

For Panthers, wrapping up 3rd consecutive trip to the Stanley Cup Final didn't lead to celebrating

SUNRISE, Fla. — Bill Zito didn't do any significant celebrating after the Florida Panthers wrapped up their third straight trip to the Stanley Cup Final. He got some food and went back to work.

At this point, no one around the team would expect anything different.

The franchise that could not win a playoff series for a quarter-century now is in the midst of a back-to-back-to-back run to the NHL's championship round. Florida won 25 playoff games in its first 28 seasons combined; the Panthers have won 41 playoff games — and counting — in their most recent three seasons.

The novelty of winning at this time of year hasn't worn off, but the Panthers have simply become used to it now. The main thing — the Cup — is the main thing. That's why after the most recent win, beating Carolina on Wednesday night to finish off the Eastern Conference title in five games, there were no helmets being thrown in the air, no raucous beer-spraying locker room scene, no thick wafts of cigar smoke. A few hand-



shakes, something to eat, and that was it. He looked at potential travel scenarios to Edmonton, where Games 1 and 2 of the Stanley Cup Final — a title-series rematch from last year — will be played next week.

"I think everybody likes it right when people are kind to you and say things that are nice," Zito, the team's hockey operations president and general manager, said before the

Panthers flew home from Carolina on Thursday. "But we learned. The journey isn't over and there's work to do and we have to be focused on that and keep your eye on the goal. Don't let success get in your way."

To be fair, for the Panthers, this is unprecedented levels of success.

They have now played 11 playoff series since the start of the 2023 postseason — their first one with

Matthew Tkachuk in a Florida sweater. They have won 10 of those series, only falling in the 2023 final to Vegas. They're 41-21 in playoff games under coach Paul Maurice and actually have a better record in those games than they do at home.

"I didn't even think about it," Tkachuk said after the Carolina series ended. "Just reacted how I reacted. I mean, I think it was different a few years

ago. I remember a few years ago it felt like such an accomplishment from where we were at one point. I know we talked about it last year. It's part of the journey. And same way with this year. It's all business, and we've got a bigger goal in mind."

So, of course, do the Oilers. And both teams surely expect the rematch to be a classic.

"They're a heck of a team," Edmonton star Connor McDavid said in the on-ice televised ESPN interview Thursday night when asked about the Panthers. "Obviously, it's their third finals. They're a special group. We're a special group. It's going to be fun. Couldn't ask for a better opportunity than to go up against the team that beat us last year. Really excited about it."

The mind-games are already underway. Florida touched the Prince of Wales Trophy after winning the East in 2023 and lost the final; the Panthers didn't touch the conference trophy in 2024 and won the Cup, and didn't touch it on Wednesday either to preserve that tradition. In turn, the Oilers didn't touch the

West trophy last year — but McDavid grabbed it this year, trying to change up the Cup luck.

When the East title series ended, Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour paid the Panthers — who won their first Cup last season — the ultimate compliment.

"They're the standard now," Brind'Amour said.

It has been a long time since the league has seen a run like this.

Tampa Bay made three straight finals from 2020 through 2022, but no team — until now — has navigated three consecutive full regular seasons and gotten to the Stanley Cup Final in each of those years since Edmonton from 1983 through 1985. By the time this year's title series is over, the Panthers will have played more games in a three-year span than any team in NHL history.

It's an accomplishment, for certain. Zito wasn't thinking about any of that after the Carolina series. There were travel plans to put together, reports to look at, somewhere between four and seven more games left in this season to think about.

Bhatia makes fine start with 70, lies tied 7th at Memorial



Dublin, Indian-American golfer Akshay Bhatia overcame a double bogey and two other bogeys on a demanding course with dense rough to shoot a creditable 2-under 70 and lie tied seventh in the first round of Memorial Tournament here.

Bhatia, a two-time winner on the PGA Tour, was lying five shots behind the in-form Ben Griffin, who won last week at the Charles Schwab Challenge and continued that form this week.

Defending champion Scottie Scheffler was not at his best but still shot 70 at Muirfield Village.

