

## Sports

# Spurs hand Bucks worst loss of season, Bogdanovic, Jazz outlast Pelicans late

## Doncic delivers another triple-double as Mavs beat Bulls

**SAN ANTONIO:** DeMar DeRozan scored 25 points, and Patty Mills had 21 off the bench as the San Antonio Spurs routed the visiting Milwaukee Bucks 126-104 on Monday night to snap a two-game losing streak. The Spurs led by 10 points after three quarters and ran their advantage to 16 points early in the final period. Milwaukee closed to within 100-89 with 8:12 to play but never made a serious run down the stretch. LaMarcus Aldridge and Rudy Gay scored 17 points each for the Spurs, with Dejounte Murray scoring 13 points and Trey Lyles pulling down 12 rebounds. San Antonio set its season high with 19 3-pointers (on 35 attempts) in the win. The loss snapped a five-game winning streak for Milwaukee, which had not lost by more than 12 points all season. Giannis Antetokounmpo led the Bucks with 24 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists but missed all five of his 3-point attempts.

**DALLAS MAVERICKS 118 - CHICAGO BULLS 110**  
Luka Doncic registered a triple-double for the second straight game, contributing 38 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists to boost Dallas to a victory against visiting Chicago. Doncic scored a career-high 21 points in the third quarter, capping the flurry with a deep 3-pointer. Dwight Powell (16 points), Tim Hardaway Jr. (15) and Dorian Finney-Smith (11) also finished in double figures for the Mavericks. Lauri Markkanen scored 26 points to lead six Bulls in double figures. Tomas Satoransky (11 points, 14 assists) notched a double-double for Chicago, which has lost four straight and five of six to fall a season-worst 11 games below .500.

**SACRAMENTO KINGS 111 - GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS 98**  
Trevor Ariza contributed 3-pointers to second- and third-quarter runs that allowed host Sacramento to pull away from Golden State for a blowout, in a game that saw the ejection of Warriors coach Steve Kerr. Buddy Hield and De'Aaron Fox led five players, including two reserves, in double figures with 21 points apiece as the Kings made quick work of their opponent on the opening night of a back-to-back. Sacramento visit Phoenix yesterday. The Warriors, who rested Draymond Green and had D'Angelo Russell out for the fourth straight game, trailed by as many as 31 before dropping their fifth straight.

**DENVER NUGGETS 123 - ATLANTA HAWKS 115**  
Nikola Jokic scored a career-high 47 points, and

Will Barton added a season-high 28 to help visiting Denver outlast Atlanta. Jokic was 16-for-25 from the field, with four of the made baskets 3-pointers, and surpassed his career previous high of 41 set against the Brooklyn Nets in 2017. His best previous output this season was 31 points against Memphis on Dec. 28. Jokic also had eight rebounds and five assists. Barton went 12-for-20 from the field, including three 3-pointers, to eclipse his season-best 26 against Philadelphia on Dec. 10. He also added nine rebounds and five assists. Jokic and Barton combined to go 7 of 14 from 3-point range.

**PHILADELPHIA 76ERS 120 - OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER 113**  
Josh Richardson scored 23 points, and Ben Simmons added 17 points, 15 rebounds and eight assists as host Philadelphia held off Oklahoma City. Tobias Harris scored 18 points, and Joel Embiid had 18 points, nine rebounds and a season-high eight assists for the Sixers, who improved to 17-2 at home and also snapped a four-game losing streak. Al Horford scored 13 points. Steven Adams led the Thunder with a season-best 24 points to go along with 15 rebounds, while Dennis Schroder added 21 points. Chris Paul and Danilo Gallinari had 18 points each for the Thunder, who had their five-game winning streak broken.

