

Sports

Pistons pound Knicks to nail down final East playoff spot

NEW YORK: Luke Kennard scored 27 points off the bench and the postseason-bound Detroit Pistons closed out their regular season finale by walloping the host New York Knicks 115-89 on Wednesday. The Pistons (41-41) qualified for the Eastern Conference playoffs for just the second time since the 2009-10 season. They were swept by Cleveland in the opening round of the 2015-16 playoffs. Detroit will be the No. 8 seed and face top-seeded Milwaukee in the first round. Kennard's point total was one shy of his career high. Reggie Jackson had 21 points and Andre Drummond supplied 20 points and 18 rebounds for Detroit. Wayne Ellington tossed in 12 points, all on 3-point makes.

Heat 113, Nets 94

Dwyane Wade ended his storied career with a triple-double of 25 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists as visiting Miami was dealt a loss to Brooklyn, which clinched sixth place in the Eastern Conference. The Nets honored Wade with a video tribute in pregame introductions by highlighting some of his notable shots against them over the course of a 16-year career while the text on the screen read "Thanks for the Memories." With longtime friends LeBron James, Chris Paul and Carmelo Anthony sitting courtside, Wade recorded his fifth career triple-double in his 1,054th regular-season game since entering the league as the fifth overall pick out of Marquette in 2003.

Spurs 105, Mavericks 94

LaMarcus Aldridge poured in 34 points and totaled 16 rebounds to help propel San Antonio to a resounding win over visiting Dallas in the regular-season finale for both teams. It was also the final game in the 21-year career of Dallas forward Dirk Nowitzki, who led Dallas with 20 points and pulled down 10 rebounds in 31 minutes of play before leaving the court for the final time with 47 seconds remaining. The win was San Antonio's third straight and — combined with Oklahoma City's win over Milwaukee — earned the Spurs the seventh seed in the NBA playoffs, where they will face the Denver Nuggets. Dallas, playing the second game of an emotional home-road back-to-back, had a two-game winning streak snapped and they will miss the postseason for the third straight season.

Trail Blazers 136, Kings 131

Rookie Anfernee Simons scored a season-high 37 points to lift Portland to a come-from-behind victory over visiting Sacramento. Skal Labissiere added 29 points and 15 rebounds for the Trail Blazers, who trailed by as many as 28 points in the first half. Jake Layman, Meyers Leonard and Gary Trent Jr. scored 19 points apiece for Portland (53-29), which gained the No. 3 seed in the Western Conference and will face No. 6 Oklahoma City (49-33) in the first round of the playoffs.

Nuggets 99, Timberwolves 95

Jamal Murray hit a go-ahead 3-pointer with 31.5 seconds left, and host Denver scored the final 15 points of the game to beat Minnesota to earn the No. 2 seed in the Western Conference.

Nikola Jokic finished with 29 points and 14 rebounds and Murray scored 17 for Denver. The Nuggets (54-28) will play the San Antonio Spurs in the first round of the playoffs. Andrewiggins scored 25 points, Gorgui Dieng had 18 points and 11 rebounds and Cameron Reynolds added 19 points off the bench for the short-handed Timberwolves (36-46).

Clippers 143, Jazz 137 (OT)

With their respective playoff spots locked, Los Angeles and Utah ended their regular seasons in overtime, where the Clippers won to end a three-game losing streak. Montrezl Harrell scored 24 points to lead the Clippers. Ivica Zubac added 22 points and 11 rebounds and Lou Williams scored 15 off the bench. Utah rookie Grayson Allen scored a career-high 40 points and Georges Niang scored a career-best 24 off the bench.

Thunder 127, Bucks 116

Dennis Schroder scored 32 points to help Oklahoma City earn the No. 6 seed in the Western Conference with a win at Milwaukee. The Bucks, who had already sealed the top seed in the Eastern Conference coming into the game, sat three starters — Giannis Antetokounmpo, Eric Bledsoe and Brook Lopez — to rest them for the playoffs. Milwaukee (60-22) will start the playoffs against the eighth-seeded Detroit Pistons (41-41). The Thunder (49-33) will open the playoffs against the third-seeded Portland Trail Blazers (53-29).

