

SPORTS

Shiffrin gets 1st slalom win in 1 year

'I just felt alive'

FLACHAU, Austria, Jan 13, (AP): Not known for exuberant victory celebrations, Mikaela Shiffrin let out a loud scream this time after crossing the finish line.

Shiffrin's victory in a night slalom Tuesday was unlike most of her previous 67 World Cup wins.

In the last slalom before next month's world championships, Shiffrin ended a year-long victory drought in her strongest discipline and earned her 100th World Cup podium.

"I felt, like, inspired, I just felt alive. I was pushing. It's hard to explain. I wish I could explain," said the American, who was away from the circuit for much of 2020 because of the death of her father and a back injury.

Shiffrin is the 2014 Olympic gold medalist and four-time world champion but last triumphed in slalom in December 2019.

On Tuesday, she held on to her opening-run lead and beat Katharina Liensberger by 0.19 seconds following a near-flawless final run, denying the Austrian her maiden career win, and the Austrian team a first slalom win since November 2014.

SKIING

Liensberger is the only skier to finish in the top three of all five slaloms so far this season.

"So much energy has been building up, it all, like, went out on that run," said Shiffrin. "What can I say? That's cool."

After dominating the circuit for three straight seasons, Shiffrin lost her overall title to Federica Brignone last year.

The American has been gradually working her way back after her 10-month break. She won her first race since her return at a giant slalom in France in December before adding the second on Tuesday.

"All of the pieces that go into race day came together tonight. It's amazing, but it doesn't mean it's fixed yet," she said. "Tonight was really, really good."

The result made Shiffrin the eighth skier in the 54-year-long history of the World Cup to reach 100 podium finishes.

On the women's side, only Lindsey Vonn (137), Annemarie Moser-Proell (114), Renate Goetschl (110) and Vreni Schneider (101) have more top-three finishes than Shiffrin.

"I definitely wasn't thinking about records today," the American said. "I just wanted to ski well. This slope kind of tripped me up the last couple of years and I just wanted to ski, like, I don't know, strong and inspired. It's really, really fun tonight."

Wendy Holdener was 0.43 behind in third, extending her record to 25 podiums without winning a race in the slalom discipline.

Overall World Cup leader Petra



United States' Mikaela Shiffrin speeds down the course during an alpine ski, women's World Cup slalom in Flachau, Austria, on Jan 12. (Inset): Shiffrin poses with the trophy after winning an alpine ski, women's World Cup slalom. (AP)

Vlhova, who won three of the previous four slaloms this season, placed fourth.

Michelle Gisin in fifth was 1.52 off the lead. Two weeks ago, Gisin won in another Austrian resort, Semmering, to become the first skier other than Shiffrin or Vlhova to win a World Cup slalom in 29 races since January 2017.

Shiffrin also led the slalom in Semmering after the first run before dropping to third.

"When you're leading in the first run, and in the second run, you're standing at the top, the wait is forever," the American said. "In Semmering I felt that, and I was like: 'I can't do it.' Today, I felt that, and every second I was thinking: 'Let me go, let me go, let me go!' Like, I wanted to go now. That was very exciting."

Shiffrin has finished on the podium here all eight times she competed in the floodlit race since 2013, including four wins.

She has won a record 44 World Cup

slaloms and 68 races overall, putting her in outright third place on the all-time winners list, one ahead of Marcel Hirscher.

Only Ingemar Stenmark (86) and Vonn (82) have more wins.

Shiffrin led a strong showing by the US ski team, with Paula Moltzan in ninth earning her first top-10 result in slalom.

A.J. Hurt finished 29th for her career best in the discipline. Hurt had not scored World Cup points before this season but now has top-30 finishes in four different events.

Camille Rast of Switzerland, a late starter with bib No. 57 who had not qualified for a second run before, was 14th after the opening run and finished the race in sixth.

The women's World Cup continues with two giant slaloms in Kranjska Gora this weekend, after the races were moved from another Slovenian resort, Maribor, because of a lack of snow.

Sabalenka wins 3rd straight title in Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates, Jan 13, (AP): Aryna Sabalenka won her third straight tour title and 15th straight match by beating Veronika Kudermetova 6-2, 6-2 Wednesday in the Abu Dhabi Open final.

The fourth-seeded Belarusian, who won indoor tournaments in

TENNIS

Ostrava and Linz at the end of last season, last lost in the third round of the French Open in October.