**UTAH JAZZ 128 - NEW ORLEANS PELICANS 126**  
Bojan Bogdanovic scored 35 points, and visiting Utah knocked off New Orleans to win its sixth straight game. The Jazz held the Pelicans scoreless for the final 1:27. Rudy Gobert, who finished with 19 rebounds, disrupted Brandon Ingram's attempted tying layup with one second left. Joe Ingles finished with 22 points, and Donovan Mitchell scored 19 for the Jazz, including the winning bucket with 1:12 to play. Ingram had 35 to lead the Pelicans, who played without second-leading scorer Jue Holiday, who has a left elbow contusion. JJ Redick added 23, Lonzo Ball had 21 and E'Twaun Moore came off the bench to score 13.

**INDIANA PACERS 115 - CHARLOTTE HORNETS 104**  
T.J. Warren helped ignite a big third quarter and finished with 36 points as Indiana won at Charlotte for only its second victory in the last six games. Warren, a forward playing in his home state, posted 13 points in Indiana's 37-point third quarter, the most points in a



**SACRAMENTO:** Willie Cauley-Stein #2 of the Golden State Warriors shoots the ball against the Sacramento Kings at Golden 1 Center in Sacramento, California. — AFP

quarter this season for the Pacers. Warren finished 15-for-24 from the field and 6-for-6 on free throws. Domantas Sabonis racked up 18 points and 12 rebounds, Myles Turner had 15 points and Jeremy Lamb added 11 points for the Pacers.

**WASHINGTON WIZARDS 99 - BOSTON CELTICS 94**  
Ish Smith scored 14 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter, and Washington beat visiting Boston. Jordan McRae added 19 points for the Wizards, and Isaiah Thomas scored 17 against his former team. The undermanned Wizards won their second straight game and have posted home wins against the Miami Heat, Denver Nuggets and Celtics in an eight-day span. Jaylen Brown had 23 points and 12 rebounds for the Celtics, who never led. Jayson Tatum had 17 points, and Gordon

Hayward finished with 10 points and 10 rebounds.

**ORLANDO MAGIC 101 - BROOKLYN NETS 89**  
Markelle Fultz scored 12 of his career-high 25 points in the fourth quarter, and Orlando made all the plays down the stretch to beat visiting Brooklyn. Reserve D.J. Augustin added 16 points for the Magic, who outscored the Nets by a 26-18 margin in the fourth quarter. Wes Iwundu contributed 12, while Nikola Vucevic went scoreless until midway through the third quarter but finished with 11 points and 24 rebounds. Spencer Dinwiddie and Joe Harris scored 16 points apiece to lead the Nets, who continued to struggle in fourth quarters. After getting outscored 38-22 in the final 12 minutes of Saturday's loss to Toronto, the Nets shot 7 of 23 in the fourth. — Reuters

## Controversy lingers as S Arabia gets set to welcome Spanish Super Cup

**MADRID:** Real Madrid and Barcelona will be among those tussling for the Spanish Super Cup in Saudi Arabia this week, amid controversy over a tournament held faraway from home in a country long-condemned for its record on human rights.

Spain's two most decorated clubs could face off in a Clasic final in Jeddah on Sunday if Real Madrid beat in-form Valencia and Barca can overcome Atletico Madrid in the semis. Yet the prospect of another showdown between La Liga's leading pair has been overshadowed by criticism, with lingering concerns about a Spanish competition being played on a different continent, more than 4,000 miles (6,400 km) away.

The financial incentives on offer, both to the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF), who run the competition, and the four clubs taking part are bound to have been persuasive. For agreeing to participate alone, Barcelona and Real Madrid will receive six million euros (\$6.72 million) while Atletico and Valencia will pocket around three million euros each. If Barca and Real Madrid reach the final, it is expected they will earn around 10 million euros for the week.

The RFEF, meanwhile, has an agreement for the tournament to be held in Saudi Arabia for three years, for which it will earn a total of 120 million euros, an amount it claims will be put back into the women's game and lower leagues.

