

Blackwell scores 17:46 into OT as Stars beat Avalanche 4-3

By Stephen Hawkins
Associated Press

DALLAS — Colin Blackwell scored 17:46 into overtime and the Dallas Stars beat the Colorado Avalanche 4-3 in Game 2 on Monday night to even up their first-round Western Conference series.

Blackwell initially took a shot that ricocheted off teammate Sam Steel and Avs defenseman Samuel Girard in front of the net. But with the puck rolling loose on the ice, the fourth-line forward circled around and knocked it in for the winner.

"It's been a long season, and not playing the first game, stuff like that, just kind of been in and out of the lineup toward the end here," Blackwell said. "I always felt my game's kinda built for the playoffs and stuff along those lines. I love rising to the occasion and playing in moments like this."

Tyler Seguin, Thomas Harley and Evgenii Dadonov also had goals for Dallas, which avoided losing the first two games at home in its opening-round series for the second year in a row. The Stars did open with their eighth consecutive Game 1 loss since 2022, after going into this postseason with a seven-game losing streak (0-5-2).

"Obviously it's a fresh new season in the playoffs, but it's been a little bit since we won a game," Seguin said. "It's almost like going through a slump. You've got to try to just break it and simplify. We did that tonight and have something great to build off of."

Colorado had finished the final 1:26 of regulation and first 34 seconds of overtime on a power play after a hooking penalty against Mikko Rantanen, who the Avalanche traded on Jan. 24 to Carolina in the East, where he played only 13 games before getting traded March 7 back to the Central Division to Dallas and getting a new \$96 million, eight-year contract.

Stars goalie Jake Oettinger stopped 34 shots. Mackenzie Blackwood had 35 saves in his second career playoff game, but the final shot went off his left shoulder.

Nathan MacKinnon scored on a power play for his third goal in this series for the Avalanche, and his 51st



GOAL: Dallas Stars center Colin Blackwell (15) celebrates his game-winning goal with teammates defenseman Ilya Lyubushkin (46) and center Sam Steel (18) during overtime in Game 2 of a first-round NHL hockey playoff series against the Colorado Avalanche Tuesday in Dallas.

JULIO CORTEZ | AP

in the NHL playoffs. Jack Drury and Logan O'Connor also scored.

"Every time you lose a game that you play pretty good, you lose an opportunity to take control of a series," Avs coach Jared Bednar said.

The series switches to Denver for Game 3 on Wednesday night, when there is a chance that Avs captain Gabriel Landeskog could play for the first time in nearly three years. His last game was June 26, 2022, when they beat Tampa Bay 2-1 in Game 6 to clinch the Stanley Cup, before a chronic right knee injury that led to two surger-

ies and multiple comeback attempts.

Landeskog was activated off injured reserve early Monday, but was a scratch for the game after being first Colorado skater to take the ice for pregame warmups. Bednar said the captain wanted to skate in warmups.

O'Connor had a go-ahead goal in the final minute of the second period with Mason Marchment draped around him for a 3-2 lead, not long after the Stars used a timeout in hopes of taking advantage of a short two-man advantage but coming up empty on nearly four minutes on the power play.

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