



Chicago Blackhawks left wing Brandon Hagel (38) and Carolina Hurricanes center Jordan Staal (11) fight for the puck during the second period of an NHL hockey game, on Feb 2, in Chicago. (AP) — See Page 15

Sports

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Rights groups call for boycott of Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics

Tokyo Games offer Playbooks to assure athletes, sway public



Brooklyn Nets guard Kyrie Irving (11) defends against Los Angeles Clippers guard Paul George during the second half of an NBA basketball game, on Feb. 2, in New York. (AP)

TOKYO, Feb 3, (AP): It will be an Olympics like no other, the world's largest mega-sports event being staged in the middle of a pandemic.

Tokyo organizers and the IOC on Wednesday began explaining in public just how they hope to do it, rolling out "Playbooks" to detail the ways that 15,400 athletes will enter Japan - and exit Japan - with the Olympics opening on July 23 and the Paralympics a month later.

"There are indeed a lot of questions in the public domain about how the games will take place this summer. And today is a preliminary review of how things will be done," Olympic Games executive director Christophe Dubi said in a video news conference with Tokyo officials.

The rollout of the Playbooks is aimed at assuring athletes, and an attempt to convince the Japanese public that the Olympics should go ahead. Polls across Japan show up to 80% want the Olympics postponed or canceled. The public sees the health risk in a country that has controlled the virus better than most.

The Playbook introduced on Wednesday is aimed at international sports federations and technical officials. Guides for athletes, broadcasters and the media will come in the next few days. They are all similar, and these are all the "first versions." Much of the information is still vague with more details coming in updates in April and June.

The IOC held a similar session earlier in the week with Olympic athletes and their representatives to explain the stringent guidelines in their rule books.

On that video conference, obtained by The Associated Press, IOC President Thomas Bach spelled out the large unknown.

"At this moment in time, no scientist can predict the health situation in 206 national Olympic committees at the time of the Olympics," Bach told the athletes, adding the IOC was learning day to day and asked for the athletes' patience.

Games operation director Pierre Ducrey explained the general procedure for entering Japan. Both Dubi and Ducrey called the Playbooks a "framework."

"In the playbook we are documenting what will be the typical journey for a stakeholder group starting with measures 14 days prior to departure," Ducrey said. "Including a test before you leave your county, a test upon the time you enter the country, and testing for each stakeholder group while they are in Japan."



Bach

OLYMPICS

Olympics officials said they expect athletes to be tested at least every four days. They are being encouraged to arrive in Japan five days before their event and leave two days after.

Dubi was asked about fans. It seems clear that fans from abroad will not be allowed but he did not confirm it.

"The decision is not made at this point in time but at some point in the course of spring we will have to make this decision regarding the number of spectators - the proportion of spectators in the stadium - and the also the question of spectators from outside," Dubi said.

The rollout comes two weeks after a British newspaper, citing an unnamed Japanese government official, said the Olympics would be canceled. The IOC and Japanese organizers have pushed back for two weeks, and the Playbooks offer some concrete plans after months of vague talk.

"No matter what situation would be with the coronavirus, we will hold the games," Yoshiro Mori, the president of the Tokyo organizing committee and a former Japanese prime minister, told lawmakers on Tuesday. "We should pass on the discussion of whether we will hold the games or not, but instead discuss how we should hold it."

The Playbooks spell out strict behavior in regard to entering Japan and leaving the country. They deal with hygiene, testing, immigration and a code of conduct that will prohibit athletes from any tourism.

Olympic officials have documented thousands of sports events that have taken place in the last 10 months - some with fans, some without - and they believe they can do the same on an Olympic scale at dozens of venues spread across a Tokyo metropolitan area of about 35 million.

"Sports events are taking place, athletes are training and competing, but we know that we are facing a huge challenge - that is to create a bubble for all athletes," Lucia Montanerella, head of IOC media operations, told a panel discussion a week ago. "One thing is to create a bubble for 200 athletes, and a very different thing is to create a bubble for thousands of athletes of different sports."

