

MLB

Bautista's blast sends Blue Jays to ALCS

Associated Press

TORONTO — The Toronto Blue Jays clinched their first trip to the American League Championship Series since 1993, overcoming one of the most bizarre plays in playoff history when Jose Bautista hit a three-run homer after three Texas Rangers errors for a 6-3 victory Wednesday in the deciding Game 5 of the Division Series.

The Blue Jays became the third team to win a best-of-five series after losing the first two games at home. They play the winner of Game 5 between Houston and Kansas City later Wednesday. Game 1 of the ALCS is Friday night.

Bautista's homer capped an event-filled, 53-minute

seventh inning that took a turn when Toronto catcher Russell Martin's throw back to the pitcher deflected off batter Shin-Soo Choo and allowed the tiebreaking to score.

The Blue Jays filed a protest after an umpire review ruled Rowned Odor was allowed to cross home plate. Toronto fans pelted the field with debris during the 18-minute delay.

The Rangers started the bottom half by making three straight errors, and Toronto rallied.

Roberto Osuna got the final five outs for his first postseason save.

Osuna turned toward the outfield after striking out Wil Venable, looked to the sky and was mobbed by his teammates as jubilant fans

cheered.

After Edwin Encarnacion tied it 2-all with a second-deck drive off tough-luck loser Cole Hamels in the sixth, Odor led off the seventh with a single and went to third on a sacrifice and groundout.

With Choo up, Martin's throw back to reliever Aaron Sanchez deflected off Choo and dribbled toward third base.

Home plate umpire Dale Scott initially ruled it a dead ball but, after Rangers manager Jeff Banister questioned the call, the umpires huddled and Odor was sent home.

Fans littered the field with objects during the delay as umpires sorted out a play that is certain to rank up there with Derek Jeter's Jeffrey

Maier homer or Reggie Jackson's hip block of a throw as one of the craziest in the postseason.

According to rule Major League Baseball rule 6.03(a) (3), the batter is not to be charged with interfering with the catcher if the batter is still in the batter's box and doesn't make a movement to block or disrupt the throw.

This type of play is not subject to manager's review but Scott, the crew chief, after discussing the ruling with Blue Jays manager John Gibbons, called an umpire's review. After a delay of 2 minutes, 32 seconds, the play stood and fans continued to throw objects on the field.

The Blue Jays filed a protest.

No need for the paperwork, though.

KANSAS CITY 7, HOUSTON 2 — In Kansas City, Johnny Cueto delivered a masterpiece on his biggest stage yet, pitching eight dominant innings Wednesday night and leading the resilient Kansas City Royals to a 7-2 victory over the Houston Astros and back to the American League Championship Series.

Cueto allowed two hits, a single by Evan Gattis followed by Luis Valbuena's second-inning homer, before retiring the final 19 batters he faced. He struck out eight without a walk in the kind of clutch performance the Royals expected when they traded for him.

When Wade Davis breezed through the ninth, the Royals poured onto the field to celebrate.

The defending AL champs

will host the Toronto Blue Jays in Game 1 on Friday night. The teams have met once before in the ALCS with the Royals winning in seven games in 1985 — they would go on to beat the St. Louis Cardinals for their only World Series triumph.

"Johnny Cueto was unbelievable," Royals manager Ned Yost said. "He knew the magnitude of this game. I think we all did. And he came out from the first pitch and had everything going."

Still, the Royals trailed 2-1 in the fifth when Alex Rios led yet another comeback with a go-ahead, two-run double. Eric Hosmer and Ben Zobrist also drove in runs, while Kendrys Morales capped the festive night with a three-run homer off Dallas Keuchel in the eighth to put it away.

FOOTBALL: Riverside, Umatilla try to reverse trends in Eastern Oregon League openers

Continued from 1B

It's just a matter of getting these kids to believe."

Here's what to watch for in the region's other Friday football match-ups, all games are at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted:

IRRIGON at WESTON-MCEWEN — At Athena, two one-loss teams try to keep their title hopes alive in this Columbia Basin Conference match-up.

Irrigon (5-1, 1-1 CBC) was dealt its first loss of the season last week when it's high-scoring offense could muster just seven points in the second half. The Knights may find points tougher to come by this week facing a Weston-McEwen (4-2, 1-1) defense that has allowed just 19 points in two league games.

The TigerScots shut out Pilot Rock 57-0 last week with back-ups playing most of the second half, and enter the game ranked sixth in scoring defense (14.3 ppg)

and eighth on offense (36.5 ppg).

