

Coe urges persuading Japan that Games will be safe

All Roads - blocked off roads - lead to Tokyo Olympics

TOKYO, June 8, (AP): Roads were being closed off Tuesday around Tokyo Olympic venues, including the new \$1.4 billion National Stadium where the opening ceremony is set for July 23.

This is a clear sign that Tokyo Olympic planners and the International Olympic Committee are moving forward despite public opposition, warnings about the risks of the games becoming a spreader event, and Tokyo and other parts of Japan being under a state of emergency until June 20.



Coe

"Today we are only 45 days away from the opening ceremony, although the state of emergency is in effect and the situation remains severe nationwide," organizing committee President Seiko Hashimoto told an executive board meeting Tuesday. "The number of new COVID-19 cases in Tokyo has started to decrease little by little and we strongly hope the situation will be under control as soon as possible."

New infections in Tokyo are down to around 500 cases a day from 1,000 a month ago. The number of hospitalizations and the seriously ill have also decreased, but the levels are still higher than some levels of last fall when COVID-19 variants were not prevalent in Japan.

Experts last week on the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's pandemic panel said that movement of people in central Tokyo had been rising for three weeks. They warned new infections could rebound if people continue to increase their mobility.

OLYMPICS

The Prime Minister's office said that 3.66% of Japanese were fully vaccinated as of Monday. It said 10.7% had at least one shot in what has been a slow vaccine rollout.

Japan has attributed about 13,500 deaths to COVID-19, good by some standards but not as low as many countries in Asia.

Dr. Hiroshi Oshitani, a virologist at Tohoku University and a government adviser, reminded about the potential spread of infection in Japan and in other countries after the Olympics.

"The government and the IOC... keep saying they're holding a safe Olympics," Oshitani was quoted saying in the Times of London. "But everybody knows there is a risk. It's 100% impossible to have an Olympics with zero risk."

Pushback against the Olympics remains strong with 50-80% opposed to the games going ahead depending how the question is phrased. Saitama prefecture, just north of Tokyo, on Monday called off plans for two public viewing areas.

Kaori Yamaguchi, an Olympic bronze medalist for Japan in judo in 1988 and a Japanese Olympic Committee board member, wrote last week that Tokyo and Japan had been "cornered" into holding the Olympics.

The IOC is pressing ahead, reliant on broadcast rights for 73% of its income.

Japan has officially spent \$15.4 billion to organize the Olympics, and government audits say it's much larger. All but \$6.7 billion is private money. The IOC's overall contribu-



Winnipeg Jets goaltender Connor Hellebuyck makes a save against Montreal Canadiens' Phillip Danault during second-period NHL Stanley Cup playoff hockey action in Montreal, on June 7. (AP)

tion is about \$1.5 billion.

In the latest numbers provided by local organizers, 11,090 Olympians are lined up to enter Tokyo. In addition, 59,000 other people will enter for the Olympics.

They include: Olympic Family (3,000); national Olympic committees (14,800); international sports federations (4,500); Olympic Broadcasting Service and other broadcasters (16,700); media (5,500); others (14,500).

So that means 70,090 for the Olympics.

The Paralympics involve 4,400 athletes, plus 19,000 more in categories similar to the Olympic breakdown.

That's 23,400 for the Paralympics, meaning 93,490 for both events. Organizers say this number is 50% less than the original forecast of 180,000 entering for the Paralympics and Olympics.

Meanwhile, Olympic sports must do more to persuade Japanese people about how much work they have done to organize a safe Tokyo Games, athletics leader Sebastian Coe said on Tuesday.

Public opinion in Japan consistently maintains canceling the Olympics that open on July 23. This is despite sports bodies working thousands of hours to create health protocols and "understanding the nature of the challenge," World Athletics president Coe told a meeting of Summer Games sports officials.

Toffoli's overtime goal leads Habs to series sweep of Jets

Islanders win to take 3-2 lead in series over Bruins

MONTREAL, June 8, (AP): Tyler Toffoli scored at 1:39 of overtime, lifting the Montreal Canadiens to a 3-2 victory over the Winnipeg Jets and a four-game sweep of their second-round playoff series.

