

# Pacers push Cavs to brink in NBA playoffs, Pacers pull even with Nuggets

The Indiana Pacers thrashed the Cleveland Cavaliers 129-109 to take a 3-1 stranglehold on their NBA playoff series on Sunday as Oklahoma City edged Denver to level their series at two games apiece.

Pascal Siakam scored 21 points to lead seven Pacers players in double figures as Indiana pushed Eastern Conference top seeds Cleveland to the brink of elimination in their best-of-seven conference semi-final.

There were no such offensive fireworks in Denver, where Oklahoma City squelched the Nuggets' second-half comeback bid to claim a gritty 92-87 victory in a game where both teams struggled to get shots to fall.

In Cleveland, the Pacers already had the game well in hand, with an 80-39 halftime lead, when the Cavs announced that star Donovan Mitchell was doubtful to return for the second half with a left ankle injury.

Mitchell, coming off back-to-back 40-point games, scored 12 points in the first half, but was



clearly hurting when he tested his ankle prior to the start of the second half. His loss would be a body blow for a Cleveland team hoping to fend off elimination when they host game five on Tuesday. Coach Kenny Atkinson said Mitchell would have an MRI scan on Monday and he had "no idea" if Mitchell would be available for game five.

Despite the Pacers'

dominance, there was no shortage of emotion. Indiana reserve Benneidict Mathurin was ejected with 4:32 left in the first quarter for a punch to De'Andre Hunter's chest.

Hunter received a technical foul for responding with a two-handed shove that sent Mathurin sprawling, while Indiana's Myles Turner got a technical for wading into the fray.

Up 38-23 after one quarter, the Pacers piled it on in the second period, a 17-0 scoring run pushing their lead to 78-37 on the way to an 80-39 halftime lead. Cleveland made just eight baskets in the first half while the Pacers put on an offensive display.

A Turner basket at the rim, off a no-look pass from Tyrese Haliburton, sent the Gainbridge Fieldhouse crowd into a

frenzy. The Pacers were also on-target from deep, making 12 of their 15 three-pointers in the first half. "This is a group that plays better through adversity," Turner said of the Pacers' rebound from their game-three defeat.

"We got punched in the mouth last game, we had a hell of a response. The starters set the tone and the bench picked it up the rest of the game."

Turner and Obi Toppin added 20 points each for Indiana and Haliburton finished with 11. Darius Garland led Cleveland's scoring with 21 points, but the Cavaliers gave up 22 turnovers leading to 35 Pacers points.

In Denver, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 25 points with six rebounds and six assists to lead Oklahoma City, but the Thunder connected on just 31 of 87 shots from the field only marginally better than the Nuggets' 25-for-80 success rate.

NBA Most Valuable Player Nikola Jokic scored 27 points and grabbed 13 rebounds for Denver, who shook off a dismal start and grabbed a 53-52 lead midway through the third

quarter on a three-pointer from Aaron Gordon.

Jamal Murray and Christian Braun scored 17 points each and Gordon added 15 as Denver extended the lead to eight points early in the fourth.

But less than 48 hours after a draining overtime triumph Friday in game three, the Nuggets failed to capitalize. Oklahoma City regained the lead on Cason Wallace's three-pointer with 8:35 to play and held on until the end.

"We got stops, held them to 18 points in the fourth quarter," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "They obviously came out hot after halftime, jumped on us, but defensive end is always it for us... We got it back on track and we were able to get a W."

Having avoided falling into a 3-1 hole, the Thunder host game five on Tuesday.

"I thought tired legs out there from both teams," Nuggets coach David Adelman said. "Give their team credit, in a really disgusting basketball game, those guys made plays, made enough plays to push them over the edge and win the game."