The other Indian-American in the field, Sahith Theegala, coming back from a neck strain that forced him to miss an event, shot 2-over 74 and was tied 31st, while Aaron Rai, the Indo-British star, was T-68 after a round of 79. Bhatia, who was T-3 at the Players, and then ninth and T-9 at Mexico and Genesis in successive starts, made a good beginning.

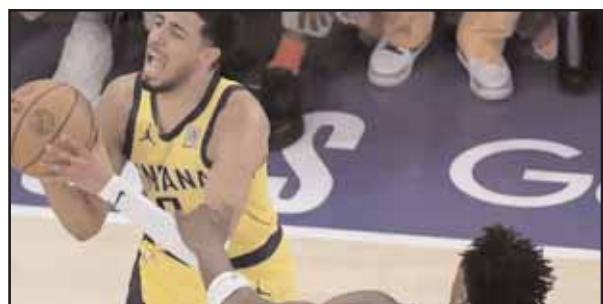
He opened with a birdie but promptly gave that shot back on the next hole. A birdie on the fifth was followed by a double bogey and a birdie as he closed the front nine with an even par 36.

Bhatia began the back nine well with birdies on 11th, 14th and the 15th but gave away a bogey on the 18th as he missed a 10-foot par putt.

Theegala was one-under for the front nine with a 45-foot birdie putt on the sixth. On the back nine he bogeyed the 10th, double bogeyed the 11th after going into the water and then into the rough.

He bogeyed the 13th, too, but picked a birdie on the 14th with a 25-foot for a birdie. On the Par-3 16th he hit his tee shot to nine inches and holed for a birdie but again dropped a shot on 18th for a 2-over.

Haliburton follows triple-double with single digits as Pacers fail in 1st attempt to clinch



NEW YORK — Tyrese Haliburton followed his historic triple-double by getting held to single digits in everything.

With a passive performance from their playmaker, the Indiana Pacers failed in their first attempt to earn the second NBA Finals trip in franchise history, falling 111-94 to the New York Knicks in Game 5 on Thursday night.

They will need Haliburton to be much closer to the player who dominated Game 4 than the one who managed only two baskets in Game 5 when they try again at home Saturday.

"Rough night for me," Haliburton said.

Haliburton had 32 points, 15 assists, 12 rebounds and no turnovers in Game 4, the first 30-15-

10 in the postseason since turnovers were first tracked in 1977-78.

But he was limited to eight points, six assists and two rebounds Thursday. The All-NBA point guard didn't even have a basket in the first half, when the Pacers' total of 45 points was just two more than the had in the first quarter of Game 4.

"I've got to be better setting the tone, getting downhill. I feel like I didn't do a great job of that but I'll watch the film," Haliburton said. "There were some different things they did defensively, but for the most part their base stuff was the same. They picked up the pressure a little bit more, try to apply more as the game went on. But I've got to be better and I will be better in

Game 6."

The Knicks cut down on some of the mistakes they made in Game 4 that allowed Haliburton and the Pacers to get their transition game going. And they were much sharper in the halfcourt, rarely letting him penetrate into the lane to set up opportunities for himself or his teammates.

"It's probably a combination of him missing some shots he normally makes, but I thought our guys were tied together and trying to make him work for everything and that's what you have to do," Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau said.

The Pacers were held to their lowest point total of the postseason and shot just 40.5% from the field. Haliburton wasn't the only one who struggled, with Aaron Nesmith going just 1 for 8 on the same court he had a postseason career-high 30 points to spark Indiana's comeback in Game 1.

Pascal Siakam, who had his postseason career high of 39 in Game 2, was limited to 15 — and that made him the only Indiana starter in double figures.

French Open: Novak Djokovic Moves Into Third Round With Victory Over Corentin Moutet



Serbian tennis icon Novak Djokovic marched into the third round of the ongoing French Open, defeating Corentin Moutet in his second round game in the French capital on Thursday.

As per ATP's official website, Djokovic, who is chasing his 25th Grand Slam title, eliminated Moutet from the competition with a 6-3, 6-2, 7-6(1) win. Moutet entertained the crowd with some fighting tennis, some unbelievably deft drop shots which made Djokovic struggle at times. However, the class and big game experience of the Serbian maestro was too much.

