

'I got the gold but it's not the end of everything'

Olympic hopeful Cheruiyot pushed by fellow Kenyan runner

NAIROBI, Nov 28, (RTRS): When Kenyan runner Timothy Cheruiyot is sprinting to the finish at the world's top races he knows one man can stand between him and gold: his best friend.

The shy 24-year-old trains alongside fellow Kenyan Elijah Manangoi, 26, who was the 1,500 metres world champion until Cheruiyot took the title this year.

The pair's coach Bernard Ouma loves their "sibling rivalry", praising Manangoi's speed, Cheruiyot's endurance and their drive to outperform each other.

"Tim is working extra-hard to catch up with him. And this is putting Elijah on his toes - 'ah! This young boy should not catch up with me!'" said coach Ouma, channelling his elder protege.

Cheruiyot was already coming close by 2017, taking silver 38 seconds behind Manangoi at the 1,500 metres world championships.

"My toughest athlete (has been) my partner Manangoi - I love how he trains," Cheruiyot told Reuters at his training camp at the Rongai Athletics Club, located on the outskirts of Nairobi.

This year, Cheruiyot won the Diamond League trophy for the third time in a row and in October took his first 1,500 metres world championships gold in punishingly hot Doha.

The heat woke Cheruiyot at 5 am on race day. He had hamstring tightness and was missing friend Manangoi, whose injury meant he was unable to

defend his title.

He put that out of his mind to focus on the goal.

No pacing. No tricks. No partner. Just run. Fast.

In the lead from the gun, Cheruiyot finished in 3 minutes 29.26 seconds, more than two seconds ahead of Algeria's Taoufik Makhloufi.

"I got the gold but it's not the end of everything," said Cheruiyot, whose new dream is next year's Tokyo Olympics.

The worst day of his career was in

OLYMPICS

2016 when he missed qualifying for the Rio tournament by half a second.

The eldest of four siblings, he was born to tea and maize farmers in a west Kenyan village.

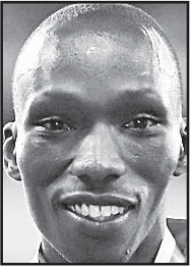
He started running to-and-from primary school, was competing at regional level by high school, but returned to the farm in 2011. Fortunately, friends encouraged him to keep running.

One was neighbour and local coach Jonathan Bellion, who developed a programme and pushed him to rest between races and eat a balanced diet. "He taught me how to run," Cheruiyot said.

His preferred race at the time was the 800 metres.

At the 2014 trials for the World Under-20 Championships in Kenya, he had to finish in the top two to qualify, but came third, seconds separating him from his dream.

But the strong, 6-foot (183 cm) 18-year-old with a rugged run had impressed an onlooker - coach Ouma, who saw a future champion. "I decided, let me polish him and see how fast he can run."



Cheruiyot



In this Feb 7, 2014 file photo Alexander Zubkov of Russia carries the national flag as he leads the team during the opening ceremony of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. At left is model Irina Shayk carrying the Russian placard. (AP)

Clean athletes to compete as neutrals

Russia 'readies' for 2020 Tokyo Olympics despite potential ban

MOSCOW, Nov 28, (RTRS): The head of Russia's Olympic Committee said on Thursday it was carrying on with preparations for the Tokyo Olympics next year and criticised World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) recommendations to punish some Russian Olympic officials as excessive and wrong.

A WADA committee recommended this week that Russia be banned from the Olympics and world championships

power for our team to compete in Tokyo under the Russian flag."

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) said this week that it welcomed the opportunity for clean Russian athletes to compete, saying WADA had not indicated "any wrongdoing by the sports movement in this regard, in particular the Russian Olympic Committee or its members."

Pozdnyakov, a five-time Olympic medalist in fencing, criticised a recommendation that would bar senior officials from Russia's Olympic Committee and Paralympic Committee from participating or attending major sporting events for four years.

"We consider the measures proposed by the committee to be excessive, inappropriate and wrong," Pozdnyakov told reporters.

Russia was banned by the IOC from last year's Pyeongchang Winter Games as punishment for state-sponsored doping at the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

But many Russian athletes with no history of doping were nonetheless cleared to compete as neutrals.



Pozdnyakov



Los Angeles Kings goaltender Jonathan Quick (right), stops a shot next to New York Islanders' Anders Lee (27) during the first period of an NHL hockey game on Nov 27 in Los Angeles. (AP)

Sundqvist scores twice as Blues edge past Lightning

Stastny's OT goal caps comeback, Vegas pip Preds 4-3

TAMPA, Florida, Nov 28, (AP): Oskar Sundqvist had two goals before leaving with an injury, and the St Louis Blues beat the Tampa Bay Lightning 4-3.

Zach Sanford and Brayden Schenn scored in the third period and Jordan Binnington stopped 32 shots for the defending Stanley Cup champions. Ivan Barbashev had three assists after going six games without a point.