Toffoli took a cross-crease pass from Cole Caufield and beat Connor Hellebuyck with a one-timer for the winner and his fourth goal of the postseason.

Erik Gustafsson and Artturi Lehkonen scored in regulation for Montreal, which has won seven straight playoff games since trailing Toronto 3-1 in the opening round. Toffoli, who scored 28 times in the regular season, also had an assist.

ICE HOCKEY

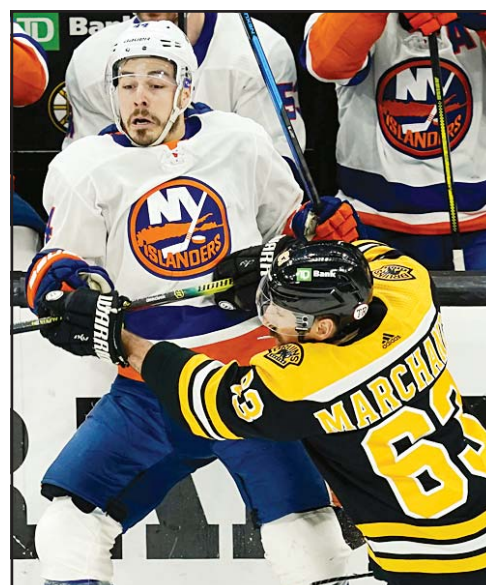
Carey Price made 14 saves for the North Division's No. 4 seed in front of another boisterous crowd of 2,500 fans at the Bell Centre.

The 16th and final team to qualify for the playoffs after winning just one of their final nine regular-season games in regulation, the Canadiens are the first club to make the semifinals of the Stanley Cup tournament this year.

Montreal awaits the winner of the Colorado-Vegas series, which is tied 2-2. Game 5 is Tuesday night in Denver.

The Canadiens improved to 34-0 all-time when leading a series 3-0, and added to their NHL record with the franchise's 23rd sweep.

Rookie defenseman Logan Stanley had two goals for Winnipeg, which was coming of a sweep of its own in the first round against Edmonton. The Jets were without No. 1 center Mark Scheifele after he was suspended four games for charging Montreal forward Jake Evans in the series opener.



Boston Bruins center Brad Marchand (63) checks New York Islanders center Jean-Gabriel Pageau (44) into the boards at the Islanders bench during the first period of Game 5 of an NHL hockey second-round playoff series, on June 7, in Boston. (AP)

Hellebuyck stopped 39 shots.

Montreal opened the scoring on the power play at 8:01 of the first period on Gustafsson's first career playoff goal, and first with the Canadiens since being acquired from Philadelphia before the trade deadline. After Winnipeg's Nate Thompson failed to get the puck out of his own zone, the Canadiens worked it back to Gustafsson, who pump-faked a one-timer before changing the angle and firing through a screen on Hellebuyck.

Montreal made it 2-0 with 51 seconds left in the

period when Lehkonen won a battle for positioning in front - something Winnipeg was unable to do at either end of the ice throughout the series - and tipped Brett Kulak's point shot for his second goal in as many games.

Stanley cut the Jets' deficit to 2-1 when he took a pass and moved down to the left circle before wiring a shot upstairs on Price's short side just 1:40 into the second.

Stanley, who had only one NHL goal before Monday, tied it at 2 at 5:29 moments after Hellebuyck made a nice save on Brendan Gallagher when he took a pass from Kyle Connor after coming off the bench and beat Price upstairs on a one-timer.

Islanders 5, Bruins 4

In Boston, Mathew Barzal scored one power-play goal and assisted on another, and Semyon Varlamov stopped 40 shots to give the New York Islanders a 5-4 victory over the Boston Bruins and a 3-2 lead in their second-round playoff series.

The Islanders, who have won two in a row to take their first lead in the series, can advance to the Stanley Cup semifinals in Game 6 at home on Wednesday.

Kyle Palmieri, Josh Bailey and Jordan Eberle all scored in the second period, when the Islanders opened a 4-2 lead. Brock Nelson made it 5-2 just two minutes into the third, after Jeremy Swayman replaced Tuukka Rask in Boston's goal.

