

Junior Hockey

# Slovakia scores late to upset US 3-2 at world juniors

By JONAH BRONSTEIN  
Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Samuel Bucek scored an unassisted goal with 2:08 remaining in the third period to give Slovakia a 3-2 victory over the United States at the world junior hockey championship on Thursday.

Filip Krivosik scored the other two goals for Slovakia, and Roman Durny made 43 saves in his world junior debut.

Casey Mittelstadt and Brady Tkachuk had goals for the U.S., which had won nine straight world junior games entering the night. The U.S. began its streak with the 2016 bronze medal game and went undefeated in winning the gold medal last year in Toronto. The previous American record was eight consecutive victories from 2004-05.

The U.S. faces Canada in an outdoor game at the Buffalo Bills' New Era Field on Friday afternoon.

In other preliminary-round games, Sweden beat the Czech Republic 3-1, Russia pulled away in the third period for a 5-2 victory over Switzerland and Finland defeated Denmark 4-1.

Slovakia is 4-13-1 all-time against the U.S. in the world junior championship and had lost six straight preliminary-round meetings since last defeating the U.S. in a 2009 quarterfinal.

Bucek made an outstanding individual effort to score the winning goal, maneuvering around three defenders and circling behind the net before slipping the wraparound past Joseph Woll, who stopped 22 shots for the U.S.

Mittelstadt tied the game for U.S. with 3:11 left in the



Mark Blinch/The Canadian Press via AP

**United States' Joey Anderson battles for the puck with Slovakia's Peter Kundraik (20) during an IIHF world junior championships game in Buffalo, N.Y., on Thursday.**

third period.

Following a 9-0 rout of Denmark on Tuesday, the U.S. got off to a sluggish start in a game it never led.

Krivosik gave Slovakia a 1-0 lead five minutes into the second period. He put Slovakia ahead 2-1 on a backhand with 4:45 left in

the third period.

Ryan Poehling set up Tkachuk for the tying goal on a 2-on-1 midway through the second period.

Earlier, Alex Nylander had a goal and an assist and defenseman Rasmus Dahlin, the expected top pick in next year's NHL draft, had two

assists to lead Sweden.

Marcus Davidsson and Elias Pettersson also scored goals as Sweden improved to 2-0 in preliminary play. Filip Gustavsson made 24 saves.

Filip Zadina scored the Czech Republic goal to make it 2-1 late in the second period. Jakob Skarek stopped 34 shots.

Artur Kayumov and Georgi Ivanov scored third-period goals to lead Russia over Switzerland. Kim Kostin and Vladislav Syomin each had a goal and an assist, Andrei Svechnikov had two assists and Vitali Abramov scored an empty-netter for the Russians, who are 1-1 in preliminary play.

Marco Miranda and Ken Jager scored for Switzerland. Philip Wuthrich made 32 saves. Jager's goal tied the game at 2-2 early in the third period before Kaymov scored the go-ahead goal

with 8:58 remaining.

Juuso Valimaki and Henri Jokiharju both had a goal and assist for Finland in its win over Denmark.

Joonas Koppanen and Aapeli Rasanen scored the other goals to give Finland a 2-0 lead in the first seven minutes. Miro Heiskanen had two assists and Ukko-Pekka Luukkainen needed to make just six saves. Finland improved to 1-1 in group play.

Kasper Krog stopped 58 shots for Denmark. Nikolaj Krag scored Denmark's first of the tournament following a 9-0 loss to the United States in the opener.

Krag scored on a power play to make it 2-1 early in the second period. Finland pulled away when Valimaki and Jokiharju scored two minutes apart late in the period.

# Ageless Fitzgerald mum on future after another big season

By BOB BAUM  
Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — Larry Fitzgerald might well be the most popular athlete in the history of the state of Arizona.

The wide receiver's resume is packed with Hall of Fame-caliber statistics accumulated over 14 seasons with the Cardinals team that drafted him third overall in 2004. Add to that his easy-going personality combined with a remarkable durability — he's missed six games of his 224 since joining the league — and off-the-field contributions.

A year ago, Fitzgerald and the Giants' Eli Manning shared the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year award.

And impressively, at age 34, he's still playing at a high level, all while staying mum on whether he will return for another season.

Last week, he said he

would take some time off when the season ends to figure it out.

His uncertainty matches big questions with other Cardinals, including whether coach Bruce Arians will stick around for a sixth season, and whether quarterback Carson Palmer will be back with a mended broken arm at age 38.

Fitzgerald found it pointless to speculate.

"What happens after Sunday moving forward, none of us can control that on Thursday," he said. "We just need to focus on the things that we can control."

He resisted talking about what might happen to the organization once the season ends.

