

Sports

Jimmy Butler helps host Heat survive 76ers in overtime

Lakers halt skid, get back on track with win over Trail Blazers

MIAMI: Jimmy Butler made the go-ahead free throw with 2.3 seconds remaining in overtime against his former team, as the host Miami Heat recorded a 117-116 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers on Saturday. After Ben Simmons converted an alley-oop dunk to forge a tie at 116 with 18.3 seconds left in overtime, Butler was fouled on a jumper on the next possession. Butler misfired on the first attempt before sinking the second, and Tobias Harris failed to convert a 3-point attempt as Miami improved to 6-0 in overtime and an NBA-best 15-1 at home this season. Butler finished with 25 points, nine assists and nine rebounds. He was playing in his third game against his former team after inking a four-year, \$142 million deal with Miami in a sign-and-trade deal that brought Josh Richardson to Philadelphia. Joel Embiid collected 35 points and 11 rebounds for the 76ers, who have dropped the first two contests of their four-game road trip.

DALLAS MAVERICKS 141 - GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS 121

Luka Dončić recorded 31 points, 15 assists and 12 rebounds for his ninth triple-double of the season to lead Dallas past host Golden State in San Francisco. Dončić and tied the franchise record for triple-doubles in a season set by Jason Kidd in 1995-96. Dončić also made five 3-pointers as Dallas set a franchise record by making 24 from behind the arc (out of 51 attempts). The Mavericks won for the 15th time in the last 20 games. Tim Hardaway Jr. made six 3-pointers and scored 25 points, and Kristaps Porziņģis made four treys while adding 18 points, seven rebounds and four blocked shots. D'Angelo Russell scored 35 points and matched his career best of nine 3-pointers for the Warriors, who had a four-game winning streak halted.

LOS ANGELES LAKERS 128 - PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS 120

LeBron James scored 21 points, matched his season best of 16 assists and also collected seven rebounds while playing through a groin injury to lead Los Angeles past host Portland. Kyle Kuzma scored a team-high 24 points, and Anthony Davis added 20 points, nine rebounds and five assists as the Lakers halted a season-worst, four-game losing streak. Rajon Rondo tallied 15 points, Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added 13 and Dwight Howard had 11 points, eight rebounds and four blocked shots. Damian Lillard recorded 31 points and nine assists for the Trail Blazers, who lost their third straight game. Hassan Whiteside recorded 19 points and 16 rebounds, CJ McCollum scored 18 points, Anfernee Simons added 14, Carmelo Anthony had 13 and Anthony Tolliver tallied 12.

UTAH JAZZ 120 - LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS 107

Donovan Mitchell had 30 points, nine assists and seven rebounds, leading visiting Utah over Los Angeles. Jordan Clarkson scored 19 points, Bojan Bogdanović added 17 and Joe Ingles chipped in 15 for the Jazz, who captured their seventh win in their last eight games. Paul George had 20 points and 10 rebounds, and Kawhi Leonard scored 19 points for the Clippers. Center Ivica Zubac finished with 15 points and 12 boards, nine of those on the offensive end. Two free throws by Zubac cut the Jazz's lead to 109-107 with 3:35 left, but Utah scored the final 11 points to clinch the win.

DENVER NUGGETS 119 - MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES 110

Nikola Jokic had a season-high 31 points to go with 10

rebounds and 10 assists for his seventh triple-double of the season, Will Barton scored 20 points and had seven assists, and host Denver beat Memphis. Jamal Murray and Mason Plumlee had 15 points each for the Nuggets, who had seven players reach double figures in scoring to rebound from Wednesday's 112-100 loss to the New Orleans Pelicans. Jaren Jackson Jr. had 20 points, De'Anthony Melton had 17, Ja Morant scored 16 and Jonas Valanciunas had 14 points and 10 rebounds for the Grizzlies. Brandon Clarke finished with 15 points.

HOUSTON ROCKETS 108 - BROOKLYN NETS 98

James Harden delivered 44 points and 10 rebounds, and host Houston survived unsightly 3-point shooting in its victory over Brooklyn. Russell Westbrook added 23 points, nine rebounds and seven assists prior to his ejection inside the final minute. Austin Rivers tallied 14 points off the bench on 4-for-9 shooting on 3-pointers. But Houston shot just 13 of 42 from deep, perimeter struggles that enabled Brooklyn to remain close. Spencer Dinwiddie paced five Nets in double figures with 17 points while adding a game-high 11 assists. Taurean Prince and Jarrett Allen scored 16 apiece for the Nets, who shot 40.2 percent.

