

Nuggets halt Utah's 11-game win streak

Jokic scores 33 points in first half • Beal, Westbrook lead Wizards over Nets

LOS ANGELES: Denver center Nikola Jokic matched his career-high with 47 points as the Nuggets cooled off the hottest team in the NBA on Sunday with a 128-117 victory over the Utah Jazz. Jokic erupted for 33 points in the first half — 22 in the first quarter — and added 12 rebounds for his 20th double-double to start the season.

The Nuggets brought an emphatic end to Utah's 11-game winning streak, the longest in the league this season. Their victory, coupled with the Los Angeles Clippers' 129-115 victory over the Knicks in New York, saw the Clippers move ahead of the Jazz atop the Western Conference with a league-leading record of 16-5. "At this moment they are the best team in the NBA, they're playing amazing, they had 11 wins in a row, they are shooting the ball really well," Jokic said. "This was a really nice win for us."

The Nuggets led by as many as 28 points, using a first-half three-point barrage to bury the Jazz. Denver were a perfect eight-for-eight from three-point range in the first quarter and made 15 of their total 18 from beyond the arc in the first half.

In the third quarter, though, the Jazz twice reduced the 28-point deficit to single figures. Denver's JaMychal Green scored all of his nine points in the fourth quarter, and fellow reserve Facundo Campazzo added six of his 11 in the final frame as the Nuggets pulled away again.

Bojan Bogdanovic paced the Jazz with 29 points, Donovan Mitchell added 13, and Rudy Gobert, Royce O'Neale and Mike

Conley added 12 apiece. But seven players weren't enough to keep the Jazz from losing for the first time since January 6.

At Madison Square Garden, Kawhi Leonard scored 28 points to lead six Clippers in double figures against the Knicks. The imposing New York defense, allowing the fewest points per game in the league, couldn't find an answer as the Clippers pulled away in the third quarter, stretching a one-point halftime lead to double digits.

Leonard and Reggie Jackson scored 10 points apiece in the third quarter, when the Clippers connected on 13 of 19 shots from the field. The Knicks, led by Julius Randle's 27 points, cut the deficit to two points with 7:44 left to play but a 9-0 scoring run put the Clippers back in charge.

Wild Wizards win

Bradley Beal and Russell Westbrook keyed a late rally by the Washington Wizards in a nail-biting 149-146 victory over the Brooklyn Nets. The contest featuring the league's top two scorers, Beal and Nets star Kevin Durant, promised fireworks — and the frantic finish didn't disappoint.

Beal's pull-up three-pointer with 8.1 seconds left pulled the Wizards within two at 146-144. Teammate Garrison Matthews then came up with a steal and got the ball to Westbrook, whose three-pointer less than four seconds after Beal's put the Wizards up 147-146 — their first lead since the second quarter.

Washington got another stop, and



WASHINGTON: Russell Westbrook #4 of the Washington Wizards shoots the game winning shot against the Brooklyn Nets on Sunday at Capital One Arena in Washington, DC. — AFP

Beal made two free throws to seal the win. "Right now, all that matters is we get a win," Westbrook said of a Wizards team that had lost four straight since having six games postponed because COVID-19 measures left them with too few available players.

Westbrook finished with 41 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists. Beal added

37 points with five rebounds and four assists. Durant had 37 points and seven rebounds for a Nets team that was without James Harden — who was nursing a thigh contusion.

In Indianapolis, Tobias Harris scored 10 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter, and Philadelphia teammate Furkan Korkmaz drained a pull-up jump shot that put the

76ers ahead with 2:30 remaining on the way to a 119-110 come-from-behind win over the Indiana pacers.

Eastern Conference leaders Philadelphia trailed by 16 with less than 10 minutes remaining, but turned the tables to notch a sixth win in seven games despite the absence of star center Joel Embiid, who was sidelined with back trouble. — AFP




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