During his match that lasted just over three hours, Djokovic displayed the top form that landed him his 100th ATP Tour-level title recently after he beat Hubert Hurkacz for the Geneva Open title. This string of wins comes after opening

round losses in Monte Carlo and Madrid in April.

The world number six in the ATP Rankings has been in top form at Paris, having eased past Mackenzie McDonald in the opener.

Speaking after the game, Djokovic was quoted as saying by the ATP website, "Mentally I had to stay concentrated and prepared for a match like that. Corentin is a player who has great speed, it was a great battle, especially the third set. I saved a shot to stay in the set, a good service. I think in general I played well, I managed to stay calm on court, which was not easy at times." Earlier, world number one Jannik Sinner shut the curtain down on Richard Gasquet's career as he soared to a convincing win to qualify for the third round.

Govt Polytechnic Jammu organised inter department Chess Tournament

TT CORRESPONDENT

JAMMU, MAY 30 : The Sports wing of Government Polytechnic College Jammu organized Interdepartmental Chess tournament for the session 2025-26 in the campus. The tournament was inaugurated on Monday, 26th May 2025 by the worthy Principal Er Talet Mahmood.

In the first Stage Intra department Chess competitions were held in all the Ten departments of the institution and the winners of the Departments took part in the Final stage where Inter department competitions were conducted by the panel of experts Paramjot Singh Demonstrator Civil engineering department and Rakesh Kumar IR from Electrical Department. In the Prize distribution function, Principal Er. Talet Mahmood was chief guest who while speaking on the occasion motivated the students to take in Games and Sports for their overall development "Chess" he said, is like "Life", where in every move can lead to mistake, and the player who makes fewer errors often wins



the game. Chess sharpens the mind and makes a person mentally tough so students should play the game of chess.

In the first Semi Final Prikshit Sharma of Computer Engineering department defeated Anirudh Sharma from IT Department and in the Second Semi Final Gurpreet Singh of Architecture Deptt defeated Anirudh Bali of Instrumentation and Control engineering department.

In the Final the tough contest was seen between Prikshit Sharma of Computer engineering who hold his nerves well and using the wise moves dominated Gurpreet

Singh of Architecture Department to take away the Winner's trophy.

In the Prize distribution function HoD Mechanical Engineering Raj Kumar, HoD Automobile engineering Raj Shekhar, HoD Electrical Department Sanjay Gupta, HoD Civil engineering Sukhdeep Singh encouraged the students by their presence.

Amit Sharma Sports Secretary presented the vote of thanks for chief guest and all the guests of honour and students. Others who were present on the occasion include Yogesh Raina, Lecturer, Mehraj-ud-Din Lecturer, Chamel Singh PEM, Smt Toshi Devi PET.

Cardoso scores 23, Vandersloot sets franchise marks in points, FGs in Sky's 97-92 win over Wings



CHICAGO — Kamilla Cardoso scored a career-high 23 points and Courtney Vandersloot set franchise records for points and field goals as the Chicago Sky beat the Dallas Wings 97-92 on Thursday night.

Arike Ogunbowale scored a season-high 37 points for the Wings and hit a 3-pointer that gave Dallas a 92-91 lead with 2:11 remaining. But Ogunbowale went 0 for 3 the rest of the way and the Sky closed with a 6-0 run.

Ogunbowale, who entered the game averaging a career-low 13.8 points on 30% shooting, shot 14 of 25 from the field and 6 of 12 from 3-point range. Vandersloot finished with 13 points, nine assists and four steals. She moved past her wife, Allie Quigley, into first in franchise history with 3,728 points and 1,394 field goals.

Quigley scored 3,273 points and had 1,386 field goals for the Sky from 2013-22. Vandersloot tied the record for field goals with a 3-point midway through the second quarter. The two-time WNBA champion hit a pull-up jumper with 4:34 to go in the third to break Quigley's scoring mark.

Angel Reese scored inside to give the Sky the lead for good at 93-92 with 1:21 remaining and finished with six points, nine rebounds and five assists. Dallas snapped its season-opening four-game losing streak with a 109-87 victory over Connecticut on Tuesday. Chicago led by as many as 13 points as Cardoso scored 14 points on 5-of-7 shooting and grabbed three of Chicago's 11 offensive rebounds in the first half before going into the intermission with a 49-43 lead.

