

Dykhuis knuckler lifts Fliers over Sabres in OT

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Karl Dykhuis' knuckling shot from the point gave the Philadelphia Flyers a 4-3 overtime victory Sunday over the Buffalo Sabres in the first game of their Eastern Conference playoff series.

Dykhuis' shot bounced past Buffalo goalie Dominik Hasek at 10:06 of the overtime as the Flyers won without injured superstar Eric Lindros. Lindros, who has a bruised left eye, isn't expected back for Monday night's second game of the series.

The Sabres tied the game at 3-3 on Jason Dawe's second goal of the game at 12:33 of the third period. Flyers defenseman Eric Desjardins kicked a clearing pass from the corner to Dawe, who whacked the puck past Flyers goalie Ron Hextall from in close.

The Flyers rallied from a 2-1 deficit, scoring twice in the second period's final three minutes to take a 3-2 lead into the third period.

Pat LaFontaine snapped a 1-1 tie with a power-play goal 3:15 into the middle period. Taking a pass from Donald Audette, he went in alone on Hextall from the blue line, eventually beating the goaltender with a fake and a short wrist shot.

Philadelphia tied it at 16:51 following a 3-on-2. Brent Fedyk swept a pass from the corner toward the crease and the puck banked in off the skate of Buffalo defenseman Richard Smehlik. The unassisted goal was credited to Fedyk.

The Flyers made it 3-2 at 18:19 when Hasek was knocked to the ice by Buffalo's Alexi Zhitnik and Philadelphia's Rob DiMaio as the two battled in front of the Sabre net.

Kevin Haller picked up a loose puck and slapped a 25-footer into the open net.

Alexander Mogilny set up Buffalo's first goal, thanks to an observant Garry Galley.

Galley spotted Mogilny loitering at the Philadelphia blue line and slipped a pass through center ice to the Sabre winger, creating a 2-on-1 with Dawe. Mogilny stepped around Desjardins, then passed to Dawe coming down the left wing. Dawe beat Hextall between the legs 1:47 into the game.

A misplay by Hasek allowed Philadelphia to tie the score at 1-1 at 10:18 of the first period.

Hasek failed to handle a shoot-in behind the net and the puck skidded to Shjon Podein. He carried it back behind the net before passing to DiMaio in the slot. The uncovered DiMaio beat Hasek between the pads with a quick shot.

Devils 5, Bruins 0

BOSTON (AP) — Forward Claude Lemieux, usually known more for his defense, turned into an offensive star for New Jersey with two first-period goals as the Devils beat the Boston Bruins 5-0 Sunday in Game 1 of their Eastern Conference playoff series.

Martin Brodeur stopped all 23 Bruins shots for his second career playoff shutout. He also shut out Boston on May 9 last year during the Devils' six-game, second-round victory.

Boston rookie Blaine Lacher allowed four goals on 17 shots before being replaced 14:59 into the second period by Craig Billington, who stopped five of six shots the rest of the way.

Game 2 of the best-of-seven series is Monday night. The Bruins need a victory to assure themselves of another game in the Boston Garden before they move

to the FleetCenter beginning next season.

A rookie who was 19-11-2 in the regular season, Lacher was beaten twice by deflected shots and twice on 2-on-1s in his first playoff appearance.

He was at Lake Superior State when the Bruins lost to the Devils last year, with Boston star Cam Neely also missing that series, because of a knee problem.

And Lemieux made sure neither one of them would be a factor this time, either. It's usually Lemieux's job to shadow Neely.

Still upset over the teams' March 2 meeting, when Lemieux goaded Neely into an early game misconduct, the Garden fans booed the Devils' forward at his introduction and cheered when he wound up on his pants after his first encounter with Neely.

Boston's plan to negate him seemed to be working when Neely got the puck in the slot and Lemieux had to take a hooking penalty to keep him from getting a clean shot. But before the Bruins could get a shot off, Don Sweeney evened the sides with a charging penalty.

Blues 2, Canucks 1

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The St. Louis Blues took the first step toward consecutive Stanley Cups for Mike Keenan Sunday, getting power-play goals from Brett Hull and Adam Creighton in a 2-1 first-round playoff victory over the Vancouver Canucks.

