Mantha, Acciari power Pens past Rangers

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Anthony Mantha and Noel Acciari scored two goals apiece, and the surging Pittsburgh Penguins held off the New York Rangers 6-5 on Saturday for their sixth straight victory.

Mantha and Acciari beat Jonathan Quick twice in a span of just over three minutes early in the first period to give the Penguins an early cushion. Mantha made it 3-0 with an easy tap-in in the second period. Acciari and Rickard Rakell scored 20 seconds apart early in the third to push Pittsburgh's advantage to 5-1 on a night the franchise celebrated the 10th anniversary of the 2016 club that won the Stanley Cup.

Erik Karlsson became the 12th defenseman in NHL history to reach 700 career assists when he picked up the secondary helper on Rakell's 10th goal of the season 1:20 into the final period. The other 11 defensemen to reach the 700-assist plateau are in the Hall of Fame.

Stuart Skinner improved to 8-1 in his last nine starts but nearly let a four-goal third period get away.

Alex Lafreniere scored twice for the Rangers. Vincent Trocheck, Vladislav Gavrikov and Will Cuylle all scored during a late rally, but it wasn't enough for the Rangers to fall to 2-10 since goaltender Igor Shesterkin was lost indefinitely with a lower-body injury.

AP

Pittsburgh's Anthony Mantha (center) celebrates in the second period with Evgeni Malkin (left) and Sidney Crosby after his second goal against the New York Rangers on Saturday.

Until the late surge, New York coach Mike Sullivan — who guided the Penguins to consecutive Stanley Cups in 2016 and 2017 during a decade-long run as head coach before trading Pittsburgh for New York last summer — watched his team spend most of the afternoon putting up little fight against the surprising Penguins.

Pittsburgh moved into second place by itself in the Metropolitan Division with the victory despite being without veteran defenseman Kris Letang, who will miss at least a month with a fractured left foot sustained in a win over Chicago on Thursday. The 20-year veteran was wearing a protective boot on the foot during a pregame ceremony honoring the 2016 club.

Letang out at least a month due to fractured foot

PITTSBURGH — Pittsburgh Penguins defenseman Kris Letang will miss at least four weeks with a fractured foot.

The club announced the extent of the injury on Saturday before the surging Penguins faced the New York Rangers. Pittsburgh coach Dan Muse said Letang, who is in his 20th season, injured the foot during a 6-2 victory over Chicago on Thursday.

Letang's absence comes with the Penguins surging into the Olympic break. Pittsburgh is 6-0-2 in its last eight games to move into second place in the Metropolitan Division.

The 38-year-old Letang has three goals and 22 assists in 50 games this season for the Penguins. He is currently three points shy of 800 for his career.

Letang's injury comes at a potentially fortuitous time for Pittsburgh with the NHL set to take an extended break for the 2026 Winter Games in Milan Cortina, which start next week. The Penguins not participating in the Olympics will be off from Feb. 6 to Feb. 25.

Ion

Continued from Page B1

"I put a lot of emphasis on building relationships. You have to have strong relationships with the players, parents and the community," he said. "You want to keep things simple for the players. You don't want to overload them with a lot of information. You want them to play loose and free and trust that their skills and instincts will get the job done," he said. "We also want to have fun or nobody is going to want to be there. You've got to make it enjoyable for the players. They need to know that we are going to work hard and we are going to get stuff done, but we are going to enjoy it while we are here."

Ion isn't coming to the program with any preconceived plans or schemes, he plans on building around the team's strengths.

"Offensively, we're going to mix things up and do whatever benefits what we have athletically and talent wise. Defensively, we will try to get after it, but you have to build your schemes to what you've got on the field. You want to adapt to what you have. We are going to show up every Friday night and play to the best of our ability and try to execute to the best of our ability. I just want the kids to play hard every snap and have fun, and I think everything else will fall into place after that."

Crosby

Continued from Page B1

And while Crosby remains a force — he recently surpassed franchise icon, Hall of Famer and minority owner Mario Lemieux as the team's all-time scoring leader and is on his way to extending his NHL record of averaging at least a point a game to 21 years and counting — he's also become keenly aware of just how fleeting the kind of chemistry the 2016 club can be.

"I love that group," Crosby said. "I love playing."

He loves winning even more, something the current crop of Penguins is doing at a rate that has them among the biggest surprises in the league as the Olympic break looms.

Pittsburgh's 'harder-than-it-had-to-be' win over the Rangers — now coached by Sullivan, who received one of the loudest ovations seven months after trading Pittsburgh for New York — moved the Penguins into second place alone in the Metropolitan Division.