President Luis Rubiales has also said the old format, involving a final in August between the league champions and cup winners, was no longer capturing the imagination of fans. "The Super Cup was doomed to death," said Rubiales in November.

"The money we will get is not for building a villa. It will go to women's football and the clubs in Segunda B and Tercera. Of course money is important, who can deny that? Money is very important but the money will go where it is needed."

Saudi Arabia has followed the lead of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates by accelerating its investment in sports events to exert soft power and cast a more positive image of the country across the world.

"There is a very offensive policy to host major sporting events... to spread a different image of Saudi Arabia," Carole Gomez, a researcher at the Institute of International and Strategic Relations, told AFP.

But Rubiales believes the Spanish Super Cup can be used as a force for good. "In the world there are food, economic, social inequalities," he said. "We can avoid it or we can try to contribute to change."

Amid criticism of Saudi Arabia's treatment of women, agreements have been reached between the RFEF and the Spanish authorities to ensure women will have free access to the King Abdullah Stadium, where all three fixtures will be played.

In January 2018, women were allowed to enter a stadium to watch football in Saudi Arabia for the first time. "Women can enter all these events," the Saudi ambassador to Spain, Mansour Bin Khalid Al Farhan Al-Saud, told Marca last month. — AFP

## Kahn promises to keep cool on Bayern board

**BERLIN:** Former goalkeeper Oliver Kahn promised yesterday that he will tone down his notorious temper in his new boardroom role at Bayern Munich.

Kahn was known as a hothead in his 14 years as Bayern number one, but at a press conference yesterday he said there would be "no slide tackles in the meeting room". "Emotionality was important for me as a player, but in business it is not necessarily so helpful," grinned Kahn.

The 50-year-old joined the board at the German champions officially last week, and will succeed Karl-Heinz Rummenigge as Bayern CEO in January 2022.

In the meantime, he will work closely alongside both Rummenigge and sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic in a two-year "acclimatisation period". At his official presentation yesterday, Kahn promised to be "100 percent Bayern Munich from this day forth".

The club legend will be charged with building a new era at Bayern, following the departure of Rummenigge and long-term club patriarch Uli Hoeness, who stepped down as president last year. Kahn said he was aware of the high expectations at Bayern, adding that the challenge "suits my character".

"A great Bayern coach once said that if you sign a contract here, you have to know what you are letting yourself in for," he said. "At Bayern, it is about being the number one in every area. We want to give the fans excellent football, and for that we need to create the economic condi-

## Reiss goal sees Arsenal edge past Leeds

**LONDON:** Arsenal's Reiss Nelson scored early in the second half to secure a 1-0 win over battling Championship leaders Leeds United in the FA Cup third round at The Emirates on Monday. Nelson put a near full-strength home side ahead in the 55th minute, scrappily side-footing the ball into the net after the Leeds defence was caught out by an Alexandre Lacazette cross. Arsenal, who have won the world's oldest cup competition a record 13 times — but lost to Leeds in the 1972 final — visit fellow Premier League side Bournemouth in the fourth round.

Leeds had taken the game to Arsenal straight from the whistle, pushing forward and blasting 11 shots on goal to the hosts' one in the first 25 minutes alone.

They dominated possession and striker Patrick Bamford was unlucky not to score after 15 minutes when he collected the ball from Jack Harrison but curled his close-range shot onto the bar. Arsenal by contrast looked a shadow of the side who beat Manchester United 2-0 in the Premier League on New Year's Day.

But Mikel Arteta's side looked a different team in the second half, with Lacazette whipping an early free-kick off the bar and David Luiz going close before Nelson struck.

"Leeds are a great team and they pressed us, we didn't expect it. We got the goal in the end and that is the most important thing," said Nelson.

"This will give us confidence to go forward," Lacazette



**MUNICH:** New board member of German first division Bundesliga football club FC Bayern Munich, Oliver Kahn (R) and Bayern's new president Herbert Hainer give a press conference for Kahn's official presentation yesterday. — AFP

tions," Kahn added that reinvigorating Bayern's youth system would be "one of the most important topics" of his tenure. New president Herbert Hainer said that Kahn had been hired for his "football expertise, business expertise and Bayern DNA".