Sundqvist left in the second with a lower-body injury.

Tampa Bay got goals from Nikita Kucherov, Anthony Cirelli and Brayden Point. Andrei Vasilevskiy made 29 saves.

After Sanford scored the tiebreaker from the right circle at 8:21 of the third, Schenn made it 4-2 at 11:07 on the power play shortly after a 5-on-3 ended.

Flames 3, Sabres 2, OT

In Buffalo, NY, Elias Lindholm scored on a wraparound 1:17 into overtime to lift Calgary over Buffalo.

Matthew Tkachuk had a goal and set up the winner for the Flames, still playing without embattled coach Bill Peters. T.J. Brodie also had a goal and an assist, and David Rittich stopped 34 shots as Calgary improved to 2-0-1 in its past three games, and with associate coach Geoff Ward behind the bench.

Peters has been accused of using racist slurs against a Nigerian-born player 10 years ago while the two were in the minors with the Chicago Blackhawks. Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour on Wednesday backed another former player's allegation that Peters kicked and punched players on the bench during his time as Carolina coach.

Peters acknowledged using offensive language in dealing with forward Akim Aliu in writing a letter of apology addressed to Flames general manager Brad Treliving, and obtained by TSN, a Canadian sports cable network.

Without specifically referencing the words he used, Peters wrote his comments to Aliu were the source of both anger and disappointment in the letter posted on Twitter during the third peri-

od. Peters added the incident was made in a moment of frustration and did not reflect his personal values.

Peters said he regretted the incident and apologized to anyone negatively affected by it.

Golden Knights 4, Predators 3, OT

In Nashville, Tenn, Max Pacioretty tied it with less than a second left in regulation and Paul Stastny scored at 1:52 of overtime to give Vegas a comeback victory over Nashville.

Mark Stone, Reilly Smith and Pacioretty each had a goal and an assist for the Golden Knights, who snapped a three-game losing streak. Malcolm Subban made 31 saves for his first win of the season.

Mikael Granlund and Matt Duchene both contributed a goal and an assist for the Predators. Ryan Ellis also scored and Roman Josi added two assists.

Rangers 3, Hurricanes 2

In New York, Adam Fox had a goal and an assist, Henrik Lundqvist stopped 41 shots and New York held off Caro-

lina.

Mika Zibanejad scored in his return after missing 13 games with an upper body injury. Brendan Smith also had a goal and Artemi Panarin added two assists to help the Rangers build a 3-0 lead in the first period and improve to 9-4-1 in their last 14 games.

Panarin has at least one point in 15 of the last 16 games.

Maples Leafs 6, Red Wings 0

In Detroit, Andreas Johnsson had two goals and an assist, and Toronto routed skidding Detroit for its third straight win under new coach Sheldon Keefe.

Frederik Andersen made 25 saves for his 17th career shutout.

Tyson Barrie and William Nylander each had a goal and an assist. John Tavares and Travis Dermott also scored, and Ilya Mikheyev and Morgan Rielly added two assists apiece.

Detroit has lost seven straight (0-5-2) and was shut out for the second consecutive game. The Red Wings have not scored in 156:28 and have allowed 13

straight goals since Taro Hirose scored in the second period of Saturday's 5-1 loss to New Jersey.

Jimmy Howard made eight saves for Detroit before limping off the ice with trainer Piet Van Zant after Tavares' goal halfway through the first period made it 3-0. Backup goalie Jonathan Bernier was not on the bench because he was ill, but took over for Howard after a delay that lasted more than five minutes. Bernier finished with 40 saves.

Penguins 8, Canucks 6

In Pittsburgh, Kris Letang capped a wild comeback, scoring the deciding goal with 3:06 to play, and Pittsburgh rallied with six goals in the third period to beat Vancouver.

Letang's slap shot from the right circle beat Thatcher Demko, completing the Penguins' comeback from a 6-3 deficit.

Evgeni Malkin scored twice and had three assists, and Jake Guentzel had two goals and two assists.

Guentzel, on a three-game scoring streak, has 14 goals this season and six goals and 12 points during a six-game point streak.

Bryan Rust had a power-play goal and three assists, and Dominik Kahun and Zach Aston-Reese also scored for Pittsburgh, which extended its point streak to seven games.

Tristan Jarry stopped six shots in relief of Matt Murray, who made 10 saves in two periods.

Bruins 2, Senators 1

In Ottawa, Ontario, Zdeno Chara broke a tie midway through the third period in Boston's victory over Ottawa.

Brad Marchand also scored and Tuukka Rask made 33 saves. The Bruins have won five straight and 10 in a row against the Senators.

Thomas Chabot scored for Ottawa, and Anders Nilsson stopped 19 shots. The Senators had won five in a row at home.