Irrigon opened CBC play with a 60-54 win over Culver before falling to Stanfield last week and enters ranked third in offense (48 ppg) and 10th in defense (22.5 ppg).

CULVER at PILOT ROCK — The Rockets are still looking for their first win and both teams are looking for their first league victory this season.

Culver (2-4, 0-2 CBC) scored 54 points in its Columbia Basin Conference opener but was shut out last week against a stingy Heppner defense. The Bulldogs are ranked 12th on offense (29.5 ppg) and 31st on defense (44.8 ppg).

Pilot Rock (0-5, 0-2) also was shut out last week in a lopsided loss at Weston-McEwen, and enters the game ranked 30th on offense (14.6 ppg) and 32nd on defense (48.2 ppg).

ONTARIO at MAC-HI — At Milton-Freewater,

the Ontario Tigers (0-6, 0-1 GOL) roll in to face the Pioneers (0-6, 0-1) coming off a 29-13 loss to Baker in their Greater Oregon League opener. Mac-Hi was dismantled at La Grande 56-3 in its opener, and although both teams have yet to win a game, Ontario didn't face any school smaller than a 3A OSAA classification during the preseason. Mac-Hi's schedule shows three losses to Class 2A or equivalent schools this year.

Ontario is 35th in Class 4A in scoring offense (9.8 ppg) and 27th in defense (31.7 ppg). Mac-Hi is 37th on offense (3.8 ppg) and 38th on defense (45.7 ppg).

UMATILLA at NYSSA, 6 p.m. — You'd have to go back to the 2008 season to find Umatilla's last win over Nyssa, but the Vikings (4-2) are hoping to end that in each team's Eastern Oregon League opener.

Nyssa (3-2) is 0-2 at home and had last week's game against The Dalles cancelled.

The Bulldogs lost to Baker, 14-8, their last time out, but do enter the game with the second-ranked defense (13.6 ppg). Their offense is ranked just 22nd (18 ppg), however. Umatilla lost on the road at King's Way Christian (Vancouver, Wash.) last week, and is ranked 15th on offense (22.8 ppg) and tied for 20th on defense (23 ppg).

RIVERSIDE at VALE, 6 p.m. — The Pirates (2-3) have never beaten Vale in the modern era, and are 0-7 against the Vikings (4-1) since the creation of the Eastern Oregon League in 2006. The series took a two-season hiatus as Riverside played an independent schedule, but Friday's game marks its return to the EOL ranks.

Riverside did not play last week, and beat Portland Christian 34-14 in its most recent game. The Pirates are 19th in Class 3A on offense (20.6 ppg) and 21st on defense (29.2 ppg). Vale also took a bye last week

with its last win coming over Ontario, 48-17. The Vikings are sixth on offense (37 ppg) and tied for 20th on defense (23 ppg).

ECHO at ELGIN — Elgin is 3-2 playing an independent schedule and both teams have claimed wins over Harper-Huntington this season. Elgin beat Tekoa-Rosalia (Wash.) 68-26 last week and is averaging 49.6 points a game on offense against 35.6 on defense.

Echo (2-4) has lost three straight and is coming off a 62-22 defeat against Joseph. The Cougars are averaging 35 points on offense and 35.3 allowed on defense.

ARLINGTON / CONDON at SHERMAN — At Moro, the Honkers were unable to get their offense going against Dufur in a 14-6 loss last week that spoiled their undefeated season. But Arlington (4-1, 3-1 SD4) faces a more porous defense this week as Sherman (4-2, 4-0 SD4)

allows 38.7 points a game on average. The Honkers are giving up just 8.4 points a game on defense and were averaging 48 points a game headed into the meeting with Dufur.

Sherman beat Dufur 32-30 in Week 2 of the league season and is coming off a 70-34 win over Mitchell/Spray/Wheeler.

IONE at MITCHELL/SPRAY, 1 p.m. — At Mitchell, two teams on lengthy losing streaks look to right the ship in Special District 4 action. The Cardinals (1-4, 0-3 SD4) have dropped three straight and are coming off a 62-20 loss to Perrydale. Ione averages 26.8 points on offense and 41.2 allowed on defense.

The Loggers (2-4, 0-3) have lost four in a row and fell to Sherman 70-34 last week. Mitchell averages 26.8 points on offense and 43.8 allowed on defense.

East Oregonian sports reporter Matt Entrup contributed to this report.

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