

Pacers near finals, Knicks need another comeback

BY BRIAN MAHONEY
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

NEW YORK — The Indiana Pacers need just one win to reach the NBA Finals and they already have two of them at Madison Square Garden in this series.

They can finish off the New York Knicks quickly, just like they play. But while the Pacers like their games fast, they were trying not to get ahead of themselves as they prepared for Game 5 of the Eastern Conference finals on Thursday night.

“We’re still pretty young so we’re learning by some of the experience that we’re getting right now, but we’ve got to stay in the moment,” coach Rick Carlisle said. “We’ve got to keep our eye on the ball and go day to day and moment to moment here.”

Indiana opened a 3-1 lead with a 130-121 victory Tuesday behind Tyrese Haliburton, who had 32 points, 15 assists and 12 rebounds without a turnover, the first 30-15-10 game in the postseason with no turnovers since they were tracked beginning in 1977-78.

The Pacers have three opportunities to reach the NBA Finals for the second time in franchise history. They fell to the Los Angeles Lakers in 2000 in their only time playing for the title.

The No. 4 seed in the East looks ready for another chance. The Pacers are 11-3 in the postseason — unbeaten outside of losses in all three Game 3s — and they have won six straight road games, two shy of the NBA record within one postseason.

They simply ran by the Knicks in Game 4, scoring 22 fast-break points, but Haliburton expects much more resistance when they try to win a series on New York’s home floor for the second straight year.

“You can feel good about it for the night, but then you’ve got to be ready to go for Game 5 because their backs are against the wall,” Haliburton said. “They’re going to play as desperate as they can, as they should. They’re going to come out and throw a punch and throw more punches and more punches, and we’ve just got to be able to respond to those.”

The Knicks rallied from a 20-point deficit in Game 3, the third time in this postseason they have done that. Now they need to make a much different kind of comeback: the 14th in NBA history from a 3-1 deficit.

“I mean, we’ve been a team that has kind of found a way to do the impossible when it always seemed impossible. We just keep fighting, so it’s going to be a testament to our whole playoff run,” center Karl-Anthony Towns said. “Now we have to be in one of the biggest fights our lives and of our season, and it starts with next game.”

The Knicks are unsure if Towns can play in it. They are listing him as questionable because of a bruised left knee the All-Star sustained in a collision that left him hobbling late in Game 4, though he was able to finish the game.

Coach Tom Thibodeau has tried a lineup change, inserting Mitchell Robinson to play alongside



Indiana Pacers guard Tyrese Haliburton (0) celebrates the team’s win after Game 4 of the Eastern Conference finals of the NBA basketball playoffs against the New York Knicks in Indianapolis on Tuesday.

Towns in a double-big look. He has gone deeper into his bench than usual in search of the right combinations to slow down a Pacers team that has reached 130 points twice in this series after doing so in Game 7 of the East semifinals last year, when they shot an NBA playoff-record 67.1% from the field in a rout at MSG.

The Knicks put themselves in bad positions by committing 17 turnovers in Game 4 that led to 20 points, but they also gave up easy baskets even when their defense was set. It left them with plenty to correct if they wanted to extend their first conference finals appearance since 2000 to a Game 6 in Indiana on Saturday.



Indiana Pacers forward Pascal Siakam (43) and guard Benedict Mathurin (00) celebrate during the second half of Game 4 of the Eastern Conference finals of the NBA basketball playoffs against the New York Knicks in Indianapolis on Tuesday.



Carolina Hurricanes center Sebastian Aho (20) celebrates his goal during the third period in Game 4 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Eastern Conference finals against the Florida Panthers on Monday in Sunrise, Fla.

Hurricanes get another home-ice shot at Panthers with Game 5 in Eastern final

BY AARON BEARD
ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH, N.C. — It’s one win in a series otherwise going resoundingly against them. The Carolina Hurricanes still face a long and improbable climb ahead against the reigning Stanley Cup champion Florida Panthers.

For now the reward from Monday’s sweep-averting road win is simply another chance to play at home in Wednesday night’s Game 5 of the Eastern Conference final.

“I don’t really think (mentality) changes if you’re up three or down three,” coach Rod Brind’Amour said Tuesday. “Like, what, are you going to try harder? Everybody’s trying their hardest and everybody wants to win that next game.”

