

Northeastern men hold off UMaine 5-3

The Northeastern University Huskies took a two-goal lead at the end of the second period and then held off the University of Maine Black Bears for a 5-3 men's hockey victory Friday night at Matthews Arena in Boston, Massachusetts.

COLLEGE HOCKEY

The Huskies improved to 15-13-5 overall and 9-8-4 in Hockey East, and the Black

Bears slipped to 8-21-6 and 5-14-2, respectively. The two teams meet again at 7 p.m. Saturday.

The Black Bears outshot the Huskies 37-26, but Northeastern's Ryan Ruck came up with 34 saves, and UMaine's Rob McGovern had 21.

UMaine cut Northeastern's lead to 4-3 4 minutes, 36 seconds into the third period when Cedric Lacroix scored his fourth goal of the

season off assists from Daniel Perez and Nolan Vesey.

The Black Bears kept up the pressure in the third period, outshooting the Huskies 15-6, but they couldn't convert again. UMaine also couldn't respond on its one power-play opportunity in the period.

UMaine pulled McGovern with 1:23 left in the game, and Northeastern's Adam Gaudette secured the win with an empty-net goal with 39 seconds remaining.

Andrew Tegeler and Will Merchant also scored goals for UMaine, and Eric Williams paced the Huskies with two goals. Zach Aston-Reese and Patrick Schule each added a goal for Northeastern.

After the teams battled to a 2-2 tie at the end of the first period, the Huskies took a 4-2 lead after two periods.

Williams and Schule scored about a minute apart to give the Huskies the two-goal cushion. Williams

scored with assists from Nolan Stevens and John Stevens at the 12:56 mark, and Schule came back at 13:54 to convert off assists from Dylan Sikura and Gaudette.

The Black Bears actually outshot the Huskies in the period 11-7, while each team was zero for one on the power play.

The Huskies jumped out to a 2-0 lead in the first period, but the Black Bears equalized on goals by Tegeler

at 14:38 and then by Merchant with just 32 seconds left in the period. Blaine Byron and Cam Brown picked up assists on Tegeler's third goal of the season, and Brendan Robbins and Mark Hamilton notched assists on Merchant's 13 goal of the season.

Northeastern outshot UMaine 13-11 in the first period, and each team was zero for one on the power play.



MARK L. BAER | USA TODAY

Boston Celtics guard Isaiah Thomas (left) drives to the hoop against Milwaukee Bucks guard Michael Carter-Williams (right) during the second half at TD Garden on Thursday. Boston won 112-107.

Celtics hold off Bucks 112-107

BY MIKE SHALIN
THE SPORTS XCHANGE

BOSTON — Isaiah Thomas made one of those special plays special offensive players make with the game on the line.

NBA

The result was the Boston Celtics holding off the Milwaukee Bucks on Thursday night for their ninth straight home victory.

"That one pass was unbelievable," Boston coach Brad Stevens said after Thomas drove into the lane and somehow found forward Jae Crowder open in the right corner with a behind-the-head, sideways pass. Crowder hit a 3-pointer with 50.6 seconds left that nailed down the Celtics' 112-107 victory.

Thomas struggled through a 2-for-10 3-point shooting night but still scored 27 points and had seven assists, including that final pass to Crowder and a behind-the-back setup for forward Amir Johnson in the third quarter.

"That was an unbelievable pass," Milwaukee guard Michael Carter-Williams said of the pass to

Crowder. "He's a great player, he's an All-Star, and he definitely showed why. (He) makes big plays in big-time moments."

The Crowder 3-pointer finished a late outside flurry that saw the Celtics make three of their final four treys in the final 4:06 after starting the game 2-for-19 from behind the arc. They blew much of an 18-point lead but were able to salt the game away in the opener of a five-game homestand.

Thomas, asked if former Celtics assist man Rajon Rondo could have made a pass like that, said, "No doubt. You all probably seen that before. He probably did something even crazier than that."

Boston guard Avery Bradley quipped of the pass, "I think he just threw it up, man. He made a great play, and Jae was able to finish it. That play right there describes our team."

The Celtics, coming off a 1-2 road trip that gave them three losses in five games, continued their longest home winning streak since an 11-gamer in 2012-13.

