

Rays fight back, tie ALDS

By Stephen Hawkins
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

ARLINGTON, Texas -- Evan Longoria is still limping. Now he's also hitting, and the Tampa Bay Rays are headed home, one victory from an improbable comeback.

MLB

Longoria snapped out of his postseason slump with a homer and two doubles, Carlos Pena scored twice with a pair of extra-base hits of his own and Tampa

Bay escaped elimination again with a 5-2 victory Sunday over the Texas Rangers to force a deciding Game 5 in the AL division series.

"We've really battled to get back to even," Longoria said. "And I think we have a lot of confidence going home, and being able to finish the series in our home ballpark."

To do that they'll have to beat Cliff Lee who matched a postseason best with 10 strikeouts in a 5-1 series-opening victory. The Rays lost the two games at Tropicana

Field before winning twice in Texas to push a division series to a fifth game for the first time since the Los Angeles Angels beat the New York Yankees in 2005.

"I still want to believe there is a home-field advantage and hopefully that's going to show up," manager Joe Maddon said. "The extra game at home, I have been talking about it all along."

If the Rays win they will join the 2001 Yankees as the only teams to lose the first two games at home and still win a five-game series.

Shutout

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Through the first 20 minutes of the game, the Lions starters were a little too eager to pull the trigger at times as Penn State rattled off seven shots before Iowa tallied its first.

However, a substitution by Walsh to bring in Bri Garcia and Megan Monroig helped calm things down. Then it was only a matter of minutes before Penn State took the lead.

With just more than 25 minutes gone by in the first half and Penn State controlling the tempo of the game, Garcia made eye contact with Christine Nairn on a corner kick.

Nairn crossed the ball in front of the net as Garcia emerged from the crowd, and after freeing herself from the defense, the reserve midfielder headed the ball right into the net for the first goal of the game.

"That was my first collegiate goal ever so it definitely was a

great, great feeling," Garcia said. "It's something that you want to be able to say, you scored for Penn State. And having done it now, it's just a great feeling."

"Knowing it was a goal that gave your team the confidence they needed to keep going on, it was just awesome."

After that goal, it was smooth sailing for the Lions as Walsh continued to sub players in and out to give her team fresh legs.

The entire game, Penn State dominated the attack — finishing with 25 shots, 12 on goal — and right before halftime, the team got its second goal on a shot by sophomore Julie Hubbard, another bench player, from about 18 yards out.

"We were a little impatient in the first half," Walsh said. "I was proud of the way they adjusted in the second half and we did a better job and showed more confidence to keep the ball."

Behind a flurry of short passes and simple play, the Lions continued to utilize their depth to control the game through the second half.

In the 80th minute, a goal by Tani Costa, who assisted the previous score, sealed the victory for Penn State and ensured the Lions would come away with its second road win of the weekend.

And while it was the bench players who helped propel Penn State to victory on Sunday, it was its starters that carried the load against Northwestern Friday. Nairn had two goals, Hayley Brock added an assist and Dani Toney caused fits for the Wildcats backline.

With the Lions set to play another two games this upcoming weekend, the team's depth helped give them confidence going forward into the Big Ten season.

"When you go into someone else's home stadium, it's definitely a lot harder," Garcia said. "But the fact that we came out with two big wins, we're definitely setting the tone now. And we're telling the rest of the Big Ten teams to watch out because Penn State is coming."

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Tenacity

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midfielder Matheus Braga, found open space at the top of the penalty area and hit a beautiful left-footed strike past the Spartans' Avery Steinlage. Braga, who also picked up his team-high 11th assist in the game, ignited the entire team with his game-tying goal.

"It's unbelievable how good he is and what he can do for the team," defender Matt Smallwood said of Braga. "He opens things up, gets us going, makes passes, gets into plays and he's feisty."

Braga's brilliance was evident once again in the 84th minute. After beating his defender down the sideline, Braga found Hertzog in front of the net, who made a shifty move to create more room for himself, and buried the eventual game-winner in the back right corner of the net. In a second half in which they unloaded 16 shots, the frustration of waiting for a goal began to settle in for the Lions.

"It was the greatest feeling in the world," Hertzog said of finally taking the lead. "When you miss opportunities, it just sucks and when you finally put the one

"You have to play with passion."