MILWAUKEE BUCKS 111 - ORLANDO MAGIC 100

A dominant fourth quarter powered host Milwaukee to its second win without star Giannis Antetokounmpo in as many nights, as it downed Orlando. Antetokounmpo missed his second game with a back injury, but Milwaukee started and finished strong in his absence. Kris Middleton led the Bucks in scoring Saturday, as he did Friday at Atlanta, posting 21 points. Orlando was paced by 23 points from Evan Fournier and 21 points from Nikola Vučević. Jonathan Isaac scored 19 points and made seven steals, a big chunk of Milwaukee's 24 turnovers.

TORONTO RAPTORS 113 - BOSTON CELTICS 97

Kyle Lowry scored 30 points and registered seven assists for visiting Toronto, which never trailed as it gained a measure of revenge for its Christmas Day loss to Boston. Serge Ibaka finished with 20 points and 10 rebounds as the Raptors ended a two-game losing streak in their first game since falling to the Celtics 118-102 in Toronto on Wednesday. It was the first Christmas Day game played in Canada. Patrick McCaw had 18 points, seven rebounds and a game-high eight assists for the Raptors, while Fred VanVleet also scored 18 points. Kemba Walker scored 30 points for the Celtics, who had their five-game winning streak snapped. Jaylen Brown finished with 17 points, followed by Gordon Hayward (13), Jayson Tatum (12) and Enes Kanter (11).

CHICAGO BULLS 116 - ATLANTA HAWKS 81

Lauri Markkanen scored 25 points on 8-for-14 shooting, and Chicago cruised to a win over visiting Atlanta. Zach LaVine added 19 points on 7-for-15 shooting for the Bulls, who won for the third time in their past four games. Coby White scored 18 points off the bench, Wendell Carter Jr. had 13 points and Tomas Satoransky finished with 11 points to go along with eight rebounds and six assists. John Collins scored 34 points on 14-for-26 shooting in a losing effort for the Hawks, who played without top scorer Trae Young because of a sprained ankle. Atlanta lost its 10th game in a row and fell to 3-15 on the road.

claiming arguably the biggest win of Gerrard's managerial career so far.

Rangers dominated the League Cup final between the sides earlier this month, but were left to rue a host of missed chances and a stunning goalkeeping performance from Fraser Forster as 10-man Celtic claimed the trophy. The pattern from that match continued, though, and this time Rangers got their reward.

After a bright start from the visitors it was Celtic who were gifted a huge chance to take the lead just after the half hour mark when Katic was penalised for holding Christopher Jullien from a corner.

Forster saved Morelos' penalty in the cup final three weeks ago and the goalkeeper again came out on top as this time Alan McGregor got down low to his left to turn Christie's spot-kick to safety.

Celtic maintained the pressure and Jullien, who scored the winner the last time the sides met, saw a header cleared off the line by Steven Davis. Just as the hosts were beginning to take control, Rangers scored their first goal against their bitter rivals in three games this season.

Kent was a constant menace in two wins over Celtic last season and was the man to provide a moment of quality as he smashed Borna Barisic's low



MIAMI: Jimmy Butler #22 of the Miami Heat drives to the basket against the Philadelphia 76ers at American Airlines Arena in Miami, Florida. —AFP

NEW ORLEANS PELICANS 120 - INDIANA PACERS 98

Brandon Ingram scored 24 points, and six teammates also scored in double figures as host New Orleans routed Indiana for its fourth win in five games and its first home victory since Nov 19. Jrue Holiday added 20 points, JJ Redick scored 15, Lonzo Ball had 13, E'Twaun Moore and Josh Hart came off the bench to score 11 each, and Derrick Favors had 10 points and 16 rebounds. Ingram and Holiday each added seven assists. Aaron Holiday scored 25 points, T.J. Warren added 20 and Domantas Sabonis had 15 points and 16 rebounds to lead the Pacers. According to the Elias Sports Bureau, Jrue, Justin, and Aaron Holiday became the first trio of brothers to play in an NBA game when Justin checked in for the Pacers with 5:13 left in the first quarter.

CLEVELAND CAVALIERS 94 - MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES 88

Collin Sexton and Darius Garland scored 18 points each as Cleveland won for the fourth time in five games by beating Minnesota in Minneapolis. In a game that was missing much of its star power, Kevin Love did not start for the Cavaliers because of hip and back soreness. The Timberwolves were without Karl-Anthony Towns for a sixth consecutive game because of a sprained left knee and also were without Andrew Wiggins because of the flu. Tristan Thompson grabbed 15 boards while scoring 12 points for the Cavaliers, and Kevin Porter Jr. added 10 points. For the Timberwolves, Jeff Teague scored 18 points, while Kelan Martin added 17. Minnesota lost for the 12th time in its last 13 games after ending an 11-game losing streak Thursday.