Their 13th victory in 17 games since Dec. 27 came the way a lot of them have come over the last three-plus months: with contributions from up and down the lineup. Anthony Mantha, working on the third line, scored twice. Noel Acciari, a fourth-line fixture, scored a pair too. Rookie Ben Kindel — all of 18 — added a late empty netter to avoid what might have been a stunning collapse after the Penguins flirted with letting a four-goal lead in the third period slip away.

The team that has struggled to defend during their three-year playoff absence held the Rangers without a shot on goal for 21 minutes at one point. And when New York drew within one with 10 seconds to go and then managed to get a faceoff in the Pittsburgh zone with 3.6 seconds left, Acciari won the draw and steered the puck out of danger.

The heady play let goaltender Stuart Skinner and the rest of the Penguins exhale on a night Skinner — a Stanley Cup runner-up with Edmonton each of the last two seasons before being acquired by the Penguins in December — is well-versed on the thin line between a great season and a historic one.

"Every time you go to the Stanley Cup finals, especially for the teams that win, the stories that you have, the camaraderie, you know you bled for each other throughout that year," Skinner said as he watched Lemieux and Crosby share a quiet moment a few stalls away. "So I'm sure it's really cool for these guys to get back together and it's really cool that I'm in the same dressing room as some of the Stanley Cup champions."

There's a long way to go before the current Penguins can start thinking of joining that kind of company. Yet Crosby is encouraged. He knows better than most the DNA required for a team to raise the Cup in late spring. Pittsburgh is hardly there yet, but for the first time in what seems like a long time, it doesn't feel completely out of reach.

"I think everyone's contributing, that's what you need to win," he said. "And you have to win different ways and you look all through our lineup, everybody's been chipping in big ways ... I think if you go through those things and you have consistency in all those areas, you give yourself a chance."

THE DAILY SCOREBOARD

NHL Glance

Saturday's Games

Los Angeles 3, Philadelphia 2, OT
Colorado 5, Detroit 0
Pittsburgh 6, N.Y. Rangers 5
Winnipeg 2, Florida 1
Calgary 3, San Jose 2
Washington 4, Carolina 3, OT
Nashville 4, N.Y. Islanders 3
Columbus 5, St. Louis 3
Montreal 4, Buffalo 2
Ottawa 4, New Jersey 1
Toronto 3, Vancouver 2, SO
Dallas 3, Utah 2
Seattle 3, Vegas 2
Minnesota 7, Edmonton 3

Sunday's Games

Carolina 3, Los Angeles 2, OT
Boston vs. Tampa Bay at Raymond James Stadium, late
Vegas at Anaheim, late

Monday's Games

Buffalo at Florida, 7 p.m.
N.Y. Islanders at Washington, 7 p.m.
Ottawa at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.
Montreal at Minnesota, 7:30 p.m.
St. Louis at Nashville, 8 p.m.
San Jose at Chicago, 8:30 p.m.
Winnipeg at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
Detroit at Colorado, 9 p.m.
Vancouver at Utah, 9:30 p.m.
Toronto at Calgary, 10 p.m.

Tuesday's Games

Columbus at New Jersey, 7 p.m.
Ottawa at Carolina, 7 p.m.
Washington at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Buffalo at Tampa Bay, 7:30 p.m.
Pittsburgh at N.Y. Islanders, 7:30 p.m.
Toronto at Edmonton, 8:30 p.m.
Seattle at Anaheim, 10 p.m.

Pittsburgh Penguins Summary

Pittsburgh 6, N.Y. Rangers 5

N.Y. Rangers	**0**	**1**	**4**	**—**	**5**
Pittsburgh	**2**	**1**	**3**	**—**	**6**

First Period—1, Pittsburgh, Mantha 18 (McGroarty), 2:37. 2, Pittsburgh, Acciari 5 (Dewar, Lizotte), 6:05. Penalties—McGroarty, PIT (Tripping), 6:10; Morrow, NYR (Hooking), 17:40.

Second Period—3, Pittsburgh, Mantha 19 (Malkin, Rakell), 12:59. 4, N.Y. Rangers, Lafreniere 11 (Miller, Zibanejad), 18:28 (pp). Penalties—Robertson, NYR (Interference), 3:19; Brodzinski, NYR (High Sticking), 10:56; Carrick, NYR (Tripping), 17:09; Mantha, PIT (Slashing), 17:09; Pittsburgh bench, served by Malkin (Too Many Men on the Ice), 18:15; Cuylle, NYR (Holding), 20:00.

