

# SPIETH BATTLES BACK BUT HAAS GRABS US PGA LEAD

**MIAMI:** Top-ranked defending champion Jordan Spieth fought into contention but it was fellow American Bill Haas who grabbed the lead after Saturday's third round of the US PGA Valspar Championship.

Reigning Masters and US Open champion Spieth, frustrated after opening with a 76, fired a bogey-free four-under par 67 Saturday to reach two-under 211, six shots off the pace of Haas, who also had a 67 on the Copperhead course at Innisbrook.

"I'm still in this golf tournament," Spieth said. "(I will need) something like seven-under tomorrow, which is feasible. So to think after the first round that

I go Saturday night and be able to sleep with a chance to win the golf tournament, I'm very pleased with that."

Haas birdied the par-5 first and par-3 fourth then began the back nine with back-to-back birdies. He answered a bogey at the par-3 13th with a chip-in birdie at the par-3 15th to grab his seventh career 54-hole lead, his first since winning last year at Palm Desert, California.

"I made some nice putts early and some loose shots on the back nine I was able to get away with," Haas said. "Overall somewhat solid. Very pleased to shoot four-under."

Canada's Graham DeLaet, seeking

his first US PGA title, was second on 206 after a 68 while Americans Charley Hoffman and Ryan Moore shared third on 208, a US trio of Steve Stricker, Patrick Reed and Charles Howell were on 209 and South African Charl Schwartzel was on 210.

Then came Spieth in a pack of 10 players on 211. The 22-year-old Texan said he wouldn't rule out flirting with the course record of 61 even though the layout has been stingy this week.

"I don't even think we need to do that tomorrow and we're definitely capable of it," Spieth said. Spieth found all but two fairways after reaching only seven in the first two rounds and his

greens in regulation has progressed from six to 10 to 12. "My misses were still on the greens today," Spieth said. "I drove the ball a bit better. To be honest with you, it really felt like it was a 6-, 7-under round."

### AGGRESSIVE ON THE GREENS

Spieth opened with a tap-in birdie, added a 31-foot birdie at the 12th and sank a 51-foot eagle putt at the par-5 14th hole.

"I was leaving everything short, which you'll see a lot this week here, but started to be a little more aggressive today on the greens, hitting my longer putts harder and it was stress-

free pars for the majority of the round," Spieth said. "Really nice to have no blemishes."

Spieth, who won the Hyundai Tournament of Champions in January, was happy at his fightback from a poor start.

"Very well could have packed it in and had some more rest this week," Spieth said. "But we did a great job of sticking to it and understanding that if we're patient with our birdies out here and we just limit those bogeys and don't take too many chances we can shoot rounds of 3-, 4-under and maybe you get one at 6 (under) tomorrow and I have a chance to win." — AFP

# SHANE VAN BOENING WINS 9 BALL TOURNEY

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Under the patronage of Fahad Khalid Al-Ghunaim, and in the presence of a large crowd including heirs of the late Khalid Al-Ghunaim, the 30th late Al-Ghunaim 9 ball tournament was concluded with American Shane Van Boening defeating Poland's Mateusz Sniegocki 13-9 following a strong and exciting match during which the two players gave a very good show.

Fahad, Talal and the rest of Al-Ghunaim family honored world champions ladies and juniors, as well as organizing committees, following the great success of the tournament. Tournament sponsor, Head of the Higher Organizing Committee Fahad Al-Ghunaim said he was happy for the tournament's success and bringing together

world with Gulf champions in Kuwait. He said the championship will grow and more women will participate in the next tournament. Al-Ghunaim thanked all committees, Director of Hot Shot Hall Sabah Al-Jabawi, which is considered the best hall in the Middle East. He also thanked all participating players, then honored the professional players, juniors champ Abdallah Al-Shiha, second place winner Mohammad Al-Muhanna and Abdallah Al-Enezi. Shahad Al-Kahder was the women's champ, followed by Dalal Al-Mathen and Dina Khader. The ladies said they were happy to participate in the 1st women's championship, and thanked Al-Ghunaim for giving them the opportunity, while demanding those responsible for sports in Kuwait to provide them with a premises and pool tables for practice.