Pacers 135, Hawks 134

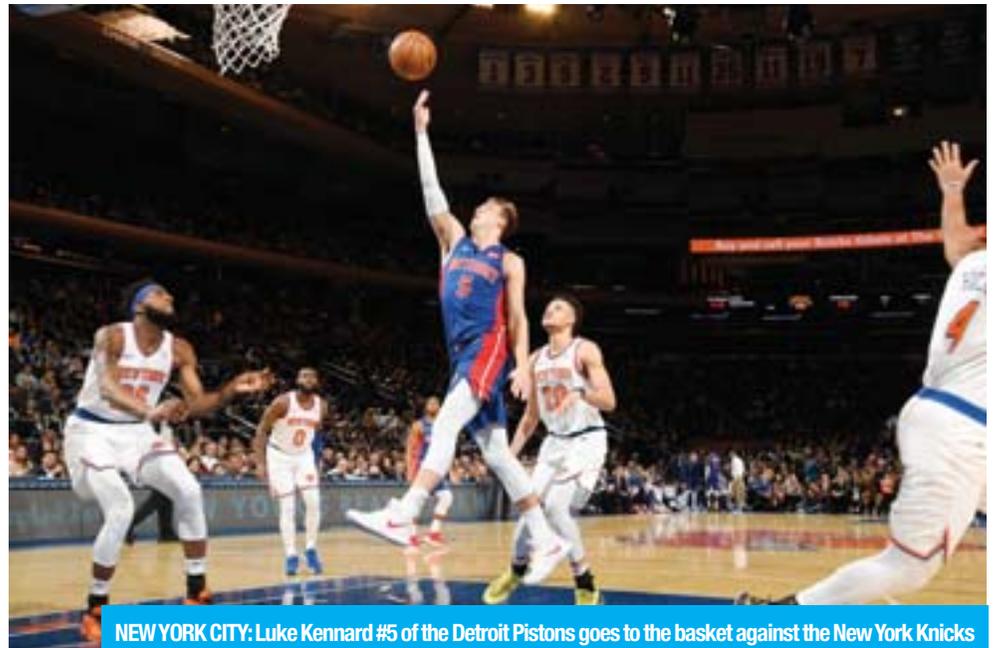
Edmond Sumner made three free throws with 0.3 seconds remaining to lift Indiana to a road win over Atlanta in the final regular-season game for both teams. Atlanta finished the season with a 29-53 record while Indiana (48-34) heads into the playoffs winners of only four of its last 13 games. The fifth-place Pacers will oppose the fourth-place Boston Celtics (49-33) in the first round of the Eastern Conference postseason.

Magic 122, Hornets 114

Terrence Ross came off the bench to score a season-high 35 points, and playoff-bound Orlando ended Charlotte's season. Ross scored 19 of his points in the first half, when the Magic led by as many as 13. He finished 12 of 19 from the field and 6 of 10 from 3-point range. Ross' performance overshadowed a 43-point explosion by Charlotte's Kemba Walker in the defeat. The Magic (42-40) remained the No. 7 seed in the Eastern Conference playoffs with the victory, and will face second-seeded Toronto in the first round of the playoffs.

Grizzlies 132, Warriors 117

Memphis dizzied visiting Golden State in the regular-season finale for both teams, parlaying a remarkable 86-point first half into a shocking win. The loss had no bearing on the playoff seeding for the Warriors (57-25). The two-time defending champions enter the postseason as the top seed in the Western Conference and they will open the playoffs against the No. 8 seed, the Los Angeles Clippers, who defeated the Utah Jazz, 143-137, in overtime Wednesday. The win



NEW YORK CITY: Luke Kennard #5 of the Detroit Pistons goes to the basket against the New York Knicks on April 10, 2019 at Madison Square Garden. — AFP

allowed the Grizzlies (33-49) to avoid what would have been a second straight season of at least 50 losses. Rookie Jevon Carter scored 19 of his career-high 32 points in the first half, when the Grizzlies ran off to an 86-68 lead.

76ers 125, Bulls 109

Jonathon Simmons scored 20 points and Boban Marjanovic added 18 to lift host Philadelphia over Chicago. TJ McConnell tied his career-high with 18, Zhaire Smith contributed 17

and Greg Monroe had 14 for the Sixers, who completed their regular season with a 51-31 record and the No. 3 playoff seed in the Eastern Conference. The Sixers finished 31-10 at home. The Sixers were extremely short-handed as numerous key players were held out for precautionary reasons as the playoffs are about to begin. All-Star center Joel Embiid, All-Star guard Ben Simmons, guard JJ Redick, forward Jimmy Butler and forward Tobias Harris were all held out. — Reuters

Famous friends stop by to see Wade's finale

BROOKLYN: For Dwyane Wade's final NBA game, where else would his so-called Banana Boat Crew members be but on hand to see it? Wade ended his 16-year career with a bang Wednesday night, producing his fifth career triple-double as he amassed 25 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists in the Miami Heat's 113-94 loss to the Brooklyn Nets.

Sitting courtside to watch Wade in his final NBA game were his longtime friends and fellow NBA stars LeBron James, Chris Paul and Carmelo Anthony. Of course they would be there, James said during the game. James was shut down for several of the Lakers' final games and Paul's Houston Rockets played their final regular-season game Tuesday night. Anthony did not sign with another NBA team after his release from the Chicago Bulls this season after he was traded by the Rockets.

"Listen, we all started this journey together," James told Fox Sports Southeast. "Obviously CP came into the league a couple years after us, but we have a brotherhood

that is just so much more than basketball. CP played last night, we had our last regular-season game last night, and Melo is right here in New York, so we kind of made the plan and made the decision to come up here."

The friends often travel together during the summer and picked up the Banana Boat Crew moniker after photos of them riding in one circulated on social media in 2016. James, who won two NBA titles with Wade in Miami, two of the three Wade won altogether, was asked about favorite memories of his friendship with Wade. James said a good answer to that would take a while.

"I mean, we'd be here all night talking. We'd be here all night talking about the best memories, or the most fond memories I have of D-Wade. "The plane rides, the bus rides, the hotels when we get to the city we'd go to the hotel room and just chop it up, the dinners we had on the road, everything we did was always genuine. (There was) always love, and we always wanted the best for one another, no matter the good or the bad. — Reuters