

Reds sweep Phillies

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

CINCINNATI — Jay Bruce hit his first two home runs of the season and drove in five runs, including four in an eight-run fourth inning, as the Cincinnati Reds completed a three-game sweep of the Philadelphia Phillies with a 10-6 victory on Thursday afternoon at Great American Ball Park.

Eugenio Suarez added his first career grand slam to help the Reds give rookie starter Robert Stephenson the victory in his major-league debut.

The Phillies led 2-1 after Cedric Hunter hit his first career home run in the top of the fourth, but the Reds erased that by sending 13 batters to the plate in the bottom of the inning. Bruce hit a three-run homer to put Cincinnati in front for good. Suarez hit his second home run in as many games to push the Reds' lead to 8-2.

Bruce added an RBI single later in the inning to provide Stephenson plenty of cushion. Ryan Howard hit his first homer of the season, a two-run shot to center in the

fifth for the Phillies, but Stephenson got through five innings, allowing four runs (three earned) and six hits.

White Sox 6, A's 1

OAKLAND, California — Jose Abreu hit a two-run homer in the top of the sixth inning and Mat Latos gave up one hit in six innings to lead Chicago over Oakland.

Latos, who walked one and struck out two, won for the first time since July 21 with Miami. He has yet to allow an earned run in 15 career innings against the A's.

Kendall Graveman took the loss despite a solid effort. He gave up two runs and three hits in 5 1/3 innings. He walked one and struck out four.

Chicago won its second straight series at Oakland Coliseum, the first time that has happened since 2008-09. It was also Robin Ventura's 300th career win as a manager.

The White Sox broke it open with a four-run ninth. Dioner Navarro, Tyler Saladino, Melky Cabrera and Abreu each drove in a run.

Yankees 8, Astros 5

NEW YORK — Mark Teixeira hit a tiebreaking three-

run homer with one out in the bottom of the eighth inning to rally New York over Houston.

The Yankees did not lead until Teixeira drove a 1-0 fastball from Ken Giles down the left-field line. Batting from the left side of the plate, it was the first baseman's 193rd home run as a Yankee and the seventh home run by New York in the series.

Besides Teixeira's home run, Brian McCann and Starlin Castro hit solo home runs for the Yankees, who have scored 24 runs in their two games.

Rookie Tyler White hit his first career home run, had three hits and drove in four runs for Houston. Preston Tucker also connected for the Astros.

Giants 12, Dodgers 6

SAN FRANCISCO — San Francisco ended Los Angeles' shutout streak and unbeaten record, scoring 12 times in its final four times up in its home opener.

The Giants put the game away with a five-run bottom of the eighth inning capped by Hunter Pence's grand slam.

The Dodgers came into the game having swept San



DAVID KOHL | USA TODAY

Cincinnati Reds right fielder Jay Bruce (left) is congratulated by third base coach Billy Hatcher after hitting a solo home run against the Philadelphia Phillies during the seventh inning at Great American Ball Park. The Reds won 10-6.

Diego in a three-game series, starting the season with three consecutive shutouts (matching the 1963 St. Louis Cardinals for the major-league record) and a 25-0 scoring advantage.

Alex Wood held the Giants scoreless through four

innings, extending the Dodgers' scoreless streak to 31 innings. Only one team has gone deeper into a season before giving up a run — the 1963 Cardinals went 32 innings.

But it all unraveled in the middle innings. The Dod-

gers led 4-0 based mainly on two RBI doubles from Adrian Gonzalez and one from Scott Van Slyke against Giants starter Jake Peavy. That extended their major-league record for unanswered runs to start a season to 29.

UMFK names new athletic trainer

FORT KENT — Kyle Fisher has been hired as an athletic trainer at the University of Maine at Fort Kent, athletic director Bill Ashby announced Thursday.

Fisher will graduate in May with a master of science in athletic training from Florida International University, where he currently works with the women's soccer team. He will start at UMFK on June 1.

Fisher will replace Andrea Sulavik, who is leaving to pursue other opportunities closer to her home state of Michigan.

Fisher is a Pennsylvania native and graduated with a bachelor's degree in exercise science from Blooms-

burg (Pennsylvania) University. At Bloomsburg, he was a standout wide receiver for the football team and was selected for the all-conference team. He went on to earn a try-out with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the New Orleans Saints.

"Kyle will be a great addition to our staff here at UMFK, and we expect all of our teams to benefit not only from his athletic training background, but from his exercise science knowledge as well," Ashby said in a news release.

Fisher also completed an

internship for the Cleveland Browns' training staff.