Meanwhile, a coalition of 180 rights groups on Wednesday called for a boycott of next year's Beijing Winter Olympics tied to reported human rights abuses against ethnic minorities in China.

The games are to open in one year, on Feb. 4, 2022, and are set to go forward despite the pandemic.

The coalition is composed of groups representing Tibetans, Uighurs, Inner Mongolians, residents of Hong Kong and others.

The group has issued an open letter to governments calling for a boycott of the Olympics "to ensure they are not used to embolden the Chinese government's appalling rights abuses and crackdowns on dissent."

Rights groups have previously asked the Switzerland-based International Olympic Committee to move the games from China. The IOC has largely ignored the demands and says it's only a sporting body that does not get involved with politics.

Nets cool off Clippers

VanVleet sets Raptors mark with 54 in 123-108 win

NEW YORK, Feb 3, (AP): Kyrie Irving scored a season-high 39 points, including eight straight in the fourth-quarter run that sent Brooklyn into the lead for good, and the Nets beat the Los Angeles Clippers 124-120.

Kevin Durant added 28 points, James Harden had 23 points, 14 assists and 11 rebounds, and the three stars scored all the points in the decisive 13-0 spurt. The Nets held on from there to snap the Clippers' three-game winning streak.

Kawhi Leonard scored 33 points and Paul George had 26 for the Clippers, who entered with the NBA's best record and lost for just the second time in 12 games.

BASKETBALL

They had a five-point lead midway through the fourth before Durant hit a 3-pointer. Irving followed with one of his own, then made a basket and another 3. Harden finished off the spurt with a 3, making it 110-102 with 4:10 to play.

The Clippers got it down to one in the final seconds before Irving's free throws closed it out.

Raptors 123, Magic 108

In Orlando, Florida, Fred VanVleet set a franchise record with 54 points and hit a career-best 11 3-pointers as Toronto beat depleted Orlando.

VanVleet made 11 of his first 12 attempts from 3-point range. He finished 17 of 23 from the field and 9 for 9 at the free throw line to surpass the previous Raptors record of 52 points scored by DeMar DeRozan against Milwaukee on Jan. 1, 2018.

According to the Elias Sports Bureau, it was the most points in an NBA game for an undrafted player - eclipsing the 53 scored by Hall of Fame big man Moses Malone on the exact same date 39 years ago.

The fifth-year guard out of Wichita State easily topped his previous high of 36 points set last season. VanVleet's previous best for 3s in a regular-season game was seven. He made eight in a playoff game last year against Brooklyn.

Once 2-8, the Raptors won for the seventh time in 11 games. They beat the reeling Magic for a second time in three nights and for the seventh consecutive time over the past three seasons.

Norman Powell had 23 points for Toronto, and Kyle Lowry posted a triple-double with 14 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists.

Nikola Vucevic had 21 points and 18 rebounds for the Magic, who have lost 12 of 14.

Celtics 111, Warriors 107

In San Francisco, Jayson Tatum had 27 points in picking up the offensive slack for Boston without injured Marcus Smart, and the Celtics withstood another scoring spree by Ste-



Toronto Raptors guard Fred VanVleet (right) goes up against Orlando Magic guard Evan Fournier for a shot during the second half of an NBA basketball game, on Feb. 2, in Orlando, Florida. (AP)

phen Curry to beat Golden State.

Curry scored 38 points with seven 3-pointers and joined late Hall of Famer Wilt Chamberlain as the only Warriors to score 17,000 points for the franchise.

Jaylen Brown, back in the Bay Area where he starred as a college player at California in Berkeley, had 18 points and 10 rebounds. Boston snapped a two-game skid with its fourth straight victory against Golden State, ending the Warriors' three-game home winning streak.

Trail Blazers 132, Wizards 121

In Washington, Damian Lillard scored 32 points, Gary Trent Jr added 26 while hitting

seven 3-pointers and short-handed Portland held off Washington.

Enes Kanter had 14 points and 15 rebounds for the Trail Blazers, who improved to 2-2 on their six-game road trip.

