

Sports

Bucks crush Hornets, become first team to notch 50 wins

Celtics dominate Lakers behind Irving's 30 points

MILWAUKEE: Giannis Antetokounmpo had 26 points and 13 rebounds, Brook Lopez scored 25 points, and the host Milwaukee Bucks beat the Charlotte Hornets 131-114 on Saturday night. The Bucks trailed by as many as 14 in the second quarter but exploded for 39 third-quarter points to take the lead before increasing their advantage to as many as 18 in the fourth quarter. The Bucks became the first team in the league to reach the 50-win plateau. They are now 27-5 at home. They have won two straight and nine of their past 11. Kemba Walker scored 25 points to lead the Hornets, who remain in 10th place in the Eastern Conference playoff race. Frank Kaminsky scored 16, Miles Bridges had 15, Nic Batum and Jeremy Lamb finished with 14 apiece, and Cody Zeller scored 10.

TIMBERWOLVES 135, WIZARDS 130 (OT)
Karl-Anthony Towns collected 40 points and 16 rebounds before exiting with a right knee injury, and host Minnesota outlasted Washington. Towns, who left in the final minute of regulation and did not play in overtime, reached the 40-point plateau for the third time in five games. The two-time All-Star fell just shy of his season high of 42 points. He will undergo further testing on his knee, but coach Ryan Saunders said he has not heard reason for serious concern. Derrick Rose scored 16 of his 29 points after the third quarter for the Timberwolves, who have won two of three. Taj Gibson had 15 points and 13 rebounds.

CELTICS 120, LAKERS 107
Kyrie Irving scored 30 points, Marcus Smart and Marcus Morris added 16 each, and visiting Boston extending its winning streak to three with a win over Los Angeles. Gordon Hayward added 15 points as the Celtics avenged a defeat to the Lakers at home in

February when former Boston point guard Rajon Rondo hit a game-winning shot at the buzzer. LeBron James finished with a triple-double (30 points, 12 assists, 10 rebounds) for the Lakers, who were playing without a number of key contributors because of injuries. Los Angeles lost its fifth consecutive game and fell for the seventh time in its last eight games.

NETS 114, HAWKS 112
D'Angelo Russell hit a go-ahead 3-pointer with 1:39 remaining, and Brooklyn held off host Atlanta to complete a season-series sweep despite a triple-double performance by rookie Trae Young. Spencer Dinwiddie had 23 points and Jarrett Allen finished with 20 points and 12 rebounds for the Nets, who had beaten the Hawks twice in Brooklyn earlier in the three-game season series. Young's triple-double consisted of 23 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists. John Collins had 33 points and 20 rebounds for Atlanta, which dropped its second straight.

KINGS 102, KNICKS 94
De'Aaron Fox scored a game-high 30 points and hit the go-ahead basket with 5:03 to play as visiting Sacramento beat New York. The Kings overcame a 15-point first quarter deficit and survived squandering an 11-point lead in the fourth quarter to win the opener of a pivotal four-game Eastern Conference road trip. Sacramento, which hasn't made the playoffs since 2006, entered Saturday four games behind the San Antonio Spurs in the race for the eighth and final playoff spot in the Western Conference. Buddy Hield scored 19 points, and Nemanja Bjelica had a double-double (13 points, 10 rebounds) for the Kings.

BLAZERS 127, SUNS 120
CJ McCollum scored 26 points on 11-for-14 shoot-



MILWAUKEE: Cody Zeller #40 of the Charlotte Hornets shoots the ball against the Milwaukee Bucks on Saturday at the Fiserv Forum Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. — AFP

ing as Portland pulled out a victory over visiting Phoenix. Seth Curry came off the bench to match his season high with 22 points for the Trail Blazers, who ended their two-game losing streak. Damian Lillard added 18 points and nine assists, and Jusuf Nurkic

contributed 14 points and nine rebounds for Portland. Devin Booker scored 23 points and DeAndre Ayton collected 21 points and eight boards for the Suns, who had won three in a row. Kelly Oubre had 17 points and seven rebounds for Phoenix. — Reuters