# LIN DAN EYES GOLD IN RIO AFTER ALL-ENGLAND TITLE

**BIRMINGHAM:** Lin Dan, already regarded by many as the greatest player of all time, made another entry into the record books with an overwhelming performance to recapture his sixth All-England Open title yesterday.

Lin's 21-9, 21-10 victory over his compatriot Tian Houwei was a thrilling rebuttal to critics who reckoned that, now aged 32 and with a mere handful of titles in the past three years, the Chinese legend is really only a past master.

Instead Lin suggested a record third Olympic men's singles gold medal could well be possible in Rio de Janeiro in five months' time. "I wanted to show everyone that at 33 I will still be able to do it," he said. It was four years since Lin last won the All-England, but his total of men's singles titles here now has only been surpassed by Rudy Hartono, the great Indonesian, who won eight.

That though was more than 40 years ago and in the pre-professional era. If this is Lin's last appearance here at the world's oldest international tournament, it was a suitably excellent way to say good-bye.

Mischievously skilful, tenaciously contentious, and consistently fluent he ensured the outcome was never in doubt. Almost within moments he was 7-1 up and was playing with an intensity of focus greater than anything previously this week.

Tian tried to hustle him a little and got back to 7-11 but it was almost impossible to escape the web created by the patient accuracy of Lin's clears, lifts and net shots.

Lin also made very few mistakes despite often playing to tight margins, before picking his moments superbly to make a quick change of direction or a sudden attacking thrust.

He used the smash or the fast drop only rarely, but it was often enough to make a constant attacking threat and infrequent enough to remain a surprise.

By the second game his confidence in ultimate victory was very evident, and twice he produced moments of arrogant magic in which he managed to make Tian turn and run.

The younger man made his last serious push at 4-13 in the second game, increasing the pace slightly and taking a few more risks in trying to force attacks through.

He reduced the deficit to 10-15, but these were the last points he was able to win. A rare but fantastic piece of retrieving by Lin was followed by a dramatic transforming kill and a piece of theatrics as he turned to the crowd and threw his arms wide open.

He may have enjoyed that moment as much as anything since triumphing at the London Olympics three and a half years ago.—AFP



**BIRMINGHAM:** China's Lin Dan (L) and China's Tian Houwei poses with their trophies after the All England Open Badminton Championships men's singles final match in Birmingham, central England, yesterday. Lin Dan won 21-9, 21-10. — AFP



**DALLAS:** Stephen Johns #28 of the Dallas Stars controls the puck against Jori Lehtera #12 of the St. Louis Blues in the second period at American Airlines Center on Saturday in Dallas, Texas. — AFP

# BLUES WIN 5-4 IN OT TO PULL INTO TIE WITH STARS ATOP WEST

**DALLAS:** Alex Pietrangolo scored 2:11 into overtime after Jamie Benn pulled Dallas even late in regulation and St. Louis ended up tied with the Stars atop the Western Conference after the Blues' 5-4 win Saturday night. It was the second straight night that the top spot in the West was on the line in Dallas after the Stars beat Chicago 5-2 with both teams tied atop the conference Friday night. The Stars forced overtime with a 6-on-4 advantage in the final 2 minutes of the third period when Benn redirected Tyler Seguin's shot past Jake Allen. The point for Dallas left both teams with 91 points with 12 games remaining. The Blackhawks have 88 points with 13 games to play. Dallas' Jason Spezza had two goals for a six-game goal streak, the longest of his career.

### SHARKS 5, CAPITALS 2

Joe Pavelski scored a tiebreaking power-play goal in the opening minute of the third period and Martin Jones stopped a key penalty shot to help San Jose beat Washington. Joe Thornton, Patrick Marleau and Brenden Dillon also scored to help San Jose move within one point of Anaheim for second place in the Pacific Division. Brent Burns added an empty-netter to seal the win. Jones made 23 saves, including a poke check on the penalty shot against Jay Beagle with 13 seconds remaining in the second period. Because Brent Burns' slash was a penalty shot and not a minor penalty, the Sharks were able to start the third period on the power play. T.J. Oshie and Justin Williams scored for the Capitals, who missed an opportunity to become the first team to clinch a playoff berth. Philipp Grubauer made 23 saves as Washington ended a three-game California swing with three points.

