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Kuzma leads Team USA past Team World

Kyle scores game-high 35 points, named MVP of the game



CHARLOTTE: Kyle Kuzma #0 of the US Team receives the MVP award after the 2019 Mtn Dew ICE Rising Stars Game on Friday at the Spectrum Center in Charlotte, North Carolina.— AFP

CHARLOTTE: Offense ruled the day and Team USA won the Rising Stars game over Team World, 161-144, Friday night at Spectrum Center in the opening competition of All-Star Weekend. Lakers guard Kyle Kuzma was named MVP of the game played at a dizzying speed, the 24-second shot clock rarely ticking to 16 before the ball went up.

Kuzma scored a game-high 35 points and had six rebounds, while Celtics forward Jayson Tatum added 30 for Team USA. Kuzma was 15 of 27 from the field in 22 minutes. "I played in this game last year and was really lackadaisical. I didn't want to

do that again," Kuzma said.

His teammates were impressed. "He definitely showed out tonight. Without his 35 we probably lose," Hawks guard Trae Young said. The annual exhibition game features players in their first and second seasons in the league.

Team USA went up on the World team 132-121 with 7:35 left on Young's second 3-pointer in as many possessions, and Knicks rookie Kevin Knox flushed a two-handed jam off a Young behind-the-back dish 13 seconds later to build a 134-121 edge.

Timberwolves forward Josh Okogie's three-point

play for the World made it a two-possession game with 6:17 to go. The breakneck, video-game pace might have been blinding for basketball purists, with a turntable active for all 40 minutes and a modest level of defense applied—even by All-Star Weekend standards. No free throws were attempted in the first half.

"As you can see, not much defense, guys just want to get up and play," World guard Ben Simmons said. "It's good to get out there and just get up and down with guys you don't normally go up and down with."

Simmons led the World with 28 points, hitting 14 of his 17 shots. Jazz forward Donovan Mitchell made the

game's first free throw with 2:30 left in the third quarter to complete the and-1 play.

Only one serious defensive challenge at the rim was made and it was an emphatic rejection by Brooklyn Nets forward Jarrett Allen of the US squad when Ben Simmons attacked in the paint.

Team USA led 83-71 at halftime, shooting 62.1 percent from the field. "It's tough in these types of games and environments to manage how to have fun and compete," Young said, noting Team USA was driven to snap a two-game losing streak to Team World. Kuzma and Tatum combined for 39 points in the first half.— Reuters

Shiffrin wins fourth successive world slalom gold

ARE: American Mikaela Shiffrin became the first Alpine skier to win the same event at four successive world championships with a thrilling victory in the slalom yesterday. Shiffrin, 23, was only third after the first run but produced an electrifying second leg to claim victory by 0.58 seconds from Swede Anna Swenn Larsson.

She ended the championships with two golds, having won the Super-G, and a bronze from the giant slalom. Her victory was all the more impressive as she said she had been battling a lung infection and "run out of oxygen" towards the end of her surge for victory.

"It was tough to breathe without coughing, I was just fighting to stay in the course, it was tough today," she said. "My skiing, especially in the second run was really good, I was pushing really hard."

Shiffrin joins Belgian-born German Christl Cranz, who dominated skiing in the 1930s, as the only Alpine skier to have won a specific event at four world championships. Shiffrin's victory made her only the third American woman to win two golds at the same world championships, after Lindsey Vonn

(2009) and Andrea Mead Lawrence (1952).

BIG MISTAKE

Slovakia's Petra Vlhova, who beat Shiffrin to gold in the giant slalom, was a full second back in third place. "When I crossed the finish I couldn't believe that I had a chance of a medal because I took risks and made mistakes," Vlhova, Slovakia's first Alpine skiing world champion, said.

Swiss Wendy Holdener, who had clocked the fastest time in a rain-hit first leg, saw her chances of a third gold medal vanish as she made a big mistake early in the last run of the day. Austria's Katharina Liensberger was fourth, meaning the Alpine powerhouse nation ended the championships without a medal from the women's races for the first time since 1982.

Rain, poor visibility and a rutted course proved too much for most of the skiers in the morning run, leaving the battle for gold between the fastest six who were separated by only 0.56 seconds heading into the decisive action.

With the sun finally making an appearance, slalom queen Shiffrin found the perfect rhythm as she powered through the gates, hardly putting a ski out of place. When she crossed the line more than a second clear of Vlhova she looked completely spent, laying in the snow to catch her breath before climbing to her feet to watch the last two runs.

Larsson's advantage quickly disappeared on the split times but the Swede, roared on by the home crowd, held her run together and celebrated wildly as she



ARE: (L to R) Second placed Sweden's Anna Swenn Larsson, winner US' Mikaela Shiffrin and third placed Slovakia's Petra Vlhova celebrate during the flower ceremony of the women's slalom event at the 2019 FIS Alpine Ski World Championships at the National Arena in Are, Sweden, yesterday.— AFP

crossed the line with a medal guaranteed, even if it was not the gold she craved.

It was left to Holdener, bidding for a third gold from the championships, to deny Shiffrin, but she missed a

gate early in her run and slipped down to 17th overall. Austria have one more chance to claim a gold medal from the championships when Marcel Hirscher starts as favourite in the men's slalom race today.— Reuters