Kuwait int'l sailing event honor winners

KUWAIT: The 12th Kuwait international sailing championship concluded at Kuwait Sea Sport Club (KSSC) on Saturday with an award giving ceremony. The championship, organized by KSSC sailing, rowing and kayaking committee, saw Malika Bellomi, of Italy, leading the Optimist (dinghy) category, followed by his compatriot Mose' Bellomi in the second place and



Yahya Al-Fakharani, of Egypt, in the third. In the Laser 4.7 category, Al-Baraa Al-Nawfali, of Oman, came first, while Kuwait's Ya'qoub Shah came second and Ali Al-Failakawi, of Kuwait too, came third. Speaking to KUNA, KSSC Secretary-General Khaled Al-Fawdery said the championship lived to our expectations and was a complete success. "The event provided

a good opportunity for seaports people from Kuwait and other GCC states to compete with their peers from around the globe," he said, voicing hope that the Kuwaiti sailors will continue training and do better in the coming events. The championship, which kicked off on Thursday, gathered 74 participants from 18 countries. —KUNA

Sterling urges City to clinch quadruple

LONDON: Raheem Sterling urged Manchester City to maintain their "amazing mentality" as the Premier League leaders chase an unprecedented quadruple. Pep Guardiola's side won the English title in record-breaking fashion last season, but their defence of the crown has been much tougher, with Liverpool posing a serious threat.

City have climbed back above the Reds in recent weeks and also lifted the League Cup trophy following their final win over Chelsea. With a 3-2 lead over Schalke heading into Tuesday's Champions League last 16 second leg and an FA Cup quarter-final at Swansea next weekend, City are still in with a chance of sweeping up all the available silverware.

Sterling's 13-minute treble secured a 3-1 win against Watford in the league on Saturday and the England winger believes City's confidence and steely focus can carry them to an historic season.

"It's going alright for me and the team," Sterling said. "We've got one trophy already and the most important thing is not how many goals I am scoring, it's how many trophies we lift. "You know, hopefully we can continue with this amazing mentality and see how far it gets us."

"We don't get excited about anything. We know how difficult teams can be, we know how difficult these competitions are, we're playing against top teams, top players and anything can happen."

"We've got to keep humble, keep fighting game by game." Guardiola kept Sterling's feet on the ground by saying "he can do better" after a match that was level until a controversial opener just after half-time.—AFP

Piatek 'kung fu' goal rescues Milan at Chievo

MILAN: Krzysztof Piatek struck again to rescue a 2-1 win for AC Milan at bottom club Chievo on Saturday, keeping their Champions League push firmly on track, but the Polish striker was accused of scoring with a 'kung fu' kick. Piatek joined Milan from Genoa in January and has now scored eight goals in nine matches, as the club notched up a fifth straight league win to remain unbeaten since before Christmas. Returning from injury, Lucas Biglia opened with a curling free kick after 31 minutes in Verona. It was just his second goal for Milan and first since February last year.

Finnish midfielder Perparim Hetemaj got his head to the end of Leris cross to pull the hosts level four minutes before the break. But once again Piatek proved crucial, scoring the winner after 57 minutes in controversial circumstances.

Chievo goalkeeper Stefano Sorrentino parried a shot from the Polish striker who then dived to send the ball back into the net after an overhead kick which struck Mattia Bani. A VAR review confirmed the goal to the fury of Chievo coach Domenico Di Carlo.

"It was a kung fu kick, it's impossible not to spot that," complained Di Carlo whose side have just one win from 27 games. "You can write the headline: 'Chievo beaten by a kung fu shot.'" The 23-year-old Piatek joins Juventus

star Cristiano Ronaldo and Sampdoria's Fabio Quagliarella on top of the Serie A scorers' chart with 19 goals this season.