### PANTHERS 5, FLYERS 4

Aleksander Barkov scored the winning goal in a shootout to lift Florida over Philadelphia. Reilly Smith scored twice in regulation, and Barkov and Jonathan Huberdeau also scored for the Panthers. Roberto Luongo stopped 22 shots and Jaromir Jagr had two assists as Florida won its second straight after a three-game skid. Nick Bjugstad also scored in the shootout for the Panthers. Luongo stopped both Sam Gagner and Nick Cousins in the tiebreaker. Shayne Gostisbehere, Michael Raffl, Ryan White and Cousins scored in regulation for the Flyers. Gagner had two assists and Steve Mason made 25 saves as the Flyers lost for the first time in four games. Gostisbehere tied the score with 1:55 left in regulation when his shot from the point got through traffic and found the back of the net.

### RED WINGS 3, RANGERS 2

Brad Richards tied the game with 31.8 seconds left in the third period, and then Darren Helm scored in overtime to give Detroit a victory over New York. Henrik Lundqvist made 40 saves in his first game since March 3, but Detroit finally broke through against the New York goalie. Helm also scored in the third period for the Red Wings. Derek Stepan and Chris Kreider scored for the Rangers, who also got Rick Nash back after an extended absence. The Red Wings tied it in the final minute of regulation when Richards scored on a power play. Detroit had its goalie pulled at the time, and the Rangers twice came within inches of scoring into the empty net. Ryan McDonagh shot the puck all the way down the ice at the open net, only to have it hit the left post. Moments later, Viktor Stalberg's attempt slipped just past the right post.

### DEVILS 2, KINGS 1, OT

John Moore circled the net and scored with 15.2 seconds left in overtime and New Jersey beat Los Angeles for its second straight victory over a Western

Conference power. Tyler Kennedy scored early in the first period for the Devils, who followed up their win at San Jose with a defense-dominated victory over the Pacific Division leaders. New Jersey has lost eight of 12 overall, but has begun its three-game California road trip in style. Keith Kinkaid made 22 saves in his second straight win over the Kings. Jonathan Quick stopped 22 shots for Los Angeles, but couldn't stop Moore from skating out in front and beating him with a short-angled shot for the defenseman's first goal since Jan 2.

### SABRES 3, HURRICANES 2, OT

Jack Eichel scored his second goal on a breakaway at 4:59 of overtime, lifting Buffalo to the victory. Evander Kane had two assists and Chad Johnson made 28 saves for the Sabres, who snapped a two-game losing streak. Marcus Foligno also scored. Victor Rask and Phillip Di Giuseppe scored for Carolina, which had won two in a row. Cam Ward made 21 saves. The Hurricanes (31-26-12) are 10th in the Eastern Conference with 74 points. Eichel, the No. 2 pick in last year's NHL Draft, slipped a short backhand between Ward's pads for the winning goal, his 22nd of the season.

### BRUINS 3, ISLANDERS 1

David Pastrnak scored two goals and Tuukka Rask made 25 saves, leading Boston to the win. Loui Eriksson added a goal and two assists for the Bruins, who have won their last five games against the Islanders. Pastrnak's point-blank wrist shot beat Thomas Greiss for a 2-1 lead with 8.9 seconds left in the second period. He slid his 12th goal of the season under Greiss with 2:34 remaining in the third. New York captain John Tavares scored his 200th career goal, becoming the 11th player in franchise history to reach the mark.

### WILD 4, CANADIENS 1

Mikael Granlund scored twice, Devan Dubnyk made 30 saves and Minnesota beat Montreal. Nino Niederreiter opened the scoring for Minnesota and Erik Haula added an empty-netter. Mark Barberio scored for Montreal in the first period. Mika Condon stopped 18 of 21 shots. The Wild entered in ninth place in the Western Conference and improved their chances of clawing into the postseason.

### JETS 3, AVALANCHE 2

Mark Scheifele had a goal and an assist to extend his point streak to seven games and Winnipeg erased a two-goal deficit to beat Colorado. Adam Lowry

scored the winner 9:01 into the third period after Drew Stafford tied it less than 2 minutes earlier. Ondrej Pavelec stopped 35 shots. Matt Duchene scored his 29th of the season for the Avalanche and added an assist on Erik Johnson's second-period goal. Semyon Varlamov made 27 saves.