"I personally have no control over 98 percent of the stuff," Fitzgerald said. "All I have control over is what I decide to do and that's



Fitzgerald

not really that big of a deal. There's a lot of other decisions that are going to be made and choices, and none of that has anything to do with me, to be honest with you.

"So I just try to stay in the moment. I said it on Sunday, just trying to stay in the moment all the time and get yourself ready to play."

Fans would argue that Fitzgerald's impending decision is a very big deal.

No. 11 jerseys far outnumber any other when Arizona's "Red Sea" of fans gathers at University of Phoenix Stadium. When he caught a TD pass to cap a big day last Sunday against the Giants, the crowd chanted "Lar-ry, Lar-ry, Lar-ry!"

Fitzgerald has shattered nearly every franchise receiving record and has

caught a pass in 210 consecutive games, third longest in NFL history. He ranks third all-time (behind Jerry Rice and Terrell Owens) in yards receiving and third (behind Rice and Tony Gonzalez) in receptions.

He has had 17 quarterbacks complete a pass to him for a franchise that has often lacked stability let alone excellence at the position, except for his time with new Hall of Famer Kurt Warner and Palmer.

Fitzgerald enters Saturday's season finale tied with Antonio Brown (now injured) with 101 receptions, two fewer than league leader Jarvis Landry. Fitzgerald has 1,101 yards receiving — the ninth, and third straight, time he has topped 1,000 yards in a season.

He's been selected to the Pro Bowl for the 11th time.

He led the league last year with 107 receptions

and had a career-best 109 in 2015 — all after he was switched from wideout to slot receiver when coach Arians arrived.

"Pretty much the norm," Arians said. "He comes in great shape, he catches a hundred passes and gains a thousand yards."

Fitzgerald credited a switch in emphasis to a short, intermediate passing game.

"I just think I'm reaping the benefit of that change," he said.

And it's no coincidence the big numbers coincided with the decision to move Fitzgerald to the slot. That's a rough job, including blocking, but it opened the way for more one-on-one coverage and other opportunities.

Fitzgerald accepted it, worked hard at it and eventually excelled.

"Yeah, it was a decision for him to leave playing what

he had played and was very comfortable doing," Arians said, "and just trusting that, 'Hey, it's going to work out, and you're going to catch a whole lot more balls this way.'"

What's not known is how seriously Fitzgerald is considering hanging it up after 15 seasons. He has a one-year contract, which means if he does play it will be for Arizona. But he has not said whether he will step away from the game instead. So there's a chance this could be his last one.

It's on to Seattle for what Fitzgerald said is "hands down" his favorite road game.

"I've been looking back through all the years. I've never played (in) Seattle before. Thanksgiving before," he said. "It's always late season, cold, dreary, rainy, loud, miserable game. So I wouldn't expect it any other way."

# BLAZERS: Napier scored 15 of his season-high 23 points in the final quarter

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and 12 rebounds, and Portland won its fourth straight against the Sixers at the Moda Center. Napier scored 22 points after halftime.

Lillard missed his third game with a strained right hamstring. Portland's top scorer, averaging 25.2 points per game, was injured in a 102-85 loss to San Antonio

on Dec. 20.

Lillard warmed up a couple of hours before the game and didn't appear hampered by the injury.

On the other side, Embiid was questionable for the game with back tightness, but played. The 76ers were coming off a 105-98 victory over the Knicks at Madison Square Garden on Christmas that snapped a five-game losing streak.

Nurkic made a layup with nine seconds left to give Portland a 52-51 lead at halftime. But he was furious in the third quarter when officials did not stop the game when he had a bloody nose. He collected his fourth foul before heading for the locker room.

Nurkic knocked heads with Redick, who appeared to have a cut lip.

The Sixers stretched

the lead to 75-59 with five minutes left in the quarter, outscoring Portland 24-7. But Ed Davis capped a 10-1 Portland run with a dunk to pull the Blazers to 79-70.

Napier had a personal 7-0 run to close the gap to 88-81. Jerryd Bayless made a 3-pointer on the other end — but it was later ruled no good because of a shot clock violation.

Napier made two of three

free throws and Nurkic added two more, before Napier's layup got the Blazers within 88-87.

Portland was coming off a 95-92 victory over the Lakers on Saturday.

**TIP INS**

76ers: The Sixers beat the Blazers 101-81 in Philadelphia on Nov. 22. Embiid had 28 points and 12 rebounds.

Trail Blazers: Portland is just 7-10 at home this season,

but 10-6 on the road. Asked before the game if he'd ever been on a team with that kind of record disparity at home, coach Terry Stotts said simply "No." ... McCollum led all scorers in the first quarter with 14 points.

**UP NEXT**

76ers: Visit Denver on Saturday.

Trail Blazers: Visit Atlanta on Saturday to kick off a three-game road trip.