## BCCI Told Rohit Sharma His Test Career Was Over, Virat Kohli's Call 'Personal' For Board: Report



As the Indian cricketing spectrum comes to terms with the possible exit of the stalwarts Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli from Test cricket, a report has shared behind-the-scenes details of the conversations that took place between all the involved parties. Parallel to a BCCI meeting in Mumbai on May 7, involving the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) selection committee chief Ajit Agarkar, Rohit's announcement of Test retirement was made public. A bigger bomb was dropped on Indian fans after reports of Kohli informing the board of a similar intention was made.

However, a report in Dainik Jagran has now claimed that Rohit was informed of the decision by the BCCI well in advance. As per the Hindi daily, the board had made it clear to Rohit that he is no longer a part of the team's Test plans.

It was later reported that Kohli has informed the BCCI of his decision to retire from the longest format, but the board has urged him to reconsider in view of the England tour. But, the paper also mentions that the BCCI doesn't want to intervene too much in the call, suggesting that the decision to retire is a personal one.

Rohit was already on the verge of retiring from the longest format after a poor outing in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, where he also dropped himself from the Sydney Test. While he is already gone, Kohli could soon follow his footsteps and quit the format he loves the most.

Among Rohit's potential captaincy successors, Shubman Gill's name sits on top of the wishlist. Gill has shown excellent form and leadership qualities for the Gujarat Titans in the Indian Premier League, and is reportedly the No. 1 captaincy choice for the Test format. He is already the team's vice-captain in T20Is and ODIs.

## Carlos Alcaraz, Alexander Zverev March Into Italian Open Last 16



Carlos Alcaraz joined reigning Italian Open champion Alexander Zverev in the last 16 in Rome after seeing off Laslo Djere 7-6 (7/2), 6-2 on centre court on Sunday. Four-time Grand Slam champion Alcaraz reached the fourth round at the Foro Italico for the first time after a battle with spirited Djere. In the next round, Alcaraz will face Karen Khachanov who knocked out Italian wild card entrant Francesco Passaro 6-3, 6-0. Alcaraz was playing in his second match since suffering a thigh injury in his Barcelona Open final

defeat by Holger Rune last month.

And the Spaniard was not at his best against Djere whose three career tournament wins have all come on clay, his most recent title in March, at the Chile Open in Santiago.

The 22-year-old was broken twice in the first set which looked like going either way until he took control in the eventual tie-break, before sweeping Djere aside in the second.

Zverev meanwhile barely broke a sweat against Lithuanian qualifier Vilius Gaubas, eas-

ing to a 6-4, 6-0 win to set up a last-16 clash with France's Arthur Fils.

The world number two took one hour and 26 minutes to see off Gaubas, suggesting that the burn-out he said he was suffering earlier in the year might be behind him.

Zverev is hoping a good defence of his Rome crown will set him up to go one better than last year at the French Open and be crowned champion.

But he will face a much tougher test against Fils, who beat Stefanos Tsitsipas 2-6, 6-4, 6-2, than the one put up by Gaubas.

It was a good day for French players in the men's tournament with Fils' win and world number 83 Corentin Moutet shocking Holger Rune 7-5, 5-7, 7-6 (7/4) to claim his first ever win over a top-10 player and line up fifth seed Jack Draper in the next round.

Daniil Medvedev will face home hope Lorenzo Musetti after making no mistake against Alexei Popyrin, winning 6-4, 6-1.

## Naomi Osaka Knocked Out Of Italian Open As Fans Await Jannik Sinner



Naomi Osaka was eliminated from the Italian Open on Monday after being beaten by Peyton Stearns 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (7/4) as her struggles for form at the top level continued. In the quarter-finals Stearns will face one of Danielle Collins, who knocked out reigning champion Iga Swiatek, or Elina Svitolina after coming through an attritional match which lasted two hours and 43 minutes on a baking centre court. Osaka is another big name that American Stearns has beaten in Rome after also knocking out fifth seed Madison Keys in the previous round. Former world number one Osaka has looked a long way from the player who has won four Grand Slams since returning last year from a 15-month break from tennis for the birth of her daughter.