NEW YORK KNICKS 107 - WASHINGTON WIZARDS 100

Julius Randle had 30 points and 16 rebounds, and New

York defeated host Washington to win two games in a row for only the second time this season. Reserve Bobby Portis scored 17 points, RJ Barrett added 14 and Marcus Morris contributed 10. Washington's Isaiah Thomas scored 20 points in his return from a two-game league suspension. Jordan McRae also had 20 points, and Gary Payton II scored 15 points for the Wizards, who have lost two straight and five of six.

SAN ANTONIO SPURS 136 - DETROIT PISTONS 109

DeMar DeRozan scored 29 points on 13-of-16 shooting, and LaMarcus Aldridge added 25 points and 12 rebounds as host San Antonio flattened Detroit to avenge a 34-point loss to the Pistons on Dec 1. After a contentious first half that ended with the Spurs up four, San Antonio broke open the game by outscoring the Pistons 42-25 in the third quarter and waltzed to the win. Bryn Forbes added 18 points for San Antonio, with Rudy Gay hitting for 16 and Dejounte Murray scoring 13 in the win. Derrick Rose paced Detroit with 24 points off the bench, with Andre Drummond scoring 21 points and grabbing 18 rebounds.

PHOENIX SUNS 112 - SACRAMENTO KINGS 110

Devin Booker had 32 points and 10 assists, and Kelly Oubre had 20 points and a career-high 16 rebounds as Phoenix broke an eight-game losing streak with a victory at Sacramento. Ricky Rubio had 21 points and eight assists, and Aron Baynes had 17 points and six rebounds for the Suns, who had lost 13 of 16. Buddy Hield had 23 points and four 3-pointers, Bogdan Bogdanovic had 22 points and five 3-pointers off the bench and Harrison Barnes had 21 points and 10 rebounds for Kings, who have lost six in a row. Barnes' 26-footer to potentially win it missed with two seconds left. — Reuters

Rangers end long wait for win at Celtic Park

GLASGOW: Rangers ended a nine-year wait to beat Celtic away from home as goals from Ryan Kent and Nikola Katic earned a 2-1 win at Celtic Park to take control of the Scottish Premiership title race.

Steven Gerrard's men still trail Celtic by two points, but have a game in hand on the Scottish champions as they aim to end a run of eight straight league titles for the green-and-white half of Glasgow.

Celtic were left to rue Ryan Christie's penalty miss with the score at 0-0 as they suffered a first home league defeat since May 2018.

Rangers' top scorer Alfredo Morelos was sent off in stoppage time for the second time in three games and the seventh occasion over the past two seasons as his wait for an Old Firm goal continued.

However, that will matter little to Rangers after

West Ham to reappoint Moyes after Pellegrini sacking

LONDON: Premier League strugglers West Ham United are set to reappoint David Moyes as their new head coach to replace the sacked Manuel Pellegrini, Sky Sports and the BBC reported yesterday.

Chilean Pellegrini was sacked after Saturday's 2-1 defeat at home by Leicester City, their ninth loss in 12 league games that left the London side 17th in the standings — one point above the relegation zone.

It would be Moyes' second stint with West Ham after he saved the club from relegation in the 2017-18 campaign during a six-month deal. He was hired by West Ham in November 2017 to replace Slaven Bilic with the London side in the relegation zone and the Scotsman led them to a 13th-placed finish to ensure the club's survival in the top flight.



David Moyes

However, the club chose not to renew his contract and hired Manchester City's former title-winning manager Pellegrini in the off season last year, who led West Ham to a 10th-placed finish last season. If appointed, Moyes' first game in charge will be at home against 16th-placed Bournemouth on Wednesday. —Reuters

Stunning win for Hilal, El Kaabi bags Wydad hat-trick

JOHANNESBURG: A stunning victory for Al Hilal of Sudan and an Ayoub el Kaabi hat-trick for Wydad Casablanca of Morocco were the CAF Champions League matchday three highlights on Saturday.

Hilal won a group game in the elite African club competition for the first time after 22 failed attempts from 2007 by shocking Etoile Sahel of Tunisia 1-0 in Rades. Athar el Tahir scored the match-winner on 59 minutes by rifling a low shot past Achraf Krir and into the corner of the net after a neat three-man build-up.