### COYOTES 4, OILERS 0

Mike Smith made 44 saves in his return from a 40-game injury absence and Antoine Vermette had two goals and an assist to help Arizona beat Edmonton. It was the 29th shutout of Smith's career and his second this season. He returned after having surgery to repair a core muscle injury. Viktor Tikhonov and Alex Tanguay also scored for the Coyotes, who have won two straight on the road on the heels of a franchise-record 10-game losing streak as the away team. Cam Talbot stopped 25 shots for the Oilers, who have lost two of their last three.

### CANUCKS 4, PREDATORS 2

Bo Horvat had a goal and an assist and Vancouver won 4-2 Saturday night to snap Nashville's franchise-record 14-game point streak. Sven Baertschi, Derek Dorsett and Daniel Sedin also scored for Vancouver, and Ryan Miller made 35 saves. Alexandre Burrows and Radim Vrbata chipped in with two assists each. Mike Fisher and Colton Sissons scored for Nashville, which got 24 stops from Pekka Rinne. Roman Josi added two assists for the Predators, who entered on a 9-0-5 run and had not lost in regulation since Feb. 9, the longest active run in the NHL. Despite the loss, Nashville still occupies the first wild-card spot in the Western Conference, seven points up on Minnesota and Colorado. Vancouver, meanwhile, is eight points back of the Wild and Avalanche.

### SENATORS 4, MAPLE LEAFS 0

Craig Anderson made 29 saves for his fourth shutout of the season and Ottawa beat Toronto to sweep the season series. It's just the second time Ottawa has swept the Battle of Ontario when the teams have played at least three times, Elias told the NHL. The other came in 2000-01, when the Senators went 5-0-0 against Toronto. Mika Zibanejad, Cody Ceci, Zack Smith and Mark Stone scored for the Senators. Jean-Gabriel Pageau added three assists. Garret Sparks, making his third straight start for the Leafs, stopped 13 shots. Sparks used to work for Anderson at his goaltending school in Chicago. Ottawa snapped a three-game losing streak and saved face after an ugly 6-2 loss to the Florida Panthers on Thursday night. — AP

## NHL Results/Standings

Boston 3, NY Islanders 1; Buffalo 3, Carolina 2 (OT); Detroit 3, NY Rangers 2 (OT); Minnesota 4, Montreal 1; Ottawa 4, Toronto 0; Florida 5, Philadelphia 4 (SO); Winnipeg 3, Colorado 2; St. Louis 5, Dallas 4 (OT); Arizona 4, Edmonton 0; Vancouver 4, Nashville 2; New Jersey 2, Los Angeles 1 (OT); San Jose 5, Washington 2.

Western Conference							Eastern Conference						
Central Division							Atlantic Division						
	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS		W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
Dallas	41	20	9	227	203	91	Florida	38	21	9	192	167	85
St. Louis	41	20	9	183	172	91	Tampa Bay	39	24	5	186	163	83
Chicago	41	22	6	195	168	88	Detroit	34	23	11	173	181	79
Nashville	34	22	13	189	177	81	Ottawa	32	30	8	202	218	72
Minnesota	32	27	10	182	172	74	Montreal	32	31	6	187	194	70
Colorado	35	31	4	188	198	74	Buffalo	28	33	9	167	190	65
Winnipeg	28	35	5	176	203	61	Toronto	22	34	11	159	201	55
Pacific Division							Metropolitan Division						
Los Angeles	40	22	5	180	154	85	Washington	49	14	5	219	160	103
Anaheim	37	21	9	167	159	83	NY Rangers	39	22	7	194	176	85
San Jose	38	24	6	203	179	82	NY Islanders	37	21	8	190	166	82
Arizona	30	32	7	185	211	67	Pittsburgh	35	24	8	183	170	78
Vancouver	27	28	12	164	192	66	Philadelphia	32	23	12	174	180	76
Calgary	28	35	5	182	213	61	Carolina	31	26	12	170	186	74
Edmonton	27	37	7	169	209	61	New Jersey	33	29	7	153	171	73
Eastern Conference							Columbus	28	32	8	180	211	64
Atlantic Division							Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L).						
Boston	39	23	8	213	188	86							