



INDIANAPOLIS: Kyrie Irving #2 of the Cleveland Cavaliers shoots the ball during the game against the Indiana Pacers at Bankers Life Fieldhouse. — AFP



LOS ANGELES: Kobe Bryant of the Los Angeles Lakers (left) takes on Luc Richard Mbah a Moute of the Los Angeles Clippers during their NBA game. — AFP

KOBE LOSES PENULTIMATE HOME GAME OF HIS CAREER

NO JAMES, NO GAME: PACERS ROLL PAST CAVALIERS 123-109

INDIANAPOLIS: Paul George scored 29 points and CJ Miles added 21, helping the Indiana Pacers blow out the Cleveland Cavaliers - with LeBron James getting the night off - 123-109 on Wednesday night. Indiana ended a four-game losing streak in the series and still leads eighth-place Detroit by a half-game. Ninth-place Chicago, still vying for one of the final two playoff spots in the East, is now three games behind the Pacers. The Cavaliers played without the four-time MVP James, who rested after playing Tuesday night in Milwaukee. Without James, Kyrie Irving had 26 points and six assists. Kevin Love scored 23.

CLIPPERS 91, LAKERS 81

DeAndre Jordan and JJ Redick scored 15 points apiece in the Los Angeles Clippers' victory over the Los Angeles Lakers, spoiling the penultimate home game of Kobe Bryant's career. The loss was the Lakers' 62nd of the season, setting a franchise low for the 16-time NBA champions. Bryant scored 17 points for the Lakers, who have a three-game road trip before the third-leading scorer in league history wraps up his 20-year career next Wednesday at home against the Utah Jazz. Blake Griffin and Chris Paul had 13 points apiece before the starters sat out the fourth quarter for the Clippers, who swept the season series with back-to-back wins over the Lakers on consecutive nights. They've won 11 straight over their cross-hallway rivals.

HORNETS 111, KNICKS 97

Kemba Walker scored 34 points, Al Jefferson had 24 and the Charlotte Hornets bounced back from consecutive losses to the Eastern Conference's top teams by beating the New York Knicks 111-97. Charlotte, which fell in Cleveland on Sunday and Toronto on Tuesday, had dropped a game behind Boston and Miami for fourth place.

Walker scored 13 points in the first quarter - more than he had in the entire game a night earlier - and Jefferson helped Charlotte break it open by scoring 10 points in the first 4 min-

utes of the fourth quarter. Derrick Williams had 17 points and 10 rebounds for the Knicks, who lost for the fifth time in six games. Carmelo Anthony returned from a game off to rest and scored 15 points.

WIZARDS 121, NETS 103

Ramon Sessions scored 18 points and had a season-high 13 assists while starting in place of the injured John Wall to help the Washington Wizards defeat the Brooklyn Nets. Bradley Beal scored 25 points, and Marcin Gortat had 16 points and 12 rebounds as Washington remained at least mathematically alive in the Eastern Conference playoff hunt.

Wall sat out for the first time this season with a sore right knee for the 10th-place Wizards (38-40), who remained 3 1/2 games behind Detroit for the final postseason berth. Thomas Robinson scored 23 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for the Nets, who have lost six straight games by an average of 19.3 points.

CELTICS 104, PELICANS 97

Isaiah Thomas scored 32 points to help the Boston Celtics fend off the short-handed New Orleans Pelicans. Jae Crowder added 14 points, Avery Bradley finished with 13 points and six rebounds, and the Celtics beat the Pelicans for the fourth straight time. Toney Douglas led the Pelicans with 19 points, and Tim Frazier added 18 points and six assists. Six New Orleans players finished in double-figures. New Orleans played without its five top scorers due to injuries, and had only eight active players.

PISTONS 108, MAGIC 104

Reggie Jackson scored 24 points and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added 18 to help lead the Detroit Pistons over the Orlando Magic. The win kept the Pistons (42-37) in contention in the Eastern Conference playoff race. They remained a half-game behind Indianapolis, which beat Cleveland, for the No 7 spot. The Magic's three-game home win-

ning streak ended. They held a 96-92 lead late in the fourth quarter, but then saw it slip away. Evan Fournier led five Orlando players in double figures with 19 points.

MAVERICKS 88, ROCKETS 86

JJ Barea scored 27 points and the Dallas Mavericks kept a slim cushion over Utah and Houston in the race for the last two Western Conference playoff spots. The Mavericks' fifth straight victory - one shy of a season best - put Dallas (40-38) a game ahead of Utah and two up on Houston with four games remaining for all three teams.

Dirk Nowitzki was limited to seven points on eight shots, but had a crucial strip of James Harden on a drive in the final seconds with the Mavericks clinging to a one-point lead. Harden scored 26 points and Dwight Howard had 14 points and 16 rebounds for the Rockets, who are in danger of missing the

postseason a year after reaching the West finals.

TRAIL BLAZERS 120, THUNDER 115

Al-Farouq Aminu scored 27 points, CJ McCollum had 26 and the Portland Trail Blazers clinched a playoff berth. Allen Crabbe hit four 3-pointers and scored 16 points for Portland as six Blazers scored in double figures. Portland (43-37) won for the fifth time in six games and became the first team in NBA history to earn a playoff berth while returning a roster that had two or fewer players with 1,000 or more minutes from the previous season (Damian Lillard, Chris Kaman). Enes Kanter had a career-high 33 points and 20 rebounds for the Thunder, and Dion Waiters had 25 points. Oklahoma City, which clinched the West's No. 3 seed with Tuesday's win at Denver, rested four starters, including All-Stars Kevin Durant and Russell Westbrook. — AP

NBA results/standings

Dallas 88, Houston 86; LA Lakers 81, LA Clippers 91; Boston 104, New Orleans 97; New York 97, Charlotte 111; Portland 120, Oklahoma City 115; Indiana 123, Cleveland 109; Orlando 104, Detroit 108; Washington 121, Brooklyn 103.

Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
Atlantic Division					Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB					
Toronto	52	25	.675	—	Oklahoma City	54	25	.684	—
Boston	46	32	.590	6.5	Portland	43	37	.538	11.5
New York	31	48	.392	22	Utah	39	39	.500	14.5
Brooklyn	21	57	.269	31.5	Denver	32	47	.405	22
Philadelphia	10	68	.128	42.5	Minnesota	26	52	.333	27.5
Central Division					Pacific Division				
Cleveland	56	23	.709	—	Golden State	69	9	.885	—
Indiana	42	36	.538	13.5	LA Clippers	50	28	.641	19
Detroit	42	37	.532	14	Sacramento	31	47	.397	38
Chicago	39	39	.500	16.5	Phoenix	20	58	.256	49
Milwaukee	32	46	.410	23.5	LA Lakers	16	62	.205	53
Southeast Division					Southwest Division				
Atlanta	46	32	.590	—	San Antonio	65	12	.844	—
Miami	45	32	.584	0.5	Memphis	42	36	.538	23.5
Charlotte	45	33	.577	1	Dallas	40	38	.513	25.5
Washington	38	40	.487	8	Houston	38	40	.487	27.5
Orlando	33	45	.423	13	New Orleans	29	49	.372	36.5