"I was doing everything I could in each match from the

beginning (in Abu Dhabi) and I'm happy to start the season with a title," Sabalenka said. "I'm going to Australia, I'm confident with one thing, that

I will do everything I can to win matches."

Sabalenka will rise three places to seventh in the rankings. She is 9-4 in career finals and 6-0 in the last 16 months.

Kudermetova was playing in her first tour final.

"I think today is not my day because I was very slow," Kudermetova said. "I had a lot of mistakes."

The tournament in Abu Dhabi was hastily arranged by the WTA to offer players more match time after the Australian Open was rescheduled for February amid the coronavirus pandemic. It is the only WTA Tour event outside Australia in the run-up to the first major of the year.

Sabalenka and Kudermetova will now travel to Australia, where they will spend time in quarantine with limited practice opportunities ahead of the Australian Open and its warm-up events.



Sabalenka

MLB Roundup

Tigers avoid arbitration with Fulmer

Senzatela & Rockies agree to \$3 million, one-year contract

DENVER, Jan 13, (AP): Antonio Senzatela and the Colorado Rockies agreed to a \$3 million, one-year contract that avoided salary arbitration.

A right-hander who turns 26 on Jan. 21, Senzatela was 5-3 with a 3.44 ERA in 12 starts last year. He earned \$212,407 prorated from a \$573,500 salary and had been eligible for arbitration for the first time.

Seven Rockies remain eligible to exchange proposed arbitration salaries on Friday: right-handers Carlos Estévez, Mychal Givens, Jon Gray and Robert Stephenson, left-hander Kyle Freeland, second baseman Ryan McMahon and outfielder Raimel Tapia.

Right-hander **Michael Fulmer** and the **Detroit Tigers** agreed to a \$3.1 million, one-year contract that avoided arbitration.

The 2016 AL Rookie of the Year went 0-2 with an 8.78 ERA in 10 starts last season after missing all of 2019 because of Tommy John surgery. He earned \$1,037,037 in prorated pay from a \$2.8 million salary.

Eight Tigers remain eligible to swap proposed salaries Friday: right-handers **José Cisnero**, **Buck Farmer** and **Joe Jiménez**, left-handers **Matt Boyd** and **Daniel Norris**, shortstop **Niko Goodrum**, third baseman **Jeimer Candelario** and outfielder **JaCoby Jones**.

Detroit also announced that Steve Chase has been promoted to major league strength and conditioning coach after 16 seasons working in the organization's player develop-

ment system. He spent the last six seasons as minor league strength and conditioning coordinator.

Carlos Carrasco got a welcome call from new Mets owner **Steven Cohen**.

"He was so excited. He can't wait to meet me. I can't wait to meet him, too," the pitcher said Tuesday. "The way he talked, the way he said everything is - he looked like a really nice guy."

New York has bulked up since Cohen completed his \$2.4 billion purchase of New York from the **Wilpon** and **Katz** families on Nov. 6. Carrasco is expecting a postseason contender.

"I'm so happy right now. I wish spring training started next week, to meet everyone and start wearing this jersey," Carrasco said during a news conference. "It's something really important for me, just wearing this jersey right now."

Francisco Lindor smiled widely for a full 40 minutes, enthralled to join a **New York Mets** team bulking up under new owner **Steven Cohen**.

"They say it's probably very contagious," the Mets' new shortstop said. "I'm living my dream. I'm living the life I always wanted, so I don't see why not."

Cleveland traded the four-time All-Star to New York along with pitcher **Carlos Carrasco** on Thursday for infielders **Andrés Giménez** and **Amed Rosario** plus a pair of minor league prospects, right-hander **Josh Wolf** and outfielder **Isaiah Greene**.

"I'm excited to be with the Mets organization. I'm not against a long term. I'm not against it," Lindor said in a news conference from Florida, wearing his new team's royal blue cap. "It has to make sense of both sides."

It would be cheaper for us to shut the doors and not play: Bettman

NHL gambles on getting through pandemic outside a bubble

WASHINGTON, Jan 13, (AP): When the NHL charter flight back from the Edmonton bubble landed in New Jersey, Gary Bettman's phone started ringing.

The commissioner thought he'd get a couple of weeks to exhale after awarding the Stanley Cup to the Tampa Bay Lightning. Instead, it was back to work.

Of course, planning for the 2021 season began well before late September. It took a long-term extension of the collective bargaining agreement between the league and players' union, layers of health and safety protocols, realigned divisions and convincing multiple government agencies that it is safe to play.

The season opens Wednesday and Bettman estimates the league will lose over \$1 billion even by playing. It's a gamble everyone was willing to make to keep hockey going during the pandemic.

