

**13** Home winner at last as amazing Grace triumphs at Sun City

**14** Ottawa tops Colorado 4-3 to sweep series of Sweden games

**15** Italy's old guard face final stand in play-off



HOUSTON: Memphis Grizzlies guard Mike Conley (11) and Houston Rockets forward PJ Tucker (4) chase a loose ball as Houston Rockets guard James Harden (13) and guard Eric Gordon (10) watch during the second half of NBA game. — AP

## Harden scores 38 points, Rockets wins

### Golden State hitting their stride, Spurs stop Bulls

HOUSTON: James Harden scored 38 points to lead the Houston Rockets to a 111-96 victory over the Memphis Grizzlies on Saturday night. After suffering two losses to Memphis in the first two weeks of the season, the Rockets finally solved their shooting woes against the Grizzlies. In their previous two meetings, Memphis held the Rockets to 90 and 89 points, the only two times the Rockets have been held under 100 points this season, and Houston's lowest two scoring efforts ever under head coach Mike D'Antoni. On Saturday night, Houston jumped out to a 9-0 lead by draining three 3s and never let Memphis go ahead, leading by as many as 25 points. The Rockets outdid their previous scoring against Memphis by the end of the third quarter, entering the fourth with a 93-70 lead. Houston hit 16 of 45 (35.6 percent) from beyond the arc, including 6 of 14 from Harden, who added eight assists and four rebounds. Eric Gordon added 26 points on 6 of 11 3-point shooting for Houston. Tyreke Evans led Memphis with 22 points.

#### WARRIORS 135, 76ERS 114

Kevin Durant returned from missing one game with a leg injury to finish with 29 points, leading Golden State past Philadelphia for its sixth straight win. Draymond

Green had 10 points, 10 rebounds, seven assists, five blocks and two steals. Stephen Curry added 22 points and nine assists to surpass the 4,000-assist mark for his career and Klay Thompson scored 23 as the Warriors pulled away in the second half. Durant sat out Wednesday's win against the Timberwolves with a bruised left thigh but hardly showed any signs of an issue. Curry, sporting new cornrows in his hair, briefly went to the locker room early in the second but returned. JJ Redick scored 17 points to lead the Sixers.

#### BUCKS 98, LAKERS 90

Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 33 points to help Milwaukee overcome Lonzo Ball's triple-double for Los Angeles. Ball became the youngest player in NBA history to record a triple-double, finishing with 17 points, 13 assists and 12 rebounds. At 20 years and 15 days, he bested LeBron James by four days to become the youngest to accomplish the feat. Milwaukee used a 9-2 run at the end of the third quarter to grab a 77-67 lead. The Bucks maintained a double-digit lead throughout most of the fourth. After the Lakers pulled within seven with just over five minutes left, Antetokounmpo threw down a dunk

while being fouled. He made the free throw to grow the Bucks' lead back to 10 points. He followed with a twisting layup on the next possession as the Bucks gained control.

#### PELICANS 111, CLIPPERS 103

DeMarcus Cousins had 35 points and 15 rebounds and Anthony Davis added 25 points and 10 rebounds to help New Orleans beat Los Angeles. Jrue Holiday had eight assists for New Orleans, half of the total assists generated by the entire Clippers team. The Pelicans also overcame 23 turnovers. Cousins lost the ball eight times - two on offensive fouls - and Holiday had seven turnovers. Blake Griffin led the Clippers with 27 points, but it came on 9-of-27 shooting. DeAndre Jordan has 12 points and 14 rebounds.

#### SPURS 133, BULLS 94

Pau Gasol had 21 points and 10 rebounds and short-handed San Antonio beat Chicago, setting a season high in points despite missing a third of their roster Saturday night. Dejounte Murray added 17 points and Davis Bertans had 16 points in 18 minutes for San Antonio. Chicago lost rookie forward Lauri Markkanen to a

sprained left ankle late in the first half. The severity of the injury is unknown. The Spurs were without six players, including three starters. In addition to Kawhi Leonard and Tony Parker, who have yet to play this season due to quadriceps injuries, San Antonio was without Danny Green. Manu Ginobili rested on the second night of a back-to-back.

#### CAVALIERS 111, MAVERICKS 104

Kevin Love had 29 points and 15 rebounds and Kyle Korver scored all 13 of his points in the fourth quarter to help Cleveland beat Dallas. The Mavericks were down by as many as 11 points in the fourth quarter and cut the lead to one on two occasions but could never take the lead. With the American Airlines Center crowd standing for most of the game's final four minutes, Harrison Barnes missed a 3-pointer that would have put Dallas up by one. Korver was fouled on the rebound and made both free throws to put the Cavs up 106-102, and Cleveland clinched the game with free throws. Barnes finished with 23 points. LeBron James, averaging 36 points in November, had just 19, but two came on an emphatic dunk with 1:08 to play that put Cleveland up 104-100. — AP

## Sasnovich beats Stephens to force Fed Cup decider

MINSK: Belarus' Aliaksandra Sasnovich battled back from a set down to beat American Sloane Stephens and force a deciding rubber in the Fed Cup final in Minsk yesterday. Earlier, CoCo Vandeweghe put the United States 2-1 up by beating teenager Aryna Sabalenka 7-6 (7/5), 6-1.

The world number 87 Sasnovich prevailed 4-6, 6-1, 8-6 in two hours and six minutes to chalk up her second win over Stephens, who has lost all of her six matches since winning the US Open title in September, in as many meetings. Vandeweghe and Shelby Rogers take on Sasnovich and Sabalenka for the title

in a doubles clash later.

"It was one of the most tense matches in my life," Sasnovich said. "I gave everything I have for the win, the god of tennis was on my side today. The support of the crowd helped me to stay concentrated throughout the game. It was a fantastic match."

Both players produced a catalogue of unforced errors in the opening set but the 24-year-old Stephens held on to take it after an early break. But in the second Stephens, ranked 13th in the world, suddenly ran out of gas allowing Sasnovich to break twice to level at one set all. In the deciding set, Stephens led 5-2 before Sasnovich, 23, roared back with four straight games before eventually closing it out 8-6. In Sunday's early match, Sabalenka and Vandeweghe both played with confidence from the start on the hard court at a packed Minsk Chizhovka 8,000-capacity arena, holding their serves until the 11th game when Vandeweghe broke.

But Sabalenka broke back immediately

under the watchful gaze of Belarus president Alexander Lukashenko to force a tiebreak, which the 25-year-old American won 7-5. In the second Sabalenka, who is 78th in the world rankings, lost her nerve, allowing Vandeweghe to break twice for a commanding 5-0 lead minutes before she took the set and the match with an accurate backhand. "I knew if I just kept giving myself opportunities and getting my nose in front in her service games, I'd keep getting opportunities and she'd eventually break down," Vandeweghe said.

"She did what she's supposed to do and did what I expected her to do - just swing and pray for it to go in and she did. So you just got to recover and keep fighting." And then it showed in the second set, she withered when I kept the pressure on her, and then I just closed it out."

On the opening day, Vandeweghe put the USA ahead with a 6-4, 6-4 win over Sasnovich, while Sabalenka beat Stephens 6-3, 3-6, 6-4 to pull the tie level. — AFP



MINSK: Aliaksandra Sasnovich of Belarus returns a ball to Sloane Stephens of the United States during the Fed Cup final match between Belarus and USA, in Minsk. — AP