Her comeback was also hampered by an abdominal

injury that forced her out of the Australian Open, after which early exits at Indian Wells and Madrid highlighted how far she was from her best. Osaka warmed up for Rome by winning a minor event in Saint Malo in France earlier this month.

But she has failed to get past the last 16 of a tournament higher than the WTA 125 series since losing the Auckland final back in January. Later, Jannik Sinner continues his bid for a first Rome title against lucky loser Jesper de Jong who will come up against not just the world number one but also a partisan crowd. No Italian has won the Rome title since Adriano Panatta in 1976, and Monday's match will be seen as another warm-up as Sinner tries to find top form ahead of the French Open which starts later this month.

## Aaron Rodgers to Pittsburgh Steelers: 3 telling signs that rumors might be true

Aaron Rodgers has become the hottest free agent ahead of the NFL schedule release, with the Pittsburgh Steelers, New Orleans Saints, and even the Miami Dolphins vying for the four-time MVP. The 41-year-old could also possibly have retirement on his mind. While nothing is confirmed, we were able to spot a few clues linking Rodgers to Pittsburgh.

Here are three telling signs that the rumors of Rodgers signing with Pittsburgh might be true.

Aaron Rodgers' 'positive' visit

Rodgers has openly praised his interactions with the Steelers, fueling optimism about a potential union. During an April appearance on 'The Pat McAfee Show', he described his visit to Pittsburgh's training facility as "really productive," noting he spent six hours meeting with coaches, including head coach Mike Tomlin, to understand "what life would be like in Pittsburgh."

He emphasized the value of getting to know the organization intimately, suggesting a genuine interest in the team's culture and



vision. Steelers president Art Rooney II said: "We keep hearing that he's headed in our direction, and so that seems to [indicate that] all signs are positive so far."

The Steelers' offseason actions reflect confidence in landing Rodgers. After a 10-7 season in 2024 marred by quarterback inconsistency, Pittsburgh let both Russell Wilson and Justin Fields depart, leaving Mason Rudolph and Skylar Thompson as their primary quarterback options—a clear signal they're banking on a high-profile signing.

The team's acquisition of star wide receiver DK Metcalf in a blockbuster trade with the Seattle Seahawks further suggests they're building an offense tailored for a veteran like

Rodgers, who could exploit Metcalf's deep-threat ability alongside other playmakers. Notably, the Steelers passed on drafting a top quarterback prospect in the 2025 NFL Draft, selecting Ohio State's Will Howard in the sixth round instead.

Nevillewood Country Club

The former New York Jets quarterback's off-field activities in Pittsburgh have added fuel to the speculation. Local radio host Andrew Fillipponi reported that Rodgers allegedly joined Nevillewood Country Club, a prestigious Pittsburgh golf venue designed by Jack Nicklaus. Though the club's president, Wayne Chirazzi, debunked the rumor, stating Rodgers hadn't joined.

## Indian Campaign Ends In Second Round In World Squash C'ships



India's campaign ended in the prestigious World Squash Championships here with all the four players losing their respective singles matches in the second round. Lone Indian in the women's singles, Anahat Singh lost 1-3 to Fayrouz Aboelkheir of Egypt. Anahat was able to level the scores at the end of the second game but eventually lost the match 7-11, 11-8, 4-11, 3-11 in the second round match that lasted 28 minutes Sunday night.

The 17-year-old Anahat, ranked 62nd in the world, had earlier beaten world No. 28 American Marina

Stefanoni in the opening round.

In the men's singles, Abhay Singh, Veer Chotrani and Ramit Tandon also lost their second round matches to bow out of the tournament.

Singh was no match to world No. 13 Youssef Ibrahim of Egypt, losing 0-3 (6-11, 6-11, 9-11), while Chotrani was beaten 1-3 (11-7, 7-11, 3-11, 10-12) by top seed Ali Farag, also of Egypt.