Third Period—5, Pittsburgh, Rakell 10 (Crosby, Karlsson), 1:20 (pp). 6, Pittsburgh, Acciari 6 (Lizotte, Kulak), 1:40. 7, N.Y. Rangers, Trocheck 12 (Gavrikov), 9:12 (sh). 8, N.Y. Rangers, Gavrikov 9 (Schneider, Brodzinski), 15:15. 9, Pittsburgh, Kindel 12 (Dewar, Skinner), 17:28 (en). 10, N.Y. Rangers, Lafreniere 12 (Robertson, Trocheck), 18:53. 11, N.Y. Rangers, Cuylle 13 (Lafreniere, Trocheck), 19:49. Penalties—Solovyov, PIT (Cross Checking), 4:37; Borgen, NYR (Roughing), 8:24.

Shots on Goal—N.Y. Rangers 9-2-9—20. Pittsburgh 11-10-13—34.

Power-play opportunities—N.Y. Rangers 1 of 3; Pittsburgh 1 of 5.

Goalies—N.Y. Rangers, Quick 4-12-2 (33 shots-28 saves). Pittsburgh, Skinner 18-12-4 (20-15).

Sports Scene

MONDAY, FEB. 2
GIRLS BASKETBALL
Fairview at Franklin (6 p.m.)
Oil City at Titusville (6 p.m.)
Rocky Grove at Cambridge Springs (6 p.m.)
Cranberry at Keystone (6 p.m.)
Union/A-C Valley at Smethport (5 p.m.)
North Clarion at Ridgway (6 p.m.)
Moniteau at Karns City (6 p.m.)
Forest Area at Brockway (6 p.m.)
Cochranton at Commodore Perry (6 p.m.)
SCHOLASTIC SWIMMING
Franklin at Sharon (5 p.m.)

TUESDAY, FEB. 3
BOYS BASKETBALL
Warren at Franklin (6 p.m.)
Titusville at Oil City (6 p.m.)
Rocky Grove at Cochranton (6 p.m.)
Cranberry at Brookville (6 p.m.)
Union at Karns City (6 p.m.)
North Clarion at Moniteau (6 p.m.)
Clarion-Limestone at Keystone (6 p.m.)
Clarion at Redbank Valley (6 p.m.)
A-C Valley vs. Forest Area at Marienville (6 p.m.)
Grove City at Sharon (6 p.m.)
GIRLS BASKETBALL
Forest Area at Rocky Grove (6 p.m.)
SCHOLASTIC WRESTLING
Franklin at Cranberry (6 p.m.)

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 4
BOYS BASKETBALL
Cochranton at Reynolds (6 p.m.)
GIRLS BASKETBALL
Brookville at Cranberry (6 p.m.)
Karns City at Union/A-C Valley (6 p.m.)
Moniteau at North Clarion (6 p.m.)
Redbank Valley at Clarion (6 p.m.)
Keystone at Clarion-Limestone (6 p.m.)
SCHOLASTIC WRESTLING
Curwensville at Redbank Valley (6 p.m.)
Saegertown at Titusville (6 p.m.)
SCHOLASTIC SWIMMING
Oil City at Titusville (6 p.m.)
BOCCE BALL
Franklin at Slippery Rock (3 p.m.)
Moniteau at Oil City (3:15 p.m.)

The Cranberry "A" team went 3-0 on Saturday at the Redbank Valley Junior High boys basketball tournament, defeating Keystone, Johnsonburg, and Clarion-Limestone in the championship game to win the event.

The Cranberry "B" team went 3-0 Friday night at the Redbank Valley Junior High boys basketball tournament, defeating Union, Keystone, and Clarion-Limestone in the championship game to win the event.

Basketball Boxscores

VARSITY BOYS

RIDGWAY (32)
Tutton 2 0-0 4, James 0 2-2 2, Kilpeck 7 1-2 21, Miller 1 0-0 2, Bender 1 1-2 3. Totals: 11 4-6 32.

NORTH CLARION (52)
Baumcratz 1 1-3 3, Bish 2 4-4 10, Lutz 4 0-0 8, Zacheral 1 1-2 3, Irwin 5 2-4 16, Swanson 1 0-0 2, Mellon 1 0-0 3, O. Walter 1 0-0 2, E. Walter 2 1-1 5. Totals: 18 10-14 52.

Score by Quarters

Ridgway	4	6	8	14	—	32
North Clarion	20	11	13	8	—	52

3-point goals — Ridgway (Kilpeck 6), NC (Irwin 4, Bish 2, Mellon).

VARSITY GIRLS

COMMODORE PERRY (59)
Saxe 76-10 21, Furey 2 3-6 9, Davidson 1 0-0 3, Varner 1 0-2 3, Post 8 6-8 23. Totals: 19 15-26 59.