Reigning champions Alcaraz, Swiatek eyeing French Open second week

Carlos Alcaraz bids to book his place in the French Open last 16 on Friday, with defending women's champion Iga Swiatek and Aryna Sabalenka also in third-round action at Roland Garros.

Second seed Alcaraz eased through his opening two matches in Paris, despite dropping a set against Hungary's Fabian Marozsan.

Next up is a third-round meeting in the night session with 69th-ranked Bosnian Damir Dzumhur, who has made the last 32 for the first time since 2018 but struggled with a knee injury during his win over Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard.

Four-time Grand Slam champion Alcaraz is the title favourite at Roland Garros after securing the Monte Carlo Masters and Italian Open trophies in the build-up to the clay-court major.

He has reached the second week in 10 of his last 11 Slam appearances.

"If I lose the focus in Grand Slams, in matches the best-of-five, it's much better to refocus your attention," he said.



"You have more time, you have more sets just to be back if you lose your focus a bit."

The 22-year-old Spaniard would secure a match against either American 13th seed Ben Shelton or Italian surprise package Matteo Gigante with a victory. World number 167 Gigante, playing in the main draw of a major for the second time, downed former finalist Stefanos Tsitsipas in the second round.

Eighth seed Lorenzo Musetti arrived in Paris as one of the form players in the world after following a runner-up finish in Monte Carlo with semi-final runs in Madrid and Rome.

The Italian has not dropped a set yet and has

Argentina's world number 97 Mariano Navone next in his sights.

"After the final in Monte Carlo there was I think a boost of confidence, of something inside that I needed to have," said Musetti.

Danish 10th seed Holger Rune, who has never failed to reach the last 16, plays Frenchman Quentin Halys in his third-round match.

Four-time winner Swiatek has dispelled some of the doubts surrounding her form with two comprehensive wins and takes on unseeded Romanian Jaqueline Cristian on Court Suzanne Lenglen.

The Polish star brushed aside former US Open champion Emma Raducanu

for the loss of just three games in round two, as she looks to reach a first final since lifting the French Open trophy last year.

"I have been feeling good, and that's it," said Swiatek, hoping to become the first woman to win four successive Roland Garros titles since Suzanne Lenglen, 102 years ago.

"We'll see what's going to happen in the future. But for sure these two matches were pretty solid, so I'm happy with the performance."

Swiatek could set up a tie against either former Wimbledon winner Elena Rybakina or 2017 French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko.

World number one Sabalenka continues her tilt at a maiden Roland Garros title against Serbian left-hander Olga Danilovic in the opening match on Court Philippe Chatrier.

The Belarusian has not played Danilovic since a win in Madrid Open qualifying seven years ago.

"She's playing great tennis. So am I," said Sabalenka. "It's going to be a fight."

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy-Chirag Shetty Sail Into Singapore Open Semifinals



India's top men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty stayed on course for their maiden title of the season, storming into the Singapore Open semifinals with a straight-game win over world No. 1 Malaysian duo of Goh Sze Fei and Nur Izzuddin in Singapore on Friday.

Making a comeback after battling fitness issues for the last few weeks, the Indian pair displayed rock-solid defence and controlled the front court with precision to register a 21-17, 21-15 win in a 39-minute quarter-final clash at the Super 750 badminton tournament.

This is their third semifinal appearance of the season, having reached the last-four stage at both the Malaysia and India Open earlier this year.

The former world No.1 Indians held a 6-2 head-to-head record against the Malaysians going into the

match, although they had lost their most recent meeting at the India Open.

The match began with two service faults in the first four points and featured short rallies as both pairs looked to execute angled returns and attack at the earliest opportunity.

As a result, the score moved evenly from 1-1 to 7-7 before the Indians gained a three-point cushion at the interval, with Satwik dictating the serve and third shot.

The Indian pair maintained the pressure to go up 15-11 before Satwik committed a service error and Izzuddin unleashed a jump smash to narrow the gap to 13-15. A brutal forehand smash from Satwik pushed India ahead at 18-15. Izzuddin then hit one wide, and Chirag, who had earlier sent a shot long, redeemed himself with a straight smash to earn three game points.