Carolina’s 3-0 win Monday night staved off elimination while ending a nasty conference-final losing streak (15 games dating to 2009). But playing on means keeping fleeting hope alive, even against a tested and deep champion.

Florida swept Carolina in the 2023 Eastern final with four one-goal wins that gave the

Hurricanes reason to feel they were in it the whole way. This had been anything but, starting with the 5-2 loss in Game 1 followed by a 5-0 romp that drew frustrated chants from a rowdy-turned-despondent home crowd.

In Saturday’s Game 3, Florida turned a 1-1 game entering the third into a 6-2 win that moved them within a win of the Cup final.

Getting to closeout opportunities is not new for the Panthers, who won nine of their first 10 series under Paul Maurice.

Also not new: letting the first chance (or three, in one case) at that closeout win slip away. Monday’s loss dropped Florida’s record in potential closeout games since the start of the 2023 playoffs to just 9-8.

It begged this question of Maurice: Do the Panthers learn from those missed chances?

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Ruud is bothered by a painful knee and loses to Nuno Borges

BY HOWARD FENDRICH
AP TENNIS WRITER

PARIS — Clearly hampered by a bad left knee, two-time French Open finalist Casper Ruud dropped 13 of the last 14 games and lost 2-6, 6-4, 6-1, 6-0 to Nuno Borges in the second round at Roland-Garros on Wednesday, then revealed he had been playing in pain off-and-on throughout the clay-court season.

The seventh-seeded Ruud reached at least the semifinals each of the past three years in Paris — he was the runner-up to Rafael Nadal in 2022 and Novak Djokovic in 2023 — and this exit is his earliest at the tournament since bowing out in the second round in his debut in 2018.

He’s been taking pain-killing and anti-inflammatory pills the past several weeks, and did so again Wednesday. But Ruud said the knee began bothering him in the first set against Borges, who is ranked 41st and became the first Portuguese man to get to the French Open’s third round.

Ruud said the worst shot for his knee is an open-stance backhand, in which he slides on his left foot, so he’s been avoiding it in practice.

“Certain movements out there are kind of what makes it painful. Certain shots are painful to do. When you’re playing matches, you can’t really control it in the same way (as in

practice). You do everything you can to get to every ball,” said Ruud, who also reached the final at the 2022 U.S. Open. “Sometimes you kind of forget that this is a shot I shouldn’t go for.”

He was visited by a trainer and took some pills during Wednesday’s match, but nothing seemed to help.

“It’s a Slam. I love this tournament,” Ruud said. “Looking back, I tried my best to continue (and tried) to avoid the shots that are hurting. But towards the end, there were also other movements that started hurting, so it wasn’t ideal.”

He said the problems began in his first clay event of the pre-French Open stretch, at Monte Carlo in April, and that he had medical exams a couple of weeks later in Madrid — where he went on to win the title. Ruud pulled out of the Geneva Open, which was played last week.

Now he’ll have more tests done.

WHAT ELSE HAPPENED AT THE FRENCH OPEN ON WEDNESDAY?

Both defending champions were in action at Court Philippe-Chatrier. Carlos Alcaraz overcame a one-set blip to defeat Fabian Marozsan 6-1, 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, and Iga Swiatek had far less trouble dispatching 2021 U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu 6-1, 6-2 to extend her French Open winning streak to 23 matches. Top-



Norway’s Casper Ruud looks down as he plays Portugal’s Nuno Borges during their second round match of the French Tennis Open, at the Roland-Garros stadium, in Paris, on Wednesday.

Lindsey Wasson | Associated Press

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Notice is hereby given that Daviess County Fiscal Court, 2620 KY Highway 81, Owensboro, KY 42301, has filed an application with the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet to replace the Baird Road Culvert over Rhodes Creek with a metal box culvert and replace an existing roadside ditch with a corrugated metal pipe. The site is located approximately 1 mile west of Baird Road intersection with Jackson Rd near Utica, KY, in Daviess County. Any comments or objections concerning this application shall be directed to: Kentucky Division of Water, Water Resources Branch, 200 Fair Oaks Lane, 4th Floor, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601. Phone: (502) 564-3410.