# PREP ROUNDUP: Mac-Hi boys best Pilot Rock, Umatilla blows out Monroe

Continued from 1B

their own to claim the lead as the clock wound down, but the Bulldogs dished out a 3-pointer of their own from senior Hannah Thompson to seal the deal.

For the second day in a row, junior Jordan Thomas led Hermiston with a game-high 19 points. For Lake Oswego, junior Katy Gilbert was the top point getter with 14.

**HHS 9 5 13 11 - 37**  
**LOHS 8 9 9 9 - 35**  
HERMISTON — J. Thomas 19, H. Thompson 10, R. Meyers 3, P. Palzinski 2, J. Ray 2, M. Wilson 1.  
LAKE OSWEGO — K. Gilbert 14, T. Anders 8, K. Dawkins 6, M. Woolard 4, J. Rutter 3.  
3-pointers — HHS 2, LOHS 4. Free throws — HHS 5-14, LOHS 1-4. Fouls — HHS 12, LOHS 14.

**PILOT ROCK 56, MAC-HI 34** — At Irrigon, Pilot Rock opened the Irrigon Invite with a 56-34 win over Mac-Hi after a near triple-double performance from senior Rhyanne Oates.

Oates notched eight points, eight assists and 10 rebounds to help keep the Rockets (7-3) win streak alive.

Pilot Rock head coach Dan Deist was happy with the teams defensive efforts at the rim.

"We rebounded really well," he said. "We took care of the glass," which was a key factor in the Rockets third straight win.

Senior Kayla Deist was the top scorer, as she dished out 13 points, and junior

Kaitelyn Evans added 10 points to Pilot Rock's total.

For the Pioneers (2-9), senior Brianna Hernandez lead the team with 13 points. Fellow senior McKenna Yensen pitched in 11 of her own.

**M-H 7 9 9 9 - 34**  
**PR 12 18 13 13 - 56**  
MAC-HI — B. Hernandez 13, M. Yensen 11, B. Garcia 4, V. Garcia 3, K. Casillas 3.  
PILOT ROCK — K. Deist 13, K. Evans 10, S. Weinke 9, G. Austin 9, R. Oates 8, L. Brewer 5, B. Howland 2.  
3-pointers — M-H 4, PR 1. Free throws — M-H 8-12, PR 11-21. Fouls — M-H 14, PR 13.

**HELIX 71, TROUT LAKE (WA) 45** — At Helix, Sadie Wilson scored a game-high 20 points and pulled down 12 rebounds to help her Grizzlies beat Trout Lake on Thursday.

Helix (6-4) had four players finish in double figures, with Annie Wood scoring 15 points, Kailey Mize with 12 and Emma Fehrenbacher with 11. Helix dominated the boards with 60 rebounds, 16 of those on the offensive glass.

**TL 16 15 4 10 - 45**  
**GHS 18 18 15 19 - 71**  
HELIX — S. Wilson 20, A. Wood 15, K. Mize 12, E. Fehrenbacher 11, A. Krol 8, H. Christman 3, C. Bennett 2.  
3-pointers — TL 4, GHS 6. Free throws — TL 9-16, GHS 15-26. Fouls — TL 15, GHS 12.

**LIBERTY CHRISTIAN 55, HEPPNER 50** — At Irrigon, Sydney Wilson scored 14 points and Jacee Currin added 12, but it was not enough as the Heppner Mustangs dropped a non-league game to Liberty Christian on Thursday.

The Mustangs (6-3) were beaten by a two-person show of Emma Reed and Maddie Godwin, who combined for 38 of Liberty Christian's (2-6) 55 points.

**LC 15 14 12 14 - 55**  
**HHS 13 15 9 13 - 50**  
LIBERTY CHRISTIAN — E. Reed 21, M. Godwin 17, K. Steele 9, A. Croskrey 4, J. Gregg 2, J. Mamma 2.  
HEPPNER — S. Wilson 14, J. Currin 12, S. Grant 7, M. Correa 6, K. Gray 5, M. Combe 2, M. Nichols 2, M. Ashbeck 2.  
3-pointers — LC 2, HHS 1. Free throws — LC 7-14, HHS 11-16. Fouls — LC 7, HHS 11.

**NIXYAAWII 84, SOUTH WASCO COUNTY 25** — At Helix, Nixyaawii continued its perfect season with a thunderous win over South Wasco County. The nearly 60-point defeat was highlighted by a 31 point performance from senior Milan Schimmel.

Fellow senior Mary Stewart added 28 points of her own. Junior Ermia Butler also had a solid outing and led the team with 17 rebounds and chipped in two points.

The Eagles (10-0) got off to a hot start, dropping 49 points in the first two quarters and the Redsides (6-2) just couldn't keep up. They were held to single digit scoring in all but one quarter and lost their second consecutive game.

