

## CHAMPION THOMPSON ENJOYS FAST START TO SEASON

**KINGSTON:** Double Olympic sprint champion Elaine Thompson cruised to a wind-assisted 10.75 seconds to win the 100 metres at Jamaica's UTECH Classic on Saturday.

Thompson, who became the first Caribbean woman to win the Olympic 100m and 200m double in Rio last

summer, comfortably pulled away to cross the line ahead of Jura Levy (11.19) and Olympic finalist Christania Williams (11.30). Thompson said she was surprised to run the time so early in the season. "Actually when I heard the time announced I was shocked but as I say, each time I race I always

surprise myself," she told Reuters.

"Honestly there was no plan coming in, I just wanted to work on the first 30 metres of my race because that is kind of my weak area. So I just wanted to execute." In the men's 100m, 2011 world champion Yohan Blake stumbled from the starting block and

Britain's Zhanel Hughes took full advantage, coming home in a wind-aided personal best 10.08. Olympic and world championship 400m bronze medallist Shericka Jackson clocked a personal best of 22.57 to win the 200, the second fastest time in the world behind the 22.29 run by Dafne

Schippers. Williams shaved 27 hundredths of a second off her previous best. Miguel Francis, who has switched allegiance to Britain from Antigua, won the men's race in 20.44 ahead of Jamaica's Commonwealth Games champion Rasheed Dwyer (20.45). — Reuters

### SOCCER

## BROWN OFF AS CELTIC HELD IN CONTROVERSIAL FINISH

**GLASGOW:** Celtic captain Scott Brown picked up a costly late red card when tempers flared as the Scottish champions were held to a 2-2 draw at Ross County yesterday. Goals from Kieran Tierney and substitute Patrick Roberts, either side of a Michael Gardyne effort for the hosts, had Celtic on course for all three points in Dingwall. But Liam Boyce scored a controversial last-minute penalty to make it 2-2 before Brown saw red for a lunge on the Northern Irishman in stoppage time. The sending-off rules Brown out of next week's Scottish Cup semi-final with fierce rivals Rangers as the Hoops chase down a domestic treble. "It's a very disappointing end to a game we dominated throughout," fumed Celtic manager Brendan Rodgers.

"We had good control and then the points are taken from us by a horrendous decision. I've seen some bad decisions up here but that's one of the worst." Despite being denied the victory, the result maintains Celtic's unbeaten record in domestic competition this season, while County are eighth, three points clear of the relegation play-off place with five games left. "It's not a penalty and I can fully understand Celtic's anger and disappointment," admitted County boss Jim McIntyre. "I thought we were better in the second half and we've picked up a great point."

The breakthrough in Dingwall came from an unlikely source in the 34th minute. Australian international Tom Rogic squared the ball across the edge of the box for Tierney who took a touch before rifling a low shot into the bottom corner.

County had hardly been in the game but a stunning header from Gardyne, once of Celtic, had them on level terms five minutes after the break. Ryan Dow delivered a fantastic ball from the left and Gardyne got in between two Celtic defenders to meet it near the penalty spot and bullet a header over Craig Gordon and into the net off the underside of the bar. However, a moment of magic from substitute Roberts saw the Hoops regain the lead in the 78th minute.

The on-loan Manchester City winger played the ball through the legs of Kenny van der Weg to cut into the box, then sent a low shot through the legs of Marcus Fraser and under Scott Fox to beat the goalkeeper at his near post. But there was controversy when Dutchman Alex Schalk threw himself to the floor in the box, with no contact from the nearby Erik Sviatchenko, and referee Don Robertson pointed to the spot.

Boyce sent Gordon the wrong way from the spot and Brown then let his anger at the decision get the better of him as he chopped down Boyce to earn himself a sending-off. — AFP

### ATHLETICS

## ETHIOPIA'S HAYLE TARGETS BOSTON MARATHON REPEAT

**NEW YORK:** Ethiopia's Lemi Berhanu Hayle and Atsede Baysa face daunting challenges today as they seek repeat titles in the Boston Marathon.

Hayle, defending the men's crown he won last year in a time of 2hr 12min 45sec, will have to contend with eight other men who hold lifetime bests under 2:07.

That includes the Kenyan duo of Emmanuel Mutai, who owns a personal best of 2:03:13, and Sammy Kitwara.

The Kenyan challenge also includes three-time Amsterdam champion Wilson Chebet, 2012 Boston winner Wesley Korir, and Geoffrey Kirui, who was third in Rotterdam last year. Three fellow Ethiopians will also challenge Hayle as he bids to become the first men's repeat winner since 2008, when Robert Kipkoech Cheruiyot of Kenya completed a treble.

Yemane Tsegay was third in Boston last year behind Hayle and compatriot Lelisa Desisa, who is absent this time around.

Dino Sefir won last year in Barcelona and Ottawa and Sisay Lemma has the 2015 Frankfurt title on his resume.

The United States have high hopes of a home runner on the podium with a strong contingent led by Galen Rupp and featuring 2014 Boston champion Meb Keflezighi

and Abdi Abdirahman.

Rupp earned Olympic bronze in Rio last year in just his second career marathon.

Baysa, who won last year in 2:29:19, will face a field that includes three women who have run under 2:20 in Gladys Cherono, Edna Kiplagat and fellow Ethiopian Buzunesh Deba, who set the Boston course record when she won in 2014. Baysa won in dramatic fashion 12 months ago, coming from behind to overtake the leaders in the final five kilometers. Two of those she passed will start on Monday: Valentine Kipeter, who finished fifth last year, and Joyce Chepkirui, who finished third.