"It would be cheaper for us to shut the doors and not play," Bettman said

ICE HOCKEY

Monday. "We're coming back to play this season because we think it's important for the game, because our fans and our players want us to, and it may give people, particularly those who are back in isolation or where there are curfews, a sense of normalcy and something to do."

None of the four major North American men's professional sports leagues rely as much on attendance as the NHL: Roughly 50% of all revenue comes from ticket sales, concessions and other in-arena elements. That's why the league and players prioritized extending the CBA before completing last season in twin playoff bubbles; they knew no fans slashes revenue for everyone.

The agreement gave the NHL a blueprint to operate and labor peace through at least 2026. "You always have to make judgments about what you think the future's going to hold and how do you attempt to maximize the benefits and minimize the detriments, mitigate your risks, take advantage of opportunities and so on," NHLPA executive direc-



In this Dec 12, 2019, file photo, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman speaks with members of the media before being inducted into the US Hockey Hall of Fame in Washington. (AP)

tor Don Fehr said in a phone interview. "I think the agreement that we reached last summer, certainly from the players' standpoint, was fair and reasonable and appropriate, and took all of those things into account. And I don't second guess it."

Living by the terms of that agreement means some short-term pain for owners now, and Bettman warned recently that players could have to repay some money later based on the 50/50 split of revenue. But that was just one part of the puzzle of pulling all this together, which started with when to begin play and how to do it.

With the clock ticking down in mid-December, the sides agreed to open training camps for most teams just after Jan 1 and drop the puck Jan. 13. Each team is scheduled to play 56 all divisional games during the regular season set to run until May 8, though the Dallas Stars' outbreak and delayed start has already forced the question of how to handle various situations.

On the eve of the season opener, the league announced Tuesday 17 of the 27 players with confirmed positive test results for the coronavirus from Dec 30-Jan 11 are on Dallas, with the other 10 from eight other teams.

There's no hard and fast rule on how many positive test results would endanger a game and the addition of taxi

Colliton agrees to 2-yr extension

Wild extend forward Foligno with 3-year, \$9.3 million deal

ST. PAUL, Minnesota, Jan 13, (AP): The Minnesota Wild have signed forward Marcus Foligno to a three-year, \$9.3 million contract extension, coming off the best season of his NHL career.

The deal takes a potential free agent off the market next summer and keeps Foligno in the fold through 2024. The 29-year-old had

25 points and a plus-8 rating, both career highs, in 2019-20 despite playing in only 59 games. Foligno also led the Wild with 184 hits.

He is ninth in the league with 1,446 hits since the start of the 2013-14 season.

Foligno has been playing right wing on the third line with Jordan Greenway and Joel Eriksson Ek in training camp this month with the Wild, who open at Los Angeles on Thursday.

Foligno was acquired by Minnesota from Buffalo in a trade for Jason Pominville and Marco Scandella on June 30, 2017. He played six seasons for the Sabres, his hometown team.

Chicago Blackhawks coach **Jeremy Colliton** agreed to a two-year contract extension on the eve of his third season with the team.

Colliton is 62-58-17 since he replaced Joel Quenneville in Novem-

ber 2018, becoming the 38th coach in franchise history. He guided Chicago into the postseason last year, winning a four-game series against Edmonton before being eliminated by Vegas.

Colliton's extension runs through the 2022-23 season. The Blackhawks open this season on Colliton's 36th birthday on Wednesday at Stanley Cup champion Tampa Bay.

Colliton was coaching at Rockford in the American Hockey League when he got the job with Chicago. He also played in the NHL, appearing in 57 games with the New York Islanders.

Willie O'Ree, who broke the NHL's color barrier, is set to have his jersey retired by the **Boston Bruins**.

O'Ree will have his No. 22 jersey honored prior to the Bruins' Feb. 18 game against the **New Jersey Devils**, the team announced Tuesday.

He became the league's first Black player when he suited up for Boston on Jan. 18, 1958, against the **Montreal Canadiens**, despite being legally blind in one eye. O'Ree played two seasons for the Bruins, retiring from professional hockey in 1979.

He also donned No. 18 and No. 25 during his time with the Bruins but wore number 22 in the bulk of his games with the club.

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squads of four to six players mitigates the risk. Watching other leagues postpone and reschedule games has helped, as has regular communication among medical experts.

Players are tested daily and all arenas except for three - Florida Panthers, Arizona Coyotes and the Stars - will



Foligno