Husson golfer third in tourney

Husson University's Daulton Wickenden earned a third-place finish in the 45th Annual Marine Federal Credit Union Intercollegiate Golf Championship's Scarlet Consolation at Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, North Carolina, over the weekend.

Wickenden finished with a three-day total of 217 after rounds of 73, 72 and 72.

Husson finished fifth in team scoring with a 903. Other Husson finishers included Greg Martin (220, fourth), Taylor Morang (231, 27th), Philip Thome (238, 47th) and Cam Clark (262, 61st).

Patrick Henry Community College won the tourney title with an 894 total, while Shenandoah University's Evan Cocke was the top individual with 213.

UMaine charity game set

Members of the University of Maine men's basketball team will take on the "Greek Stars" at 5 p.m. Saturday in a charity game held at Memorial Gymnasium in Orono.

The Greek All-Star Team, voted by the UMaine community, will host the Black Bears in a special charity event. Tickets to the event are \$3 with all proceeds going to support Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Best Buddies.

There will be raffles, prizes and food available.

Concussions cause Bills' Tarpley to retire

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Buffalo Bills 23-year-old linebacker A.J. Tarpley announced on Instagram that he is retiring from the NFL after just one season because of four diagnosed concussions he suffered in his career.

"The only thing comforting about not knowing this play would be the last of my career is knowing that I never took a second for granted," Tarpley wrote on Instagram. "After months of introspection, I am retiring from football. I suffered the 3rd and 4th concussions of my career this past season and I am walking away from the game I love to preserve my future health.

"This decision is the hardest I've made yet but after much research and contemplation I believe it's what is best for me going forward. I'd like to extend my gratitude to everyone that helped me along the way. Thank you to my

coaches at Wayzata and Stanford, and to lifelong friends that I was blessed to call teammates. You all molded me into the man I am today.

"To my family, I'll never be able to repay your unwavering support and love, I just hope that I can continue to show how gracious I am and make you proud. I also want to thank the Buffalo Bills organization, coaches, and teammates for helping me fulfill my lifelong dream in the NFL.

"Last but not least, I'm proud to be a part of #Bills-Mafia and playing in front of the best fans in the league is something I won't forget. Thank you God for all that you have blessed me. I'm excited for my future."

Tarpley played in 14 games for the Bills last season after being undrafted out of Stanford. He had eight tackles and two interceptions.

Strong start lifts Quinnipiac by BC in semi

BY JESS MYERS

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

TAMPA, Florida — Quinnipiac jumped on Boston College early, taking a two-goal lead in the first period on the way to a 3-2 win in the NCAA Frozen Four semifinals Thursday night.

Kevin McKernan, Andrew Taverner and Landon Smith scored goals for the Bobcats (32-3-7), and goalie Michael Garteig had 34 saves as Quinnipiac advanced to the NCAA championship game for the second time in four years.

Alex Tuch and Ryan Fitzgerald scored for the Eagles, who trailed 2-0 halfway

through the first period and were doomed by the slow start. Thatcher Demko had 27 saves for BC (28-8-5).

The Bobcats needed less than three minutes to take the lead, taking advantage of a giveaway behind the Eagles' net.

Demko made a save and blindly steered the puck behind him, where Bobcats fourth-line winger Scott Davidson got possession and zipped a pass to McKernan, who was crashing in from the blue line. McKernan's low shot beat Demko between the post and the goalie's left leg pad. It was the fourth goal of the season for McKernan, his first since Feb. 26.

Taverner made it 2-0 for Quinnipiac five minutes later, getting a rising shot

past Demko on the blocker side. Another Boston College turnover started the play, with Travis St. Denis intercepting a loose puck and feeding a pass to Taverner for the goal.

The Eagles had a pair of first-period power plays but could not get on the scoreboard until the second. On the opening shift of the middle period, Casey Fitzgerald shot from the blue line, Colin White redirected the puck, and Garteig made the save. However, the rebound popped right to Tuch, who tapped it in to make the score 2-1.

It stayed that way until the Bobcats got their first power play of the game, and they needed just nine seconds on the man advantage to take a 3-1 lead. With the puck bounc-

ing around near Demko, Smith cleaned up with his 12th goal of the season.

Frustrated on their first four power plays, the Eagles finally got one with the man advantage with 4:16 to play in the game. Fitzgerald slammed home the rebound of a long-range shot by Ian McCoshen.

The Eagles pulled Demko for an extra attacker with less than two minutes to play and pressured the Bobcats, but Garteig made a glove save on a McCoshen slap shot in the final seconds to preserve the win.

Quinnipiac will play in Saturday night's championship against the winner of Thursday night's semifinal between North Dakota and Denver.