Caroline Rotich, the 2015 Boston winner, is also in the field, while home hopes rest with Desiree Linden, who finished seventh in the Rio Olympic marathon last year.

The race will be the fourth Boston Marathon contested since two pressure-cooker bombs planted near the finish line of the race killed three people and injured 264 others in 2013.

Two brothers of Chechen descent, Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev were tracked down by authorities. Tamerlan was killed trying to escape capture while Dzhokhar was apprehended and convicted of the attack. —AFP



**CLEVELAND:** Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James (23) drives around Indiana Pacers' Thaddeus Young (21) in the second half in Game 1 of a first-round NBA basketball playoff series, Saturday, in Cleveland. The Cavaliers won 109-108. — AP

### BASKETBALL

## CAVS ESCAPE PACERS, SPURS PUT BOOT TO GRIZZLIES IN OPENERS

**LOS ANGELES:** The NBA champion Cleveland Cavaliers escaped with a 109-108 victory over the Indiana Pacers on Saturday in the opening game of the 2017 playoffs. Indiana's C.J. Miles missed a wide-open jump shot at the buzzer after the Cavaliers, as they often did in the waning stages of the regular-season, let the game get complicated toward the end. "It doesn't matter how you get a win in the playoffs. We're one-up," said Cavs superstar LeBron James, who led all scorers with 32 points and also handed out 13 assists and pulled down six rebounds.

Elsewhere on Saturday, Kawhi Leonard equalled his career playoff high with 32 points as the San Antonio Spurs seized control in the third quarter en route to a 111-82 victory over the Memphis Grizzlies in game one of their first-round Western Conference series. James has now won 18 playoff openers, but he and the Cavs cut it close in this one. James missed a three-pointer with 20 seconds left and the Pacers had the ball coming out of a timeout.

Miles got loose, but his effort bounced off the rim. Pacers star Paul George finished with 29 points. His three-pointer with four seconds left had cut the Cavs' lead to one point, setting the stage for Miles's attempt at a game-winner. George complained after the game that he should have been the one to attempt the game winner. "Situations like that, I gotta get the last shot," George said. Kyrie Irving scored 23 points and Kevin Love added 17, 15 of them in the first half for Cleveland, who led by 12 points late in the third quarter and were up by 10 with 9:04 remaining before the Pacers rallied. Jeff Teague's three-pointer with 3:31 to play put the Pacers up by two after six straight empty possessions for the Cavs. But James immediately responded with a driving dunk and the Pacers wouldn't get ahead again. In San Antonio, the Spurs led 74-64 with just under two minutes to play in the third quarter but closed the quarter on a 10-0 run. The Spurs added the first nine points of the fourth quarter to compile 93-64 lead. Leonard seized control in the third quarter, pumping in 15 points—the same amount as the entire Memphis team—before sitting out the fourth with the game already in hand.

The Spurs are making their 20th straight post-season appearance, tied for third all-time. Game two of the best-of-seven series is Monday in San Antonio.

In Toronto, Giannis Antetokounmpo tallied 28 points and eight rebounds as the Milwaukee Bucks manhandled the Toronto Raptors 97-83 to open their Eastern Conference series.

Malcolm Brogdon delivered 16 points for the Bucks, Greg Monroe finished with 14 points and 15 rebounds, Tony Snell and Matthew Dellavedova added 11 points each for the Bucks.

DeMar DeRozan led the Raptors with 27 points and grabbed nine rebounds, Serge Ibaka added 19 points and 14 rebounds, and Jonas Valanciunas had nine points and nine rebounds.

The Raptors' first-game woes continued as they fell to 0-9 in openers of first round playoff series. They are a dismal 1-10 overall in game ones.

### JOHNSON STRIKES FINAL BLOW

In Los Angeles, Joe Johnson hit the clutch winner as time expired, lifting the Utah Jazz to a 97-95 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers

at Staples Center. Jazz star centre Rudy Gobert went down clutching his left knee less than 20 seconds into the contest after bumping knees with Clippers forward Luc Mbah a Moute. Gobert, who had to be helped off the court and carried into the locker room, is expected to undergo a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan Saturday night to determine the severity of the injury. —AFP



**LOS ANGELES:** Los Angeles Clippers center DeAndre Jordan, below, shoots as Utah Jazz forward Derrick Favors defends during the second half in Game 1 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series, Saturday, in Los Angeles. The Jazz won 97-95. — AP



**DAKAR:** (From L) Second placed Naomi Tui, third placed Kenyan Jacqueline Nyetpei and first placed Kenyan Zeddy Limo compete during the Dakar Marathon, yesterday, in Dakar. — AFP

## BASTIA FANS ATTACK PLAYERS

**BASTIA:** Dozens of Bastia fans invaded the pitch at their Armand Cesari stadium and attacked Lyon players as they warmed up for a French Ligue 1 game yesterday. Lyon players fled to the dressing rooms and the 1500 GMT kick-off between the two sides was consequently delayed by more than 50 minutes. Lyon's players were finishing their pre-game warm-up when about 50 Bastia fans targeted them, an AFP reporter at the scene said. Stewards and Lyon security staff rushed onto the pitch to intervene and for

a few minutes there was chaos and scuffles until the playing surface was cleared. Visiting Lyon initially refused to leave the changing rooms again, but eventually did so to warm up for a second time and the game kicked off soon after with stewards lined up on the edge of the pitch. Bastia were bottom of Ligue 1 going into Sunday's match against a Lyon side who are in the European places. It is the second time in a week that Lyon have been caught up in football violence.