Coyotes 4, Ducks 3, SO

In Glendale, Arizona, Christian Dvorak scored in the fourth round of a shootout after getting two goals in regulation to help Arizona beat Anaheim.

Alex Goligoski scored to force overtime and Darcy Kuemper stopped 31 shots as the Coyotes won for the fourth time in six games.

Brendan Guhle, Sam Steel and Troy Terry scored for the Ducks, who have lost four of five. John Gibson finished with 25 saves.

Avalanche 4, Oilers 1

In Denver, Nathan MacKinnon had a goal and an assist as part of a three-goal flurry early in the third period that carried Colorado past Edmonton.

Nazem Kadri, Logan O'Connor and Matt Nieto also scored for the Avalanche, who unleashed a season-high 50 shots on goal against Mikko Koskinen. The Oilers had 30 fewer shots, getting their lone goal from Juhar Khaira.

Jets 5, Sharks 1

In San Jose, California, David Gustafsson scored his first NHL goal and Kyle Connor had a goal and an assist as Winnipeg beat San Jose.

Patrik Laine, Mark Scheifele and Jack Roslovic also scored for the Jets, who began a three-game road swing through California by improving to 9-2-1 over their past 12 games.

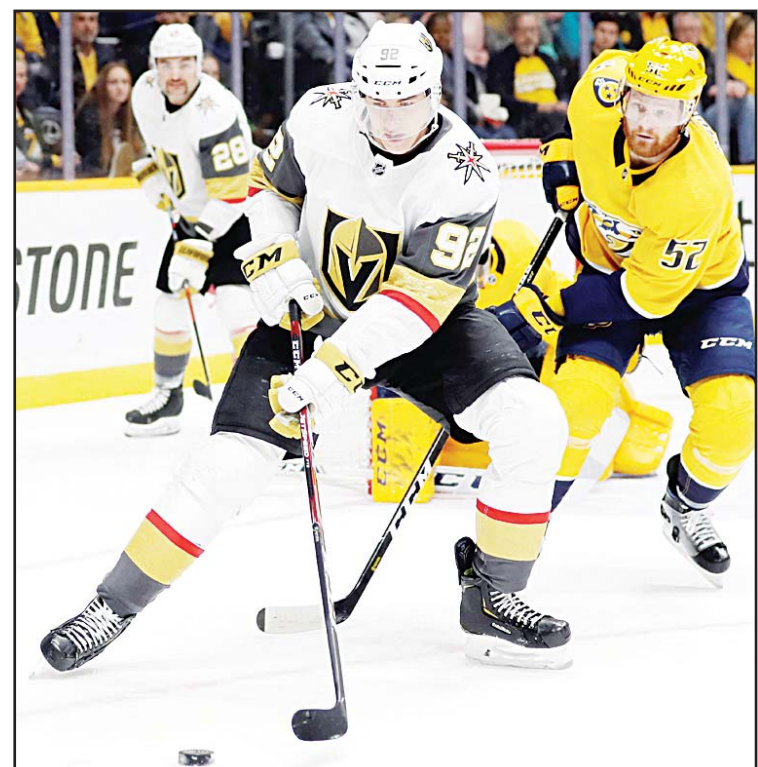
Winnipeg got two goals in each of the first two periods to open a comfortable lead and slow down the Sharks, who had won 10 of 11 to begin a climb up the Pacific Division standings.

Kings 4, Islanders 1

In Los Angeles, Dustin Brown and Alex Iafallo each had a goal and an assist. Jonathan Quick stopped 24 shots and Los Angeles Kings topped New York.

Jeff Carter had a power-play goal and Matt Roy also scored to help the Kings win for the fifth time in eight games (5-2-1).

Derick Brassard scored for the Islanders, who went 0-2-1 in their three-game California trip. Semyon Varlamov made 26 saves in his first regulation loss in 10 starts.



Vegas Golden Knights left wing Tomas Nosek (92), of the Czech Republic, moves the puck in front of Nashville Predators defenseman Matt Irwin (52) in the first period of an NHL hockey game on Nov 27, in Nashville, Tenn. (AP)

NHL Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, Nov 28, (RTRS): Results and standings from the NHL games on Wednesday.

Team	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	Pts	Team	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	Pts
Calgary	3	3	0	93	62	39	Washington	4	4	0	78	72	36
Philadelphia	3	3	0	91	93	29	Las Vegas	4	4	0	72	62	32
Toronto	6	6	0	87	85	28	Arizona	4	4	0	73	74	31
NY Rangers	3	3	0	81	83	27	Colorado	8	2	0	85	70	30
Boston	2	8	2	83	72	26	Nashville	11	9	4	84	82	26
Pittsburgh	8	7	1	71	76	26	Chicago	10	9	5	69	69	25
St Louis	4	13	1	66	74	23	Minnesota	10	11	4	69	82	24
				59	104	17							

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