Carmelo Anthony had 21 points off the bench and Robert Covington added 19 for the Blazers, who have been without starters CJ McCollum (foot), Jusuf Nurkic (wrist) and Derrick Jones Jr (foot) for at least three games each.

Fill-in starter Nassir Little was also out Tuesday with a sprained left knee.

Russell Westbrook had a triple-double with 17 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists for the Wizards, the only NBA team without five wins this season. Bradley Beal scored 37 points and Rui Hachimura added 24.

Pacers 134, Grizzlies 116

In Indianapolis, Domantas Sabonis had a season-best 32 points and 13 rebounds to help Indiana snap Memphis' seven-game winning streak.

Sabonis made 11 of his first 12 shots and had 24 points and 11 rebounds by halftime. It was his 14th double-double in 16 starts.

Malcolm Brogdon added 23 points and Myles Turner scored 22 for the Pacers, who set a season high for points.

The Grizzlies entered with the NBA's longest active win streak and ended up one victory shy of matching the franchise record of eight straight wins set four times, most recently in 2015.

Dillon Brooks led Memphis with 25 points.

Jazz 117, Pistons 105

In Salt Lake City, Donovan Mitchell scored 32 points to lead Utah past Detroit.

Mike Conley added 20 points and Bojan Bogdanovic had 18 for the Jazz, who reclaimed the NBA's best record. Royce O'Neale finished with 12 points and 13 rebounds as Utah (16-5) won its ninth straight home game.

Jerami Grant scored 27 for the Pistons (5-16).

NBA Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, Feb 3, (AP): Results and standings from the NBA games on Tuesday.

Toronto	123	Orlando	108
Brooklyn	124	LA Clippers	120
Portland	132	Washington	121
Indiana	134	Memphis	116
Utah	117	Detroit	105
Boston	111	Golden State	107

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division			
Philadelphia	15	6	714
Brooklyn	14	9	609
Boston	11	8	579
Toronto	9	12	429
New York	9	13	409

Southeast Division

Atlanta	10	10	500
Charlotte	10	11	476
Orlando	8	14	364
Miami	7	13	350
Washington	4	13	235

Central Division

Milwaukee	12	8	600
Indiana	12	9	571
Cleveland	10	11	476
Chicago	8	11	421
Detroit	5	16	238

Western Conference

Southwest Division			
Memphis	9	7	563
Houston	10	9	526
San Antonio	11	10	524
Dallas	8	13	381
New Orleans	7	12	368

Northwest Division

Utah	16	5	762
Denver	12	8	600
Portland	11	9	550
Oklahoma City	8	11	421
Minnesota	5	15	250

Pacific Division

LA Clippers	16	6	727
LA Lakers	16	6	727
Phoenix	11	8	579
Golden State	11	10	524
Sacramento	9	11	456

Marseille's Villas-Boas suspended for offering to resign over transfer

PARIS, Feb 3, (AP): Marseille suspended coach Andre Villas-Boas for handing in his resignation because of a conflict with the club's board over transfer decisions.

SOCCER

Villas-Boas offered to stay in charge if his resignation was not accepted but Marseille reacted angrily to his public remarks. At a news conference, the former Chelsea and Tottenham manager disagreed with the club's decision to hire Olivier Ntcham on loan from Celtic without letting him know.

"The mercato (transfer window) ended with the arrival of a new player," Villas-Boas said. "It's a decision that is not made by me. I learned

it this morning from the press when I woke up. It is a player for whom I said no."

Marseille boosted its midfield by grabbing Ntcham on the final day of the window on Monday. Villas-Boas added he was also informed very late of the departure on loan to Hertha Berlin of Serbian winger Nemanja Radonjic.

"I do not agree with the sporting policy," said Villas-Boas, speaking on the eve of Marseille's game at Lens. "This club has already lived through two or three years of nonsense in terms of transfers."

Marseille said Villas-Boas' comments targeting Pablo Longoria, the director in charge of football, were "unacceptable" and raised the possibility of sanctions against the Portuguese coach following a disciplinary procedure.



Exile Tibetans use the Olympic Rings as a prop as they hold a street protest against the holding of 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing in Dharmasala, India, on Feb 3. (AP)