

25 Muir secures golden double at European indoors



26 Mitchell claims first PGA win with big final putt



27 England bids farewell to WCup-winning keeper Banks



Harden drops 42, Rockets dump Celtics

Trail Blazers pull away in fourth quarter, drop Hornets



BOSTON: James Harden #13 of the Houston Rockets handles the ball against the Boston Celtics on Sunday at the TD Garden in Boston, Massachusetts. — AFP

BOSTON: James Harden scored 42 points before fouling out, and the visiting Houston Rockets extended their winning streak to five games with a 115-104 victory over the Boston Celtics on Sunday. Before being whistled for his sixth foul with 1:44 left to play, Harden staved off a furious Boston rally with a driving layup and a 3-pointer over two defenders that extended the lead to 112-100. The Celtics, once down 71-43, scored the opening 10 points of the fourth quarter and had cut the margin to nine on a Marcus Smart second-chance basket at the 4:40 mark. The Celtics rallied behind their reserves, with Jaylen Brown posting 15 points and six rebounds off the bench to lead the charge. Boston recorded a 31-9 advantage in bench points. Eric Gordon matched his career high with eight 3-pointers and scored 32 points to complement Harden, who was 6 of 18 on treys. Chris Paul added 15 points and 12 assists as Houston, which finished 21 of 51 from beyond the arc, improved to 12-0 this season when Paul records double-digit assists.

THUNDER 99, GRIZZLIES 95

Russell Westbrook scored 22 points, including two big shots in the closing stretch, to lead Oklahoma

City past visiting Memphis. The win snapped a four-game losing streak for the Thunder, the team's first since an 0-4 start to begin the season, and kept them tied with Portland for third place in the Western Conference after the Trail Blazers won at Charlotte earlier in the day. Avery Bradley scored 27 points to lead the Grizzlies, who have lost six of their last eight.

PISTONS 112, RAPTORS 107 (OT)

Blake Griffin had 27 points and seven rebounds, and Detroit scored the final 10 points of overtime to defeat visiting Toronto. Luke Kennard and Reggie Jackson had 19 points apiece for Detroit, which has won nine of its last 11 to reach the .500 mark at 31-31. Andre Drummond had 15 points and 17 rebounds despite foul trouble. Wayne Ellington added 11 points for Detroit, which beat coach Dwane Casey's former team for the second time this season.

TRAIL BLAZERS 118, HORNETS 108

Rodney Hood came off the bench to score 27 points, including 21 in the fourth quarter, as Portland knocked off host Charlotte. The Trail Blazers bolted to a 15-point lead in the first quarter but then had to pull away again in the fourth quarter, going on a 15-2

run in the final six minutes. Hood scored 14 of 16 Portland points in one stretch of the quarter. Portland won for the sixth time in its last seven games. Jeremy Lamb scored 23 off the bench to lead the Hornets.

WIZARDS 135, TIMBERWOLVES 121

Bobby Portis had 26 points and 12 rebounds, Bradley Beal scored 22 points and host Washington defeated Minnesota. Reserve Jabari Parker added 22 points for Washington, which had lost five of six. Karl-Anthony Towns led the Timberwolves with 28 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists, his first sub-30 point effort in four games. Derrick Rose scored 18 points off the bench.

CLIPPERS 128, KNICKS 107

Landry Shamet made four 3-pointers in the first eight minutes as Los Angeles went on to rout visiting New York. Shamet finished with 21 points, all on 3-pointers, and Danilo Gallinari added 20 for the Clippers, who were beginning a stretch of eight consecutive games at the Staples Center. The Clippers will be listed as the visiting team on Monday night when they return to their home floor to face the rival Lakers. Noah Vonleh (17 points, 12 rebounds) and

Mitchell Robinson (16 points, 13 rebounds) recorded double-doubles for the Knicks, who likewise were playing the opener of a back-to-back sequence.

CAVALIERS 107, MAGIC 93

Jordan Clarkson scored 18 points off the bench, and Cleveland enjoyed a big fourth quarter to top visiting Orlando. Collin Sexton had 17 points on 6-for-11 shooting. Kevin Love posted a double-double with 16 points and 14 rebounds, and Cedi Osman finished with 14 points and six boards. Magic big man Nikola Vucevic led all scorers with 28 points on 13-for-16 shooting. He pulled down 13 rebounds and dished out six assists.

HAWKS 123, BULLS 118

Alex Len scored a season-high 28 points and made two key free throws in the final seconds as visiting Atlanta hung on to beat Chicago. Len picked up the scoring slack for the Hawks, who were without two starters and saw point guard Trae Young ejected in the third quarter. Len was 9 of 18 from the floor and made five 3-pointers to go along with nine rebounds and two blocked shots. Lauri Markkanen led Chicago with 19 points and nine rebounds. — Reuters

Nawal El Moutawakel, torch bearer for Muslim sportswomen

MONACO: Nawal El Moutawakel took just 54 seconds to go from the "dark to the light" when she became the first Muslim woman from Africa to win Olympic gold in the 400 metres hurdles at the 1984 Games.

The 56-year-old Moroccan has since forged a successful career as a sports administrator having twice been Minister of Sports, and is an influential member of both the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Association of Athletics Federations.

"I consider myself a role model with my other Olympic champions back home in Morocco," she told AFP. "I could have stayed and spent most of my life enjoying my glory of 1984 but no, that's wrong."

"54 seconds allowed me to go from dark to light, like

I said from zero to hero. I would like to share every single moment with the younger generation."

El Moutawakel, whose victory in Los Angeles was marked by the then King Hassan II ordering every girl born that day named in her honour, said the hurdles on the track reflected the challenges she had faced in her life. However, she always met them head on, claiming "my victory meant no more just washing the dishes for women". "In my religion, women were never forbidden to compete," she said at the recent Laureus awards. Women could compete equally as men, and that's why I felt growing up in an environment that was very supportive, very positive until today, so I don't think there is any resistance whatsoever."

El Moutawakel supports her claim by citing a passage from the Koran in Arabic. "Teach your children how to run, do horse-back riding, and also swimming," she said. "This is in our religion. He never said, teach your daughter, or teach your son. It says 'teach your children', and in children, there is a son and daughter."

El Moutawakel, a mother of two children, daughter Zineb and son Roda, certainly received all the support she desired from her parents, especially her father

Mohammed. He allayed her fears of how much bigger some of her rivals were by saying "rubies and diamonds come in small packages."

"My father was a judoka, my mum did physical activities at high school, we grew up five brothers and sisters, we were all in the same club and we all did athletics so I was in an environment that was very positive, very supportive," she said. "I never felt any resistance (to her wanting to be an athlete) whatsoever. "Until the day I won in 1984, August 8th, when many microphones were placed in front of me, talking about this resistance. "And I was like, what do you mean?"

El Moutawakel, whose great regret is her devoted father did not live to see her moment of glory, dying in a car crash in early 1984 a week after she had started university in the United States, found the spotlight unnerving. "When I ran in 1984, my coaches (Iowa University's Ron Renko and Pat Moynihan) were teaching me how to run, but they weren't teaching me how to speak," she said. "So all of a sudden I had hundreds of journalists with microphones wanting me to speak, and I said 'I have nothing to say, I showed you in my performance.'" — AFP



Nawal El Moutawakel