CRANBERRY (71)
Wenner 10 6-8 31, Ishman 7 0-4 14, Stewart 2 1-4 5, Earp 0 0-0 0, Shumaker 6 0-0 12, Schwab 0 0-0 0, Garland 0 0-0 0, Morrow 3 3-6 9, Scarbrough 0 0-0 0. Totals: 28 10-22 71.

Score by Quarters

Commodore	13	16	7	23	—	59
Cranberry	15	20	26	10	—	71

3-point goals — CP (Furey 2, Saxe, Davidson, Varner), Cranberry (Wenner 5).

NORTH CLARION (47)
Baumcratz 3 2-2 10, Carll 1 10-13 12, Reisinger 1 0-0 3, Ki. Freeman 4 1-2 9, McClung 0 0-4 0, Gilara 1 2-6 4, Thompson 3 3-4 9. Totals: 15 19-32 47.

FOREST AREA (31)
Forker 0 0-0 0, B. Wagner 1 0-0 2, Colvin 5 2-5 14, A. Wagner 2 0-2 4, K. Wagner 2 0-0 4, O'Connor 2 0-0 5, Brown 0 2-2 2. Totals: 13 4-9 31.

Score by Quarters

North Clarion	9	19	15	4	—	52
Forest	10	5	8	8	—	31

3-point goals — NC (Baumcratz 2, Reisinger), Forest (Colvin 2, O'Connor).

CURWENSVILLE (21)
Warren 0 3-4 3, Peoples 3 1-8 7, Was 2 0-0 5, Thachuck 3 0-2 6, Elensky 0 0-0 0. Totals: 8 4-14 21.

UNION/A-C VALLEY (52)
Fletcher 6 1-4 16, Best 0 0-0 0, Fair 2 0-0 4, Warfield 0 0-0 0, Black 0 0-0 0, Kifer 2 0-2 4, Watson 0 0-0 0, M. Dehart 7 8-12 24, Hall 2 0-0 4. Totals: 19 9-18 52.

Score by Quarters

Curwensville	3	11	7	0	—	21
UACV	17	10	12	13	—	52

3-point goals — Curwensville (Was), UACV (Fletcher 3, M. Dehart 2).

MEADVILLE (37)
Gongaware 1 0-0 2, Jordan 2 0-0 4, Shaw 1 0-0 2, Luteran 1 3-4 5, Hall 9 0-0 20, Gordon 1 0-0 2, Dixon 1 0-0 2. Totals: 16 3-6 37.

GROVE CITY (52)
A. Cook 1 4-6 6, Barr 2 3-4 7, Brink 4 0-2 8, Bianconi 4 6-8 14, Kolbe 6 3-4 15, VanZandt 1 0-0 2. Totals: 18 16-24 52.

Score by Quarters

Meadville	13	6	5	13	—	37
Grove City	17	9	10	16	—	52

3-point goals — Meadville (Hall 2).

8TH GRADE BOYS

COCHRANTON (8)
No names available.

ROCKY GROVE (50)
Ca. Barrett 5 2-2 12, D. Hughes 8 0-1 16, Burchanowski 2 0-0 4, Bell-Carone 4 0-1 8, Ali 1 0-0 2, Alcorn 2 2-2 6, Kam Hughes 1 0-0 2.

Score by Quarters

Cochranton	2	2	2	2	—	8
Rocky Grove	16	18	6	10	—	50

7TH GRADE BOYS

COCHRANTON (43)
No names available.

ROCKY GROVE (41)
Kam Hughes 5 2-5 12, Kas. Hughes 6 2-4 14, Beightol 3 0-0 7, Hefferman 2 1-2 6, Wilson 1 0-2 2. Totals: 17 5-13 41.

Score by Quarters

Cochranton	11	6	13	13	—	43
Rocky Grove	12	8	3	18	—	41

3-point goals — RG (Beightol, Hefferman).

Announcement

BENEFIT BASKETBALL GAME

The Franklin High School junior varsity and varsity basketball teams and the Franklin senior high winter cheerleaders are putting on a benefit night next week for a Franklin student.

The two basketball games against Warren on Tuesday — junior varsity at 6 p.m. and varsity following at around 7:15 p.m. — will benefit sophomore Austin Wallace, who is valiantly fighting osteosarcoma, a rare bone cancer.

Wallace is also an enthusiastic basketball player.

Donations will be taken for Wallace and his family at the games, and organizers are also seeking raffle items as further fundraisers.