The legendary goalkeeper won the Champions League, the UEFA Cup and eight Bundesliga titles with Bayern before his retirement in 2008. He was Bayern's hero in the 2001 Champions League triumph, saving three penalties in the final shootout with Valencia. Aside from his goalkeeping prowess, Kahn was also known for his on-field aggression, which earned him the nickname "volcano". Since retirement, he has worked as a pundit for German broadcaster ZDF and earned a master's degree in business management. — AFP



**LONDON:** Arsenal's French midfielder Matteo Guendouzi (L) vies with Leeds United's Northern Irish midfielder Stuart Dallas (R) during the English FA Cup third round football match between Arsenal and Leeds United at The Emirates Stadium in London. Arsenal won the game 1-0. — AFP

said Arteta gave the players a firm talking to at halftime, although the manager made it sound less daunting.

"Now I'm really pleased but we saw two different teams from the first to second half. I tried to tell them exactly what they were going to face and after 32 minutes we'd won one duel," he said.

"We changed our attitude, desire and organisation at halftime and then we were completely different. It was good for my players to learn and to suffer on the pitch."

Both sides fielded second-string keepers — with Emiliano Martinez coming in for Arsenal and Illan Meslier for Leeds — and the home side were missing striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang due to illness, but otherwise they fielded strong lineups. — Reuters

## Empty stands and absent stars a sign of FA Cup's slow demise

**LONDON:** The FA Cup third round used to have pride of place among the showpiece dates of the English football calendar, but a weekend of empty stands and much-changed teams showed there appears to be little romance left for the cup.

After a gruelling festive fixture schedule saw four rounds of Premier League games crammed into 13 days either side of Christmas and new year, managers from the 20 top flight teams made a combined 136 changes.

Crystal Palace, Brighton and Aston Villa were the only Premier League sides to pay the penalty for resting first-team regulars against Championship opposition with even many of the sides further down the pyramid taking the chance to rotate.

The 24 Championship sides made 171 alterations to their starting line-ups. Many fans also took the opportunity for a weekend break from football with attendances for Premier League and Championship clubs down over 150,000 on their previous home matches.

Cardiff narrowly avoided their lowest ever attendance since moving to the 33,000 capacity Cardiff City Stadium over a decade ago. Just 5,828 saw Saturday's 2-2 draw with Carlisle with only one of the four stands even opened.

"I think the amount of fixtures in the schedule over this period makes it very difficult for supporters to support every single game," said Cardiff manager Neil Harris. He was not alone in calling for a change to the schedule if the cup is to be revived.

After a gruelling December in which his side played nine games across four different competitions, Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp made nine changes as the youthful Reds still inflicted more Merseyside derby pain on Everton with a 1-0 win at Anfield.

"Two players started the last game, one of them got injured," said Klopp after James Milner limped off inside 10 minutes. "That's the situation we are in, that's why a lot of managers make a lot of changes. It's nothing to do with the cup, it's the timing."

However, others believe more radical changes are needed to the format to halt the FA Cup's decline.

Replays have already been abolished from the fifth round, but Wolves manager Nuno Espirito Santo said he would have preferred a penalty shootout than another go at Manchester United after a 0-0 draw at Molineux.

From this season the fifth round has also been moved to a midweek to allow a Premier League winter break for the first time over two weekends in February. The Premier League taking priority and people's attention has been a recurring theme of the FA Cup's dwindling attraction. — AFP



**Matches on TV**  
(Local Timings)

SPANISH SUPER CUP	
Valencia C.F v Real Madrid CF	22:00
beIN Sports	
ENGLISH LEAGUE CUP	
Leicester City v Aston Villa	23:00
beIN Sports	