Boston (34-25) led by 18 with 4:24 left in the third

quarter and by 15 entering the fourth. However, the Bucks (24-34) rode center Greg Monroe and forward Jabari Parker back into the game, cutting their deficit to five with 6:15 remaining and then to four with 1:12 on the clock.

Stevens ended Thomas' rest midway through the fourth, and the little point guard scored seven points in 1:35 to get the lead back up to 11. Fellow guard Avery Bradley and Thomas hit back-to-back 3-pointers.

Milwaukee came right back and cut it six. The game got sloppy, and a fast-break dunk by guard Khris Middleton made it 106-102 with 1:12 remaining. Thomas then made big pass.

The Bucks absorbed their second loss in six games since coach Jason Kidd made a couple of lineup changes.

"We did a better job in the second half, which got us back into the game," Kidd said. "Then it's a four-point game (and) Isaiah makes a heck of a play to Crowder in the corner and he makes the three. Before all that happened, on the road we're right where we want to be.

"It was (great)," Kidd said of the key pass. "Creativity. You talk about Isaiah, he's having a heck of a year. He's an All-Star, well deserved, and All-Stars make plays when needed for their team, and tonight he made a heck of a play to find his teammate in the corner."

Crowder, coming off a career-high 27 points in a loss at Minnesota, had 20 points and eight rebounds. Bradley scored 18 points. Forward Jared Sullinger delivered 14 points and 10 rebounds, and forward Amir Johnson had 15 points and eight boards. Forward Jonas Jerebko had eight rebounds off the Boston bench.

Johnson, who has been bothered by back trouble, had totaled 10 points and seven rebounds in the previous four games.

Parker led the Bucks with 22 points, 10 in the fourth quarter. Middleton scored 21, Monroe had 11 of his 20 in the fourth quarter, and swingman Giannis Antetokounmpo (coming off his first career triple-double) added 14 points, eight assists and seven rebounds. Carter-Williams had 12 points off the bench.

Lincolnton fighter loses New England Golden Gloves semi

BY ERNIE CLARK
BDN STAFF

Light welterweight Jack Simpkins of Lincolnton reached the semifinals of the New England Golden

BOXING REPORT

Gloves novice championships this week before falling by decision to Jose Maysonet of Hartford, Connecticut, at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium in Massachusetts.

"Maysonet had a little more experience than Jack," said Simpkins' trainer, Ken "Skeet" Wyman of Wyman's Boxing Club in Stockton Springs. "Jack did a tremendous job though. He definitely belonged there, he just came up a little short."

The 24-year-old Simpkins, a former wrestling standout at Camden Hills Regional High School in Rockport, qualified for the semifinals by winning the Northern New England Golden Gloves title earlier this month in the 141-pound division. Simpkins was named outstanding novice boxer of the night at that show.

Simpkins (2-2) is expected to compete again on an amateur boxing card in April in Lewiston.

PBC's Morales falls in Golden Gloves final

Gabriel "Tito" Morales of Portland's bid to qualify for the national Golden Gloves championships in Salt Lake City, Utah, in May came up just short Thursday evening.

The Deering High School junior and Portland Boxing Club prospect dropped a unanimous decision to Jacob Marrero of Bridgeport, Connecticut, in the finals of the 70th annual New England Golden Gloves Tournament of Champions held at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium.

Morales qualified for the New England men's open 123-pound final two weeks earlier with a unanimous de-

cision over Jonathan Perez of Lowell, Massachusetts.

Morales, who moved up to the open division for the New England championships, won the New England novice featherweight title in his first Golden Gloves event earlier this winter. He was presented Thursday night with the Luis Ayala Memorial Award as the region's outstanding novice boxer regardless of weight class.

NEF sets two April bouts

Two boxing matches have been announced for New England Fights' NEF 22 boxing and mixed martial arts show on April 23 in Lewiston.

Brandon Berry (11-1, seven knockouts) of West Forks will face James Lester (10-9, four KOs) of Detroit, Michigan, in a six-round bout at 140 pounds.

Berry has won three straight fights but will be returning to the junior welterweight ranks after fighting recently in heavier weight classes.

Lester, a product of Detroit's world-famous Kronk Gym, returned to the ring in 2015 after a three-year absence but has lost his last two bouts, including a unanimous decision to undefeated Dimash Niyazov on Feb. 6 in Detroit.

