

Ryan Getzlaf leads Ducks past Stars 3-2

Written by Administrator
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ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Ryan Getzlaf wore the strain all over his exhausted face. In the past 51 hours or so, he had taken a slap shot to the jaw, attended the birth of his third child and propelled the Anaheim Ducks to two gritty playoff victories.

Getzlaf figures he has all summer to rest. He's too busy polishing his reputation as a dominant scorer and an equally formidable leader in another narrow win over the Dallas Stars.

Getzlaf had a goal and an assist while wearing a facemask over his injured jaw, Corey Perry scored his first playoff goal in three years, and the Ducks beat Dallas 3-2 Friday night to take a 2-0 lead in their first-round series.

"It's been absolutely incredible couple of days," Getzlaf said. "They were a little hectic, but these are the things you want to do in life. At least tonight I didn't get hit in the face."

Rookie Frederik Andersen made 34 saves in his second postseason start, and Andrew Cogliano scored a short-handed goal in the third period before the Ducks survived Dallas' late flurry to move halfway to their first series victory since 2009.

Game 3 is Monday in Dallas.

Anaheim has won just one postseason round since its only Stanley Cup title in 2007, back when Getzlaf and Perry were supporting players. The Ducks are their team now, and the dynamic duo led Anaheim to another victory despite committing a couple of late penalties.

"Every once in a while, you need your best players to step it up when the rest of the guys lose their composure," Ducks coach Bruce Boudreau said. "Getzy, with what happened to him in the last three days, to come in and get two points and a plus-3 rating, is a sure reason why he (should be) hopefully nominated for the MVP."

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Getzlaf was clobbered by Tyler Seguin's shot in the final minute of Game 1, leaving him with alarming bruises and a ragged cut. His wife then gave birth to a daughter named Willa early Friday morning before sending him home to rest for Game 2.

None of it could stop Anaheim's captain from getting back in the lineup with a clear facemask around his jaw and mouth in a prudent concession by a player who doesn't like even wearing a visor. After a raucous pregame ovation from an Orange County crowd that recognized his toughness, Getzlaf then scored a first-period goal and set up Cogliano's electric short-handed goal.

"He's an unbelievable player, and he's a great captain," Cogliano said. "He's pretty easy to follow."

Kari Lehtonen stopped 16 shots, while Alex Chiasson and Ryan Garbutt scored for the wild-card Stars, who took two one-goal losses to open their first playoff series since 2008. Dallas coach Lindy Ruff realizes his team's playoff inexperience must go away quickly to get back into the series.

"We handed them their opportunities and their goals," Ruff said. "We skated well. The effort was great, but we made a couple of mistakes that cost us."

Half of Dallas' skaters made playoff debuts in the series opener, but the Stars came out for Game 2 with more confidence and poise from the opening faceoff. Chiasson put Dallas ahead early on a power play, one-timing a pass from captain Jamie Benn for his first career playoff goal.

Getzlaf evened it by himself, taking the puck away from Erik Cole and beating Lehtonen high for his second goal of the series.

"What a great play by him, stealing the puck and being a beast going to the net," Perry said.

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Perry put the Ducks ahead late in the first period after intercepting a pass between Seguin and Benn before rocketing a slap shot past Lehtonen from close range.

Perry hadn't scored a playoff goal in 10 games since April 2011, getting blanked during the Ducks' seven-game loss to Detroit in the first round last spring. But the Canadian Olympic gold medalist knows how to fill a net: He was the NHL's second-leading goal-scorer this season, trailing only Alex Ovechkin.

The Ducks went up 3-1 when Cogliano, their dominant forechecker and penalty-killer, got away with breaking Sergei Gonchar's stick in the Dallas end. Getzlaf controlled the puck and fed Cogliano for the score.

"We had a chance to win the game and the ref missed a penalty (committed) against me," Gonchar said. "It should have been a 5-on-3, but instead it's a goal for them. ... Nobody is happy about it, but I think we're playing better."

Garbutt kept the Stars close with a goal in front, and Dallas tilted the ice decidedly in its favor in the final minutes. But Anaheim killed a penalty on Getzlaf with 3 minutes to play before Nick Bonino blocked the Stars' final shot.

NOTES: Dallas D Brenden Dillon missed his third straight game with a lower-body injury, and the Stars scratched veteran D Aaron Rome in favor of rookie Kevin Connauton, who made his playoff debut. ... The Ducks played without top-line forward Matt Beleskey, who aggravated a persistent lower-body injury late in Game 1. Devante Smith-Pelly replaced Beleskey in the Anaheim lineup, making his NHL playoff debut.