different reads that are there."

Khris Middleton amassed 30 points, six rebounds and seven assists for the Bucks. Giannis Antetokounmpo added 25 points and 10 rebounds, and Nikola Mirotic contributed 11 points.

"They did a great job on us defensively," Middleton said. "They took advantage of some of our defensive coverages and just made shots. For the most part,

they got anything they wanted. We've got to be better."

The Raptors led by as many as 16 points during the third quarter and had a 13-point margin entering the fourth.

"I think defensively, just tonight didn't feel like where we need to be defensively, as good as we need to be," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said. "They got to good spots. They shared the ball. They passed it. They made open shots. They made some high-degree-of-difficulty shots, so that's a bad combination. They're making open looks, and then they're making tough ones, too."

VanVleet sank a 3-pointer that bounced around the rim several times before dropping in. Ibaka knocked down a free throw, and Powell hit a one-footer to put Toronto ahead by 20 points with 8:35 to play in the game.

The Bucks crept within 14, but Lowry's layup had the lead at 21 with 3:50 to

go. Ibaka's dunk bumped the lead to 25.

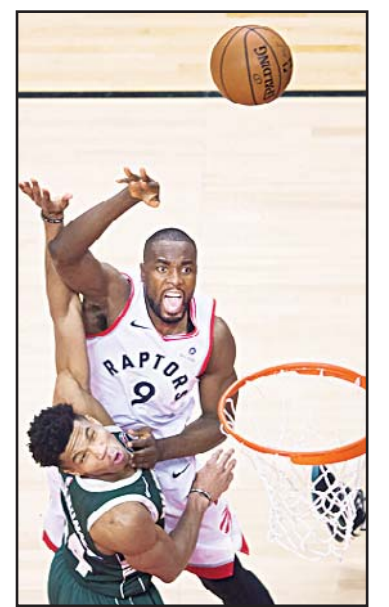
The Raptors led 32-31 after one quarter, and they scored the first nine points of the second quarter to increase the margin to 10. Middleton's 3-pointer with 7:08 remaining in the first half trimmed the deficit to five.

George Hill made two free throws to reduce the margin to four with 3:08 left, but Toronto went up by nine on Powell's 3-pointer with 1:53 left.

The Raptors led 65-55 at halftime with Lowry scoring 18 points. Middleton had 16 first-half points for Milwaukee. The Raptors led by 13 early in the third quarter on Pascal Siakam's layup and free throw.

The Raptors had the lead as high as 14 before the Bucks went on a 7-0 surge to cut the gap in half.

Toronto pulled away again, taking a 12-point lead on Leonard's step-back jumper with 3:15 remaining.



Toronto Raptors center Serge Ibaka (9) scores past Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo (34) during the first half of Game 4 of the NBA basketball playoffs Eastern Conference Finals on May 21 in Toronto. (AP)



Toronto Raptors guard Danny Green (right), scores past Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo (34) during the first half of Game 4 of the NBA basketball playoffs Eastern Conference Finals on May 21 in Toronto. (AP)

## Sarri to discuss future with Chelsea after final

LONDON, May 22, (Agencies): Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri will discuss his future with the club after next week's Europa League final against Arsenal.

Sarri led the team to third place in the Premier League and a return to the Champions League.

With two years remaining on his Chelsea contract, Sarri says he will speak to the club after next Wednesday's final "to know if they are happy with me."

The former Napoli coach has been linked with a return to Italy to fill the vacant job at Juventus.

Sarri says he is "very, very happy but we have to discuss the situation. It's normal. You have to discuss things with the club."

Meanwhile Chelsea's new forward Christian Pulisic believes he can reach the same level as Stamford Bridge talisman Eden Hazard and is hoping to team up with the Belgian playmaker next season.

The 20-year-old US international Pulisic joined Chelsea from Borussia Dortmund in January for

a reported fee of 58 million pounds (\$73.40 million) but was immediately loaned back to the German club for the rest of the season.

With Hazard, 28, linked by British and Spanish media with a move to Real Madrid in the close season, Pulisic could be asked to fill the void and feels he is ready for the challenge.

Hazard has won two Premier League titles, the FA Cup, league Cup and Europa League crown in seven years at the club.

Asked if he could be as good as Hazard, Pulisic told Sky Sports: "Of course, I want to believe that I can be the best player I can possibly be."

"That's why I work so hard every day and why I thought it was necessary for me to take this next step in my career and to come here. I have so much more to learn as a player and am excited to see what the future holds."

"It's a great compliment (to be compared to Hazard), he's obviously much further along in his ca-

reer than I am. He is an unbelievable player."

Pulisic, the most expensive American soccer player of all time, could be Chelsea's only new signing ahead of the 2019-20 campaign as they face a two-window transfer ban.

He has mostly played on the right wing for Dortmund this sea-

### SOCCER

son but could be asked to move to the left flank or take up the number 10 role depending on Hazard's future at the club.

"I guess I have a similar style with an attacking and creative mindset like he does, he's very quick and shifty," Pulisic added.

"There's a lot to learn from him. It would be a great goal to do what he does. Everyone can see he is an unbelievable player and I would be honoured to play alongside him."