Also scheduled is a four-round light heavyweight clash between Crowsneck Boutin (0-0-1) and Brandon Montella (3-2, four knockouts).

Boutin, a NEF MMA fixture since 2012 now based in Portland, battled Joel Bishop to a draw in his pro boxing debut at NEF 21 on Feb. 6 in Lewiston.

Montella, a 1998 graduate of Carrabec High School in North Anson, owns and operates a boxing gym in Woburn, Massachusetts. He went 14-7 as an amateur before turning professional in 2015 and was a 2012 New England Golden Gloves champion.

B Girls

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who is Houlton's only player taller than 5-9 at 5-10.

"She was the field general," said Andreasen. "I had an assistant coach once tell me that you are going to win more games than you lose if you have the best player on the court. She was the best player on the court tonight."

"She's a very, very talented player," said Gray-New Gloucester junior forward Isabelle DeTroy. "Whenever they needed a point or a foul shot, she came through for them."

Houlton took the lead for good by scoring the last six points of the first half to break a 13-13 tie.

Natalie Hill hit a 10-foot jumper off a Kristen Graham pass, Bouchard passed to Hill for a fast break layup and Bouchard grabbed a defensive rebound and went coast to coast and laid it in.

Houlton outscored Gray-New Gloucester 14-8 in the third quarter to build the lead to 33-21.

Bouchard's six third-quarter points were sandwiched by 3-pointers by Aspen Flewelling and Rylee



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

Houlton celebrates after defeating Gray-New Gloucester during the Class B girls state championship at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor on Friday. Houlton won the Class B state championship game 48-35.

Warman. Warman also had a top-of-the-key jumper in the period.

The Patriots never gave up and closed the gap to 33-33 with three minutes left in regulation on a Skye Conley basket in the paint and seconds later a DeTroy steal and pass to Alicia Dumont for a layup.

But that's as close as the

Patriots would get.

Graham called a timeout and told his Shires "basketball is a game of buckets. They've had their run. Let's get a couple of buckets and put them away. We've been in that situation before and we used it to our advantage."

The Shires received a pair of foul shot from Warman

and, after a Gray-New Gloucester miss, Bouchard grabbed the rebound and was fouled.

She made both free throws to make it 42-33 with 1:45 left.

DeTroy converted a Dumont pass but two more free throws from Hill and Hill's basket off a rebound sewed it up.

Sox

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one another, that's the core and the center of us and I think one of the main ingredients to becoming a very tight-knit team."

Red Sox principal owner John Henry was satisfied with Farrell's speech.

"He had the right message, I think, to this team," Henry said. "And I'm looking forward to him being back."

Leave it to the rambunctious Dustin Pedroia to bring a dose of reality to the party.

Pedroia said talk is cheap. "Obviously we listened to every word that was said," Pedroia said. "The fact is you have to go out there as a team and come together and play well. You can only take words so far. You have to go out there and do it together, and that's what we plan on doing."

New X factor

Last year at this time, Xander Bogaerts was trying to prove his 2014 season was a fluke.

After he hit .320 last season, Bogaerts has carried himself with noticeable confidence this spring.

"In 2014, it was a tremen-

dous learning experience for him," Farrell said. "In 2015, he was a Silver Slugger winner. We're seeing a guy that's really gained comfort in his own skin. His confidence has caught up to his physical abilities here in the big leagues." . . .

Jackie Bradley Jr. still has more to prove than Bogaerts, but after the outfielder posted an .832 OPS in 255 plate appearances last year, Farrell sees a similar breed of confidence.

"He's more sure of himself, he's more confident, he's more relaxed around his teammates," Farrell said. "Ask anybody who's seen him come through the minor leagues, a relaxed and confident Jackie Bradley is a very good player."

More than numbers

Though Henry believes the Red Sox front office has relied too heavily on analytics and should use fewer numbers in their evaluations going forward, Farrell offered a different view.

"I don't see it changing at field level," Farrell said. "If anything, it may continue to grow . . . But it's not paint by numbers. It's your preparation. Your game plan is a starting point, but you have to be fluid enough to see the game as it's unfolding and react accordingly."

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