Thomas helps Celtics battle by pesky Pelicans

BY MIKE SHALIN

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

BOSTON — The Boston Celtics took another step forward in their fight for home-court advantage in the playoffs Wednesday night.

However, they almost lost to a decimated New Orleans Pelicans team despite leading by 14 points late in the third quarter.

Avery Bradley hit a jumper to snap a 93-93 tie, and Isaiah Thomas scored 32 points as the Celtics fought off the pesky Pelicans 104-97.

The win moved the Celtics (46-32) into a virtual tie with the idle Atlanta Hawks (46-32) for third place in the Eastern Conference. The Heat (45-32) are a half-game back in fifth, and the Charlotte Hornets (45-33) are a half-game behind Miami in sixth.

The Celtics have four games left, three at home and one at Atlanta.

Boston, playing for the first time since clinching a playoff berth on Sunday, won its third straight but



WINSLOW TOWNSON | USA TODAY

Boston Celtics guard Isaiah Thomas (right) looks to get around New Orleans Pelicans guard Tim Frazier during the second half of the Boston Celtics 104-97 win over the New Orleans Pelicans at TD Garden on Wednesday night.

had to scratch and claw to beat a team that was missing over 100 points per game among its top players.

Jae Crowder followed a Marcus Smart missed 3-pointer — Boston's 33rd trey attempt of the game, to make it 97-93. Two Thomas free throws extended the lead to six with 1:23 left. New

Orleans scored and almost scored again, but Amir Johnson blocked a Luke Babbitt layup and Bradley nailed a trey.

The Celtics finished 10-for-34 from 3-point range against a team that dressed the NBA-minimum eight players.

Thomas continued his

torrid second half of the season, adding eight assists and four rebounds. Crowder scored 14 points, Bradley 13 and Smart 11.

Toney Douglas led the Pelicans (29-49) with 19 points and added seven rebounds and three assists. Babbitt had 16 points and eight boards, Jordan Hamilton 14 points and Alexis Ajinka 10 points and eight rebounds.

New Orleans was 9-for-24 from 3-point range.

Because of their slew of injuries, the Pelicans didn't start a player averaging more than 7.6 points per game. They were coming off a loss at lowly Philadelphia, but had won two of their last three games — and played a disciplined style that wouldn't let the Celtics get too far ahead in the first half.

However, the Celtics, who went just 4-for-17 from 3-point range in the first 24 minutes, finished the half with a 13-6 run and led by eight at the break. They then scored the first eight points of the second half, six of them on back-to-back 3-pointers by Crowder.

Titus

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Center alumnus Patrick Thibodeau were namesakes for the annual Spirit of the Game Awards presented by Maine McDonald's in conjunction with the Maine Association of Basketball Coaches.

Titus, who lived with autism, and Thibodeau, who has Down syndrome, were managers of their respective high school basketball teams and the subject of a CBS Sports documentary that aired during the 2010 NCAA Final Four pregame show after their coaches put them in to play during the teams' final home games of their senior year.

Titus, for his part, showed considerable skills — scoring nine points.

At the 2009 Maine McDonald's banquet they were named the first recipients of the Spirit of the Game Awards, which honor two high school seniors who embody the spirit of the sport of basketball, exemplify sportsmanship, and support and inspire their teammates and coaching staff.

A year later, the awards were named after them, with the North Division honor called the Joshua Titus Spirit of the Game Award while the South Division accolade similarly is named for Thibodeau.

And with each year that has ensued, the hundreds who attend the Maine McDonald's banquet inevitably are brought to tears by a re-airing of the CBS story before the new Spirit of the Game Award honorees are announced.

The documentary, the Spirit of the Game Award

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ANDY AND CAROLYN TITUS

and the relationships Titus forged with everyone from his high school teammates, coaches, teachers and classmates to others throughout Maine's basketball community — including a newspaper guy in need of a little organizational assistance — should serve as an enduring and inspirational testimonial to his absolute honesty, his love of basketball, and his concern for others.

One last time, Josh, thank you.

His parents, Andy and Carolyn Titus, issued the following statement Thursday afternoon:

"Yesterday, April 6, our loving and amazing son, Joshua, passed away after a brief and brave battle with cancer.

"We will forever remember Josh's infectious smile, his love for basketball and the pride he had as the team manager for the Edward Little boys varsity team and his involvement with the Maine McDonald's High School Senior All-Star Basketball Games, his love for numbers and his desire to one day be an accountant, and the easy way he made friends and family feel special.

"We are saddened that Josh is no longer with us and ask for privacy as we grieve with our son, Nate, and family."