Tandon's match was the closest as he went down fighting 2-3 (9-11, 7-11, 11-5, 11-8, 8-11) to eighth seed Marwan Elshorbagy of England.

## Golf-New Zealander Fox makes his mark stateside on Mother's Day at Myrtle Beach

New Zealander Ryan Fox sealed his first U.S. PGA Tour title in spectacular fashion on Sunday with a 50-foot chip-in from the fringe of the green to win the Myrtle Beach Classic and give his wife the perfect Mother's Day gift.

Fox celebrated with his wife, Anneke Ryff, and two young daughters after the stunning birdie chip won him a three-way playoff against Mackenzie Hughes and Harry Higgs and earned him a spot at the PGA Championship, which starts on Thursday.

"It's Mother's Day today," Fox told reporters. "So my wife sort of joked on Friday when I said, 'What can I get you for Mother's Day?' And she goes, 'Well, a trophy would be nice'. So I guess I lived up to my end of the bargain there."

"To have the wife and kids here is amazing."

With a father who played 46 times for the All Blacks and helped bring the inaugural World



Cup to rugby-mad New Zealand, Fox was always going to have to produce something special in his golf career to shed the "son of" tag.

After claiming the prestigious BMW PGA Championship title in 2023 for his fourth win on the European Tour, he packed up his young family to try his luck in the United States.

"I haven't transitioned probably as well as I would have liked over the PGA Tour," the 38-year-

old said. "It was tough last year, I managed to just keep my card, and it's been a scratchy start this year as well."

"I always, deep down, felt like I could compete with the guys out here, I just haven't been able to put it together. And I was very happy to do it this week."

After signing for a final round five-under-par 66, Fox earned his spot in the playoff when Hughes blew a one-stroke lead with a bogey at the 18th

and Higgs was only able to par the last.

"I don't want to be pessimistic, but you kind of figure someone's going to hole a putt on the last, that's what normally happens," Fox said.

"I kind of said to my caddie, regardless of what happens, I did all I could control really well out there. I was very chuffed to get another chance."

Fox also earned a two-year exemption on the PGA Tour and is hoping that certainty over his future will help kickstart his career stateside.

"In this game, you don't get to win very often. You don't get job security very often either," he concluded.

"So it's certainly nice to have that. And at the back of my mind, can feel like for the rest of the year, I can freewheel it a little bit. Hopefully that takes some pressure off."

"We'll see how it goes in the next few weeks. But yeah, it's feels like a monkey off my back, that's for sure."

## India Names 24-Member Team For European Leg Of Women's Pro League Hockey



India on Monday named a 24-member team for the European leg of the women's Pro League hockey in June with midfielder Salima Tete as the captain. India will play twice each against Australia, Argentina, Belgium and China in London, Antwerp and Berlin from June 14 to 29. India will begin their campaign against Australia on June 14. Experienced forward Navneet Kaur will be Salima's deputy during the assignment. The team includes goalkeepers Savita and Bichu Devi Khariabam. Veteran Sushila Chanu Pukhrabam, Jyoti, Suman Devi Thoudam, Jyoti Singh, Ishika Chaudhary, and Jyoti Chhatrui will be in charge of the defensive line. The midfield will be under the watchful eyes of Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, Sujata Kujur, Manisha Chauhan, Neha, Salima,

Lalremisiami, Sharmila Devi, Sunelita Toppo, and Mahima Tete.

The likes of Deepika, Navneet, Deepika Soreng, Baljeet Kaur, Rutaja Dadaso Pisal, Beauty Dungdung, and Sakshi Rana will be in charge of the forwardline.

The standby list includes goalkeeper Bansari Solanki and defender Ajmina Kujur.

Speaking on the squad selection, Indian women's hockey team chief coach Harendra Singh said, "We've gone with a balanced squad that blends experience with young talent. The European leg is a crucial phase of the Pro League, and we are expecting high-intensity matches against some of the best teams in the world. "Every player selected has shown great commitment and readiness during our recent camps and Australia tour.