The triumph lifted Hilal to first place in Group B, ahead of Al Ahly of Egypt and Etoile on head-to-head records as the three contenders have six points each. With home fixtures to come against Etoile and Ahly, a Hilal team coached by Egyptian Hamada Sedki can entertain realistic hopes of a top-two finish and a quarter-finals place. Based in Omdurman, a city on the western bank of the River Nile opposite the Sudanese capital

cross in off the post. The lead lasted just six minutes, though, as luck shined on Celtic when Callum McGregor's shot deflected in off the arm of Odsonne Edouard's hand and was not spotted by referee Kevin Clancy.

Morelos has scored 28 goals this season but has still not netted in 12 meetings against Celtic and was desperate to atone for a host of missed chances in the cup final. The Colombian had a huge chance to restore Rangers' lead early in the second half but spooned over after a brilliant low cross from Kent left the goal at his mercy. Rangers had to wait just six minutes longer to get back in front as they peppered the Celtic goal with a series of set-pieces and the pressure paid off when Katic powered home a Barisic corner.

McGregor was needed to make two big saves as Jullien threatened again from a corner before Boli Bolingoli's long-range strike was beaten away. Morelos saw red with virtually the last action of the game as he saw a second booking for diving inside the area. However, Rangers comfortably saw out the final stages to snap Celtic's 11-game winning streak in the league and set up a thrilling title race when the action resumes in the new year after a three-week winter break. — AFP

Khartoum, Hilal are trying for the 33rd time to win the top African club prize. They came closest in 1987 and 1992, losing two-leg finals against Ahly and Wydad respectively 2-0 on aggregate.

Walid Soliman, the 35-year-old Ahly veteran, scored in each half to earn the record eighth-time African champions a 2-0 win over pointless Platinum of Zimbabwe in Cairo.

Meanwhile, China-based Moroccan El Kaabi ended a loan spell at Wydad with a treble as Wydad finished 4-1 winners over Petro Luanda of Angola in an electric Casablanca atmosphere.

Against a backdrop of singing, flag-waving supporters, Wydad were stung midway through the second half when Brazilian Antonio 'Tony' Ribeiro equalised. But El Kaabi netted a second time to put Wydad ahead again on 79 minutes and completed the scoring after Wilson Carmo conceded an own-goal. —AFP

Leicester end Pellegrini's time at West Ham, Man Utd close on top four

LONDON: A much-changed Leicester inflicted the final blow of Manuel Pellegrini's time in charge of West Ham with a 2-1 win on Saturday as Manchester United closed on the Premier League's top four with a 2-0 victory at Burnley. Anthony Martial and Marcus Rashford struck late in each half to take United above Tottenham in fifth after Spurs were held 2-2 draw at Norwich. Pellegrini was sacked soon after the Hammers succumbed to a Leicester side that made nine changes after a Boxing Day thrashing by Liverpool.

Jamie Vardy was among those missing due to the birth of his daughter, but Kelechi Iheanacho and Demarai Gray made the most of their chance for a rare Premier League start by scoring either side of half-time.

"Anytime you come in if you're not playing so much you have to try and stamp your mark and get yourself in the team," said Gray, who also saw an early penalty saved by Lukasz Fabianski.

The Foxes move 10 points behind Liverpool, having played two games more, and stretch their lead in second over Manchester City to four points. Pablo Fornals levelled for the Hammers just before half-time, but a seventh defeat in nine games left them just one point above the relegation zone. "It has become clear that a change is required to get the club back on track in line with our ambitions this season," said the Hammers joint-chairman David Sullivan.

"We felt it was necessary to act now in order to give the new manager as much time as possible to try and achieve that goal."

United closed to within a point of fourth-placed Chelsea with Martial and Rashford again their talismans at Turf Moor. Martial produced a clinical finish after Andreas Pereira pounced on an error from Charlie Taylor a minute before half-time.

United had to wait till stoppage time to secure all three points when Rashford rounded off a rapid counter-attack as they kept a first clean sheet in 15 league games. "It is a big difference to get a clean sheet. It is important for us to know we can grind out results as well," said United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer. Tottenham have also struggled for clean sheets under Jose Mourinho and their defensive deficiencies were again exposed by bottom-of-the-table Norwich. Mario Vrancic was afforded time and space to fire the Canaries into an early lead and only the finest of margins on a VAR review for offside denied Teemu Pukki putting Norwich 2-0 up before half-time. —AFP