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Post wire services

John Tolkin scored on a penalty kick in the fourth minute of second-half stoppage time to give the visiting Red Bulls a dramatic 1-0 Decision Day victory over Nashville SC on Saturday afternoon.

The Red Bulls qualified for the playoffs for the 14th straight season, the longest active playoff streak in major North American sports.

Carlos Coronel made four saves for his ninth clean sheet of the season for the Red Bulls (11-13-10, 43 points) who finished eighth and will host ninth-place Charlotte FC in the Eastern Conference wild-card match on Wednesday night.

The playoff streak, which began in 2010, also broke a tie with the Seattle Sounders (2009-21) for the longest in MLS history.

Joe Willis finished with four saves for Nashville SC (13-11-10, 49 points) who finished in seventh place and will play second-place Orlando City in the opening round of the MLS Cup playoffs.

The Red Bulls entered stoppage time knowing they needed a goal to keep their playoff streak alive and got a major break in the 92nd minute when Nashville's Anibal Godoy tripped midfielder Luquinhas right inside the top of the 18-yard box. Tolkin then blasted a left-footed shot into the right corner of the goal as Willis dived to the left. It was his third goal of the season.

Both teams had excellent scoring chances in a scoreless first half that saw Nashville finish with a 4-2 edge in shots of goal.

Reigning Golden Boot



Red Bulls clinch unlikely playoff spot on Tolkin's PK

GREAT ESCAPE: John Tolkin celebrates his goal from the penalty spot in stoppage time of the Red Bulls 1-0 win over Nashville SC in their season finale, clinching their record 14th straight playoff berth. *USA Today Sports*

winner Hany Mukhtar had a pair of good chances for Nashville, including one on a breakaway in the 16th, but Coronel made a diving finger-tip deflection on his right-footed shot from the left side of the box that carried off the far right post.

Fafa Picault had another excellent chance for the home team in the eighth minute of stoppage time with a right-footed shot

MLS ROUNDUP

from the left-side of the six-yard box that Coronel caught.

Forward Elias Manoel had the best scoring chance for the Red Bulls in the 25th minute when he took a through pass from Luquinhas, but Willis saved his left-footed attempt from left side of the box.

Willis also made a diving two-handed grab of a Manoel right-footed shot from the middle of the box in the 50th minute.

NYCFC 1, Chicago Fire 0

Julian Fernandez scored in the second half to lead New York City FC to a 1-0 victory over the Chicago Fire in a regular-season finale at Yankee Stadium that saw both teams eliminated

from postseason play.

Fernandez's second goal of the season for NYCFC (9-11-14) came in the 64th minute with an assist from Santiago Rodriguez.

Matt Freese totaled four saves for NYCFC. Chris Brady saved three shots for Chicago (10-14-10).

NYCFC failed to win 10 matches in a season for the first time since joining the league nine years ago.

English soccer legend Charlton dies at 86

Associated Press

MANCHESTER, England — Bobby Charlton, an English soccer icon who survived a plane crash that decimated a Manchester United team destined for greatness to become the heartbeat of his country's 1966 World Cup triumph, has died. He was 86.

The death of Charlton, who is regarded by many as the greatest ever English player, was announced in a statement from his family that was released by United, which said he died Saturday surrounded by his family.

An extravagantly gifted attacking midfielder with a ferocious shot, Charlton was the leading scorer for both United (249 goals) and England (49 goals) for more than 40 years until being overtaken by Wayne Rooney. He was easily recognizable with his

comb-over, and known globally for being a gentleman of the beautiful game.

"Sir Bobby was a hero to millions, not just in Manchester, or the United Kingdom, but wherever football is played around the world," United said.

"He was admired as much for his sportsmanship and integrity as he was for his outstanding qualities as a footballer; Sir Bobby will always be remembered as a giant of the game."

Sir Alex Ferguson, who managed United from 1986-2013, said before Charlton's death that he "is the greatest Manchester United player of all time — and that's saying something."

"Bobby Charlton is absolutely without peer in the history of the English game," Ferguson said. Charlton was also renowned for his

humility and discipline. He was never sent off in 758 appearances for United from 1956-73 or 106 internationals for England from 1958-70.

Charlton played with George Best and Denis Law in the so-called "Trinity" that led United to the 1968 European Cup title after surviving the 1958 Munich crash that wiped out the celebrated "Busby Babes" team. He won three English league titles at United, and one FA Cup.

"For a footballer, he offered an unparalleled combination of grace, power and precision," said former United defender Bill Foulkes, another survivor of the Munich air crash.

"It added up to a greatness and something more — something I can only call beauty."

United played a Premier League match against Sheffield United a few

hours after Charlton's death was announced. Man United's players laid a wreath on the field ahead of the game and took part in a period of applause while a picture of a young Charlton was displayed on the screens inside the stadium.

In November 2020, it was announced that Charlton had been diagnosed with dementia, the same disease that afflicted his brother Jack — who died in 2020 at age 85.

Charlton's death left Geoff Hurst, who scored a hat trick in the 1966 final, as the only surviving member of that England team.

"We will never forget him and nor will all of football," Hurst said of Charlton on X, formerly known as Twitter. "A great colleague and friend, he will be sorely missed by all of the country beyond sport alone."