Bob Warming
men's soccer coach

in, you can miss three or four, but when you make that one it just feels great."

However, the offense refused to give up and kept the pressure on. Confident that their aggressive play would finally pay off, the Lions kept letting the shots fly.

"When you shoot, something's gonna happen," Braga said.

After a first half in which his team had little energy, Warming was proud of the way his team turned things around the second half. The Lions' rallying back from a goal down speaks to their ability to come together, find a solution, and make the most of the tactical change.

"We can put 10 cones out there in those spots, and it's not gonna win the game even if those are the right places to be," Warming said.

"You have to play with energy and passion and want to get to the goal, and those guys did a great job of that."

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Icers

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sloppy things we did last weekend. I think it was pretty beneficial."

Coach Scott Balboni said the team paid attention to having good power plays and shutting down the opposing team's man advantage. Balboni said his team focused on taking advantage on special teams and the effort paid off with two short-handed goals from senior forward Chris Pronchik and a power-play goal from junior forward Chris Cerutti. Pronchik added his team-best third and fourth goals of the sea-

son on his two short-handed opportunities.

Senior goaltender Teddy Hume and sophomore goaltender Dan Ivanir, who relieved Hume midway through the game, combined to save 16 shots from the Dragons' offense for the shutout.

On the other hand, the Icers fired off a barrage of 59 shots toward Dragon goaltenders' Adam Birmingham and Marteen Naeff.

Balboni said getting off to a hot start was the most important factor in the game.

"I think it was crucial that we didn't let them stick around," Balboni said. "We were able to

trap them and we did a good job of putting pucks onto the net."

Now, the Icers will turn their attention to preparing for Central Oklahoma (0-6) — the squad that knocked off Balboni's team in the second round of last season's ACHA national tournament.

"In the back of our mind we know they knocked us out," O'Brien said. "We are going to be extra motivated and focused for the game. We aren't going to take anything lightly and we are going to try and take things up one step."

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Spartans

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great help with yelling at me and keeping my head up so all good words to my teammates."

The Spartans opened the scoring on a 19-yard laser from Brent Rosendall, who appeared to be off-sides, but no call was made. Overall, the Lions didn't play up to their standards in the first half and knew it going into the break.

Hertzog and senior midfielder Matheus Braga, the team's top play-makers were the biggest culprits but responded strongly in the second half. Braga struck a volley past Spartans keeper Avery Steinlage in the 67th minute, which Hertzog said turned the game around.

"The first half was really bad, we couldn't connect passes. I think that I didn't get one single pass right in the first half," Braga said.

"We had a conversation in the tent and the team just picked their heads up and we got back into it in the second half."

"The team just picked their heads up and we got back into it."

Matheus Braga
senior midfielder

In pre-game warm-ups, senior co-captain Drew Cost suffered an injury that caused him to miss the game. Lions coach Bob Warming said Cost's injury took a lot of energy out of his team, but Braga's strike lifted the spirits on the field and sideline.

Tactically, the Lions changed formations in the second half, which put Braga closer to the forwards and junior Mackenzie Arment in the middle. Warming felt Arment's move was a key to Hertzog and Braga's resurgence.

"His energy and speed in there drew a lot more attention away from Matheus and away from Corey," Warming said.

"Now they're looking all the time, when you see a little bit of speed next to you it always catches your eye and

I thought 'Kenzie helped those two.'

After rotating forwards all half, Warming called in freshman Jordan Tyler to finish the job. The bruising forward took over with his size, strength and deceptive speed and opened up space that led to Hertzog's winner.

Braga fed Hertzog after making one of his trademark runs into the corner, cutting around defenders then feeding a low ball to Hertzog. The junior took a touch then buried the ball in the left corner of the net, before setting off for the bleachers.

Despite a bad show for the first 45 minutes, Warming's experience has told him to stick with his playmakers. Sunday, his patience was rewarded.

"That's going to happen with your attacking players and the thing with those kind of guys is you just have to be patient and have some faith and believe if you leave them on long enough it's going to happen," Warming said. "The players just got to keep their confidence up and you tell them to keep getting after it but, 'do better.'"

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