But David Pastrnak scored his second of the game two minutes later, and David Krejci brought Boston within one goal with five minutes left in the third period. The Bruins pulled Swayman in the final two minutes for an extra skater, but managed just one more shot to add to their 44-19 advantage in shots on goal.

Boston fans pelted the ice with cups and giveaway towels after what could be the final horn of the season.

Rask stopped 12 of 16 shots before Swayman made his playoff debut to start the third period. The rookie made two saves on three shots - the first on a short-handed breakaway by Eberle.



People walk near the Olympic Rings, on June 2, in Tokyo. (AP)

Rio Olympic tennis gold medalist Monica Puig to miss Games

Refugee team of 29 athletes picked for Tokyo Olympics

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, June 8, (AP): The refugee team for the Tokyo Olympics has 29 athletes competing in 12 sports.

The team selected by the International Olympic Committee on Tuesday was drawn from 55 athletes who fled their home countries and got scholarships to train for the games in a new home country.

OLYMPICS

The 29 - a rise from 10 in the inaugural refugee team at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics - are originally from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Congo, Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela.

They will compete in swimming, athletics, badminton, boxing, canoeing, cycling, judo, karate, shooting, taekwondo, weightlifting, and wrestling.

"You are an integral part of our Olympic community, and we welcome you with open arms." IOC president Thomas Bach told the athletes when

announcing their selection, adding they would "send a powerful message of solidarity, resilience and hope to the world."

The team will be managed in Tokyo by officials from the IOC and the

United Nations' Geneva-based refugee agency, the UNHCR.

"Surviving war, persecution and the anxiety of exile already makes them extraordinary people," UNHCR High

Commissioner Filippo Grandi said in a statement, "but the fact that they now also excel as athletes on the world stage fills me with immense pride."

Reigning Olympic tennis gold medalist Monica Puig will miss the Tokyo Games and the rest of the season after having surgery on her right shoulder.

Puig, who became the first athlete to win gold for Puerto Rico in any sport at an Olympics with her triumph at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games, announced in a video message posted on her Instagram account Sunday that she had a second operation to repair her rotator cuff and biceps tendon.

Two-time medalists Folu Akinradewo Gunderson and Jordan Larson headline the 12-player U.S. women's volleyball team picked to compete at the Olympics in Tokyo.

Akinradewo Gunderson and Larson were part of the U.S. team that won a silver medal in 2012 in London and a bronze in 2016 in Rio de Janeiro.



In this Aug. 13, 2016 file photo, Monica Puig, of Puerto Rico, returns to Germany's Angelique Kerber in the gold medal match of the women's tennis competition at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. (AP)

Detry, Molinari, Van Driel tie in 2nd

Armitage shoots 7-under 65 to win European Open by 2 shots

HAMBURG, Germany, June 8, (AP): Marcus Armitage shot a 7-under 65 Monday to win the three-day European Open by two shots.

The Englishman, who was at par after the opening round and 1-under after the second, made six birdies and an eagle to get 8-under 216 for his first European Tour title in his 71st appearance.

The 33-year-old Armitage bogeyed the 16th hole after a misjudged putt from more than 100 feet and produced a remarkable chip to save par on the 17th after an overly cautious tee shot.

Matthew Southgate looked most likely to reach Armitage's total but dove into the water on the final hole for a 71 to finish in a tie for second.

Thomas Detry (69), Edoardo Molinari (70) and Darius Van Driel (70) also finished in a tie for second.

Previous champion Paul Casey, who won in 2019, shot 68 and finished sixth at 4-under.

GOLF

The tournament at Green Eagle Golf Courses was shortened to 54 holes - and its start postponed by two days to Saturday - to allow players and tour staff from Britain extra time to deal with Germany's travel restrictions.

Armitage's win is the fourth consecutive victory by an English player at the event after Casey, Richard McEvoy and Jordan Smith.

Declining coronavirus infections allowed fans to attend a European Tour event for the first time since 2019.



Armitage