**SWC 2 6 15 4 - 25**  
**NCS 20 29 26 9 - 84**  
SOUTH WASCO COUNTY — A. Noland 7, M. Davis 6, J. McCoy 6, J. Myers 3, A. Birman 2, K. Delco 1.  
NIXYAAWII — M. Schimmel 31, M. Stewart 28, K. Melton 6, K. Mountain Chief 6, I. Herrera 5, T. Van Pelt 4, L. Moses 2, E. Butler 2.  
3-pointers — SWC 2, NCS 7. Free throws

— SWC 3-13, NCS 3-10. Fouls — SWC 11, NCS 12.

**ECHO 59, IONE 36** — At Helix, the Echo Cougars (4-6) snapped a two-game losing skid with a victory over the Ione Cardinals (1-6) on Thursday evening at the Bouncing Cancer fundraiser.

**RIVERSIDE 45, STEVENSON (WA) 34** — At Stevenson, the Riverside Pirates picked up their 10th win of the season with a victory over Stevenson (WA), the fifth consecutive win overall for the Pirates (10-2).

**BOYS BASKETBALL**

**LIBERTY CHRISTIAN (WA) 63, HEPPNER 56** — The Liberty Christian Patriots ran away with a win on the first day of the Irrigon Invite thanks to a 23-point performance from senior Nico Shupe III.

Shupe led the Patriots to a 63-56 win over the Heppner Mustangs.

Heppner was able to hold its own against the school from Richland, Wash., but a low scoring third quarter hurt the Mustangs chances at a comeback.

Along with Shupe, senior Riley Sullivan and freshman Grant McClure put up 12 points apiece.

Leading Heppner was junior Hunter Nichols with 11 points.

The Mustangs (3-6) got a mere 24-of-53 shots in while knocking down only two

three's. The Patriots (5-2) hit seven 3-pointers and were 26-of-56 from the field.

**HHS 18 16 9 13 - 56**  
**LC 22 18 15 8 - 63**  
HEPPNER — H. Nichols 11, J. McAninch 10, T. Smith 9, T. Carter 7, W. Steagall 6, G. McCurry 6, B. Wolters 3, A. Lindsay 2, D. Howard 2.  
LIBERTY CHRISTIAN — N. Shupe 23, R. Sullivan 12, G. McClure 12, N. Olsen 8, J. Godwin 4, M. Knodt 2, N. Hayden 2.  
3-pointers — HHS 2, LC 7. Free throws — HHS 6-12, LC 4-9.

**TROUT LAKE (WA) 61, HELIX 41** — At Helix, Trout Lake made the trip for the Bouncing Cancer basketball event and with it took a 61-41 victory on the first day.

The Grizzlies (0-9) have yet to catch a break during the start of their season, and have yet to pick up a win of their own.

Down by only by only five points at the half, Helix was within striking distance. But a lax third quarter gave the Mustangs (6-2) a chance to run away with the lead.

"We had a lapse and that was the difference of the game," Helix head coach Zach Orem said.

Orem also commended the team's fight despite letting the game get away in the second half. Leading the Grizzlies was sophomore D'Artagnan Carlson with 14 points. Freshman Eli Sprenger chipped in 13 for Helix.

**TLHS 16 8 19 18 - 61**  
**TRHL 9 10 9 13 - 41**  
TROUT LAKE — C. Lands 18, R. Painter 13, M. Colburn 10, D. R. Allaway 7, Cortez 5, C. McKinney 3, D. Coaster 3, A. Cortez 2.  
HELIX — D. Carlson 14, E. Sprenger 13, G. Newtonson 6, M. McBea 5, L. Davis 3.

**MOUNTAIN VIEW 59, PENDLETON 33** — At Bend, the Pendleton Buckaroos (5-4) had its three-game win streak snapped with a rough loss to the Mountain View Cougars (6-3) on Thursday at the Les Schwab Holiday Hoopfest.

**MAC-HI 62, PILOT ROCK 59** — At Irrigon, the Mac-Hi Pioneers (9-2) picked up their ninth win of the season after pulling out a three-point victory over the Pilot Rock Rockets (7-4) on Thursday at the Irrigon Invite.

**STEVENSON (WA) 85, RIVERSIDE 63** — At Stevenson, the Riverside Pirates (6-6) fell back to .500 on the season with a loss to Stevenson (2-3) on Thursday evening.

**UMATILLA 71, MONROE 34** — At Salem, the Umatilla Vikings (9-1) started the Salem Academy Tournament with a big win on Thursday, blowing out the Monroe Dragons (5-4).

**ECHO 70, IONE 54** — At Helix, the Echo Cougars (4-6) earned their fourth win of the season with a victory over the Ione Cardinals (1-6) at the Bouncing Cancer fundraiser on Thursday.