The Blues, who tied for the third-best record in the regular season, outshot the Canucks 36-26. They also blanked Vancouver on five power plays, extending a drought to 1-for-22, including a holding-the-stick penalty on Brendan Shanahan with 7:08 to play.

Goalie Curtis Joseph made one of his best saves late in the game, sliding to stop Jeff Brown's shot from the left side of the net with 4:38 to go. Canucks goalie Kirk McLean — named the game's No. 1 star — had an even stronger game, robbing Hull alone three times.

Hull was held to one assist in four regular-season games against Vancouver. He was stopped on a one-timer from in front of the net late in the first period and hit the crossbar late in the second. McLean bobbled his drive in the first minute of the third and ended up sitting on it as it slid past him.

Pavel Bure, who led the NHL with 60 goals while leading Vancouver to the Stanley Cup finals last year, scored for the Canucks.

Al MacInnis, back in the lineup after missing five games with a separated shoulder, assisted on both St. Louis goals. The Blues are 14-3-1 in their last 18 games at the new Kiel Center.

Maple Leafs 5, Blackhawks 3

CHICAGO (AP) — Mats Sundin scored twice as the Toronto Maple Leafs renewed their postseason mastery of the mistake-prone Chicago Blackhawks by opening the playoffs with a 5-3 victory Sunday night.

The Blackhawks, who lost to Toronto in six games last season, have dropped 13 of their last 15 playoff games and are trying to avoid falling in the opening round for the third consecutive year. They play host in Game 2 Tuesday night.

Chicago certainly was a generous host in Game 1, making mistakes on all five Toronto goals. The Blackhawks looked nothing like the strong defensive team that ended the regular season

with a five-game winning streak.

Felix Potvin, who won three 1-0 decisions over Chicago in last year's playoffs, wasn't as sharp this time. But he didn't have to be, as the Maple Leafs controlled most of the game.

The Maple Leafs trailed 2-1 until Chicago goalie Ed Belfour was beaten from a bad angle by Paul DiPietro with 33.7 seconds left in the second period.

At 1:25 of the third, the Blackhawks failed to clear the puck and Dave Andreychuk centered to Mike Gartner, who got behind defenseman Gerald Diduck and tipped the puck past Belfour.

Toronto clinched the game when Sundin scored with 9:10 to play and Andreychuk followed with a goal 14 seconds later. Sundin and Andreychuk each beat a Chicago player to a loose puck to score.

Red Wings 4, Stars 3

DETROIT (AP) — Detroit's quest for its first Stanley Cup championship in 40 years got off to the start Red Wings fans have

been praying for with a 4-3 victory Sunday over the Dallas Stars.

Vyacheslav Kozlov snapped a 3-3 tie at 10:15 of the third period as the Red Wings beat the Stars in the opener of their Western Conference quarterfinal series.

It was a huge relief for the 19,875 partisan fans at Joe Louis Arena. Detroit has finished with the best record in the conference, yet lost in the first round of the playoffs the last two seasons. The Red Wings lost to San Jose in seven games last year and in seven to Toronto in 1993.

Game 2 against the Stars is scheduled for Tuesday night in Joe Louis Arena. Action then shifts to Dallas.

Sharks 5, Flames 4

CALGARY, Alberta (AP) — The San Jose Sharks opened the NHL playoffs like they did last year with an upset victory, shocking the division-winning Calgary Flames 5-4 Sunday night behind Jamie Baker's two goals.

Ex-Flame Sergei Makarov,

Mike Rathje and Ulf Dahlen also scored for the Sharks, who lead the best-of-7 Western Conference quarterfinals 1-0. Game 2 will be played Tuesday.

The Sharks picked up where they left off last year, when they finished last in the conference but upset the first-place Detroit Red Wings in the opening round of the playoffs. They lost the conference semifinal to Toronto in seven games.

Paul Kruse, Theoren Fleury, Steve Chiasson and German Titov scored for Calgary, which hasn't won the opening game of the playoffs since 1988. The Flames also haven't won a playoff series since their 1989 Stanley Cup championship.

Robert Reichel could have tied the game in the dying seconds, but his shot at an open net missed.

Flames captain Joe Nieuwendyk missed the game with a lower-back injury. He had the injury examined in Los Angeles but returned to Calgary for the game.

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