Elementary Basketball

ELEMENTARY BOYS BASKETBALL
6th Grade Division
Game 1
Rocky Grove Orange (21) — Max Bloom 17, Bentley Watson 4.
Rocky Grove White (25) — Liam Riley 5, Cody Graham 20.
Game 2
Rocky Grove Orange (19) — Max Bloom 7, Warren Struthers 6, Levi Griffen 2, Bentley Watson 4.
Franklin Black (32) — Carter Lyons 8, Jack Lyons 3, Silas Montgomery 6, Michael Rodriguez 9, Philip Steigerwald 4, Calvin Hanna 2.
Game 3
Rocky Grove White (21) — Liam Riley 6, Cody Graham 11, Christian Tarr 4.
Oil City (34) — Chance Russell 6, Bricen Hartzell 2, Gabe Sibble 2, Austin Kellogg 2, Mason Friedhaber 2, Logan Dickenson 12, Luan Roos 6, Matt Welms 2.
5th Grade Division
Game 1
Rocky Grove (9) — Jaxen Miller 2, Jacob Potter 2, Levi Weller 5.
Oil City (25) — Benson Basham 4, Zak'i Collins 9, Drake Vogan 4, Quinton Siembida 4, Griffen Kasunic 2, Jace Mackin 2.
Game 2
Victory (19) — Thatcher Stone 4, Case Staley 2, Finlee Kline 4, Cayde Miller 5, Brantley Metcalf 4.
Sandycreek (13) — Adon Purich 4, Torin Schmidt 4, Jayce Wheeler 1, Markus Stone 2, Peyton Reed 2.
4th Grade Division
Sandycreek (8) — Joseph Price 2, Krew Angiolieri 2, Brantley Hollidge 4.
Victory (0) — no scoring.

Sports on TV

Monday, Feb. 2
AUTO RACING
11 a.m.
FS2 — NASCAR Cup Series: Practice and Qualifying, Bowman Gray Stadium, Winston-Salem, N.C.
4:30 p.m.
FOX — NASCAR Cup Series: Last Chance Qualifying Race, Bowman Gray Stadium, Winston-Salem, N.C.
6 p.m.
FOX — NASCAR Cup Series: The Cook Out Clash at Bowman Gray Stadium, Bowman Gray Stadium, Winston-Salem, N.C.
BASEBALL
3 p.m.
MLBN — 2026 Caribbean Series: Puerto Rico vs. Dominican Republic, Round Robin, Zapopan, Mexico
8 p.m.
MLBN — 2026 Caribbean Series: Mexico (Red) vs. Panama, Round Robin, Zapopan, Mexico
COLLEGE BASKETBALL (MEN'S)
7 p.m.
CBSSN — Boston U. at Holy Cross
ESPN — Syracuse at North Carolina
9 p.m.
CBSSN — Incarnate Word at Texas A&M-CC
ESPN — Kansas at Texas Tech
COLLEGE BASKETBALL (WOMEN'S)
4:30 p.m.
CBSSN — Boston U. at Holy Cross
6 p.m.
ESPN2 — North Carolina at NC State
8 p.m.
ESPN2 — South Carolina at Texas A&M
COLLEGE HOCKEY (MEN'S)
5 p.m.
NHLN — Beanpot Tournament: Boston College vs. Harvard, Semifinal, Boston
8 p.m.
NHLN — Beanpot Tournament: Northeastern vs. Boston U., Semifinal, Boston
GOLF
5 p.m.
ESPN — TGL: Atlanta Drive GC vs. Jupiter Links Golf Club
NBA BASKETBALL
7:30 p.m.
PEACOCK — Minnesota at Memphis
10 p.m.
PEACOCK — Philadelphia at L.A. Clippers
NHL HOCKEY
7 p.m.
SNP — Ottawa at Pittsburgh
SOCCER (MEN'S)
3 p.m.
USA — English Premier League: Burnley FC at Sunderland
SOCCER (WOMEN'S)
5:50 p.m.
FS2 — CONCACAF U-17 Qualifier: Haiti vs. Guatemala, Round One, Willemstad, Curaçao
7:50 p.m.
FS2 — CONCACAF U-17 Qualifier: Costa Rica vs. Cuba, Round One, Managua, Nicaragua
TENNIS
6 a.m.
TENNIS — Montpellier-ATP, Abu Dhabi-WTA, Cluj-Napoca-WTA & Ostrava-WTA Early Rounds
UNRIVALED BASKETBALL
7:30 p.m.
TNT — Vinyl vs. Hive, Miami
TRUTV — Vinyl vs. Hive, Miami
8:45 p.m.
TNT — Mist vs. Laces, Miami
TRUTV — Mist vs. Laces, Miami