Milan consolidate third position to move five points behind second-placed Napoli who travel to Sassuolo later. Champions Juventus pulled 19 points clear at the top on Friday with Moise Kean scoring a brace in a 4-1 win over lowly Udinese. Inter Milan, are fourth, four points behind Milan, before hosting SPAL. The Milan teams will go head-to-head next weekend. "We started off well, controlled the game but we then conceded a goal and then lost the compass for a moment," said Milan assistant coach Luigi Riccio.

"Fortunately Krzysztof Piatek got the winner and sorted things out. "We know the difficulties involved in a derby and wanted to get to that game with this kind of standing. We're on the right road and want to continue like this."

However, coach Gennaro Gattuso was sent to the stands for arguing on the sidelines with Chievo midfielder Riccardo Meggiorini in the first-half and now risks a suspension for the derby. "We hope Gattuso will be there for the derby, it would be an added bonus for us," said Riccio. "These things happen, Gattuso spoke to the referee afterwards and it's all sorted out. All clarified." Roma, in fifth, three points off the Champions League places begin life under new coach Claudio Ranieri at home against Empoli today. Czech midfielder Juraj Kucka scored the only goal as Parma ended mid-table rival's Genoa's six-game unbeaten run. Kucka broke through after 78 minutes against his former club on a rebound after Brazilian goalkeeper parried his header. Parma overtake Genoa to move two places up to 11th position. — AFP



Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE
AS Roma v Empoli 22:30
beIN SPORTS

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA
Fortuna D,sseldorf v Eintracht Frankfurt 22:30
beIN SPORTS

Villa's Grealish punched by Birmingham fan

LONDON: Aston Villa's Jack Grealish was punched by a pitch-invading Birmingham fan in a shocking incident during yesterday's Championship clash, but the midfielder had the last laugh as he scored the decisive goal in a 1-0 win over their bitter rivals.

Grealish was in the Birmingham penalty area in the 10th minute when a man ran on to the field and threw a punch from behind at the Villa captain. The blow caught Grealish on the side of the head and sent him sprawling to the turf. The intruder was quickly restrained by a steward as Villa players including Tammy Abraham and Glenn Whelan rushed to Grealish's defence.

After the fan had been shoved over, he was eventually led away by police, defiantly blowing kisses to the crowd. A visibly furious Grealish was helped to his feet and was able to continue playing once order was restored at Birmingham's St Andrew's stadium.

Grealish produced the perfect response to the assault in the 70th minute. Taking possession 20 yards from goal, he advanced into the Birmingham penalty area before drilling a low shot into the far corner to seal Villa's league double over their hated neighbours.

In a fittingly dramatic gesture, Grealish jumped into the stand to celebrate with the Villa fans behind the goal and was booked as a result. West Midlands Police confirmed the Birmingham supporter had been arrested, while the Blues condemned the attack as "deplorable and disgusting" and will apologise to Grealish personally.

It was reported Birmingham will ban the man for life from St Andrew's. "The EFL condemns the mindless actions of the individual who encroached on to the pitch at St Andrews yesterday afternoon," a Football League statement read. "It's a situation no player should ever be faced with."

Former Manchester United defender Gary Neville said: "The club are going have to take a huge punishment for this to act as a deterrent in the future. A Points deduction or Empty stadium for 10 games!"

Former Villa midfielder Lee Hendrie, working as a TV pundit at the match, added: "A fan running on to the pitch and taking someone like Jack out, there's knife crime... anything could have happened out there."

There is a long history of animosity between Birmingham and Villa supporters, with outbreaks of serious violence in the streets marring many of the 'second city' derby encounters. There was fighting between rival gangs before Sunday's match, with police having to hold back fans while at least one man was seen being treated by paramedics after suffering a head wound.

Fanning the flames further, Grealish is a boyhood Villa fan and once turned down a chance to join Birmingham on loan when he was a youngster, reportedly saying: "I'm not going there". In 2002, a Birmingham fan was jailed for four months after running onto the pitch at St Andrew's to taunt then Villa goalkeeper Peter Enckelman, who had just conceded a bizarre own goal when he let a backpass roll under his foot into the net.—AFP