

# Lightning outlast Blue Jackets in 5 OT thriller

Flames, Golden Knights win

**TORONTO, Aug 12, (AP):** Brayden Point scored 10:27 into the fifth overtime, and the Tampa Bay Lightning beat the Columbus Blue Jackets 3-2 on Tuesday in the fourth-longest game in



Columbus Blue Jackets center Liam Foudy (19) celebrates the goal by teammate Oliver Bjorkstrand (28) behind Tampa Bay Lightning goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy (88) during the second period of an NHL Eastern Conference Stanley Cup first-round playoff hockey game in Toronto on Aug 11. (AP)

**Stanley Cup playoff history.**

Point scored from just above the left circle, beating Joonas Korpi after the goaltender made an NHL-record 85 saves. Point also scored way back in the first period of Game 1 of the best-of-seven series.

Vezina Trophy finalist Andrei Vasilevskiy was outstanding for Tampa Bay, making 61 stops. The teams combined for 151 shots – most in a NHL game since the league began officially tracking the statistic in 1955-56.

Game 2 is Thursday. Pierre-Luc Dubois scored on the power play and Oliver Bjorkstrand added a goal late in the second period to give Columbus – the No. 7 seed in the East – a pair of short-lived leads in regulation.

Yanni Gourde had the other goal for the second-seeded Lightning.

The five-overtime thriller led the NHL to postpone the playoff opener between Boston and Carolina to Wednesday. The Bruins and Hurricanes were supposed to play at Scotiabank Arena after the Blue Jackets-Lightning game.

**Flames 3, Stars 2**

Rasmus Andersson snapped a

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tie after Dillon Dube scored twice in the first period, leading Calgary to the victory in Game 1 of their first-round playoff series.

Andersson scored on a rush with four minutes left in the second period, with the defenseman taking a strong shot and the puck skirting over the top of defenseman Andrej Sekera's stick blade on its way to the net.

Cam Talbot stopped 24 shots for the Flames, including a power-play attempt by Joe Pavelski with 10 seconds left in the game.

Game 2 is Thursday. Dallas got even in the second when Denis Gurianov and captain Jamie Benn scored in a nine-second span. Anton Khudobin had 23 saves for the Stars.

**Golden Knights 4, Blackhawks 1**

Shea Theodore and William Carrier scored 2:17 apart midway through the second period, Robin Lehner made 19 saves against his former team, and Vegas beat Chicago in Game 1 of the teams' Stanley Cup playoffs first-round matchup.

Riley Smith scored twice in the third period as the top-seed in the Western Conference maintained its high scoring ways. The Golden Knights scored 15 goals in the three seeding games and didn't slow down against the Blackhawks.

Game 2 is Thursday. David Kampf scored short-handed for the Blackhawks in the second period thanks largely to the work of Brandon Saad forcing a turnover, but that was the extent of Chicago's scoring.



Calgary Flames' Noah Hanifin (55) checks Dallas Stars' Roope Hintz (24) during the second period of a first-round NHL Stanley Cup playoff hockey game in Edmonton, Alberta on Aug 11. (AP)

**Delay is to protect the health and safety of all participants from COVID-19**

## WC further behind schedule with Asian games off

GENEVA, Aug 12, (AP): All Asian qualifying games for the 2022 World Cup scheduled this year were postponed to 2021 on Wednesday, adding to a global fixture backlog for soccer's biggest competition caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation issued a joint statement saying the delay is to protect the health and safety of all participants from COVID-19. The games will be rescheduled in 2021.

Each of 40 nations involved were due to play three or four rounds to complete the current phase of World Cup qualifying in Asia which now fell further behind schedule with no games played in 2020.

FIFA's global calendar of national-team games now has too few dates to complete the qualifying program as originally planned after the latest round of postponements.

The slots in June 2022 protected for national-team games are fast becoming key to deciding the 32-nation World Cup lineup. Yet those dates are available only because of the disputed FIFA decision in 2015 to move the finals tournament to November and December to avoid Qatar's searing summer heat.

Soccer governing bodies for Europe and South America already proposed changes to make space for more national-team games.

UEFA is adding a third game into traditional double-header weeks for national teams, ahead of losing dates

for World Cup qualifiers in June 2021 when the postponed 2020 European Championship is played. However, this solution is more complicated for other continents with greater travel demands, including for Europe-based players.

South America's CONMEBOL has yet to start its scheduled 18-round World Cup qualifying group and asked FIFA for an extra block of games in January 2022. That will likely be unpopular with European clubs if they are required to release players for additional weeks in what

will already be a congested season.

FIFA and the AFC said they would work together "to identify new dates for the respective qualifying matches." The four rounds of games postponed Wednesday would have completed the second round of World Cup qualifying in Asia, that also feeds into teams advancing to the 2023 Asian Cup hosted by China.

The eight group winners and the four best runners-up advance to the third stage of qualifying for the finals tournament in Qatar 2022.

Japan lead their group after four

straight wins without conceding a goal. South Korea, a 2002 World Cup semifinalist, are in a tight group tied with North Korea and Lebanon, and trailing leaders Turkmenistan by a point.

Australia also have four straight wins to be two points clear of Kuwait and Jordan. Syria have won five straight to lead their group by eight points from China and the Philippines.

The next scheduled phase involves 12 nations in two round-robin groups of 10 games for each team. Those will send four teams to Qatar.

Two further playoff rounds are in the intended Asian program. Two

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teams would play a two-leg series to decide which advances to an inter-continental playoff round with one nation from each of South America, Oceania and North American region CONCACAF.

FIFA already pushed back the inter-continental round from March 2022 to June that year because of the pandemic.

Across AFC member countries, domestic leagues have resumed in under strict health protocols in China, Japan, South Korea and Australia. The Chinese government said last month it would not host any international sports event for the rest of 2020 unless it was to test venues for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

## Ex-Juve 'defender' Lichtsteiner retires

BERN, Switzerland, Aug 12, (AP): Switzerland and former Juventus defender Stephan Lichtsteiner retired from soccer Wednesday after being denied the chance to end his career at the European Championship.

The 36-year-old right back said in a Swiss soccer federation statement it became clear after Euro 2020 was postponed by one year because of the pandemic that it was "a good moment" to retire.

A tenacious and feisty competitor, Lichtsteiner's 108 appearances for Switzerland included going to the last three World Cups and Euros 2008 and

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2016. He was captain at Euro 2016 and the 2018 World Cup where the Swiss lost each time in the round of 16.

Lichtsteiner helped Juventus win the Serie A title in each of his seven years in Turin and reach two Champions League finals. He played in the 2015 loss to Barcelona and was an unused substitute two years later when Real Madrid won.

Lichtsteiner started his career with Swiss club Grasshopper and also played for Lille, Lazio and Arsenal before completing his career in Germany with Augsburg.

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A Barcelona player has tested positive for the coronavirus, the club said Wednesday, adding that he is not in its Champions League squad.

Barcelona did not identify the player but said he had "not been in contact with any of the senior team players who are scheduled to travel to Lisbon" on Thursday.

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