

Sports

Young carries Hawks past Bulls, Pelicans' Williamson flies high

Tatum youngest Celtic to score 50 points in a game

LOS ANGELES: Trae Young bounced back from a subpar outing to score 42 points as the Atlanta Hawks overcame Zach LaVine's 50-point performance with a 120-108 win over the Chicago Bulls on Friday in Atlanta.

The second meeting of the season between the two teams played out similar to their first game in December when Hawks top scorer Young and Bulls all-star LaVine carried their respective offences in Atlanta's 124-104 win.

Young, who was coming off a poor shooting night on Wednesday against Memphis when he shot just six-of-12 from the floor, ratcheted up the intensity against the Bulls, who were gunning for their fourth straight win but playing on short rest.

Young shot 15-of-25 and finished with eight rebounds and nine assists as the wrapped up a four game homestand with the win. Young leads Atlanta, averaging over 25 points per game to go along with almost 10 rebounds a game.

Clint Capela contributed 22 points and 10 rebounds while shooting 10-for-12 from the field for the Hawks. Danilo Gallinari came off the bench to score 20 points for Atlanta, which earned its fifth win in the past six games.

"It gives everybody a lot of confidence," said Gallinari. "You win games like this and the next time you're going to approach it the same when you're in a tight fourth quarter when you know what you want to do, and the shots you want to take."

LaVine scored a career-high 50 points, making 18 of 31 shots from the field, seven of 12 threes, and missing just one of eight free throws. He scored 39 points in the first half, which tied for the best scoring production since Phoenix Suns Jamal Crawford

had 39 points in the second half in April 9, 2019.

"I just got in a rhythm," LaVine said. "My threes started falling and then I can get to the mid-range and get to the hoop. I was trying to get to the free-throw line late in the second quarter because I was so damn tired. Trying to get a little bit of a break." Atlanta outscored the Bulls 67-42 in the second half to come from behind for the win.

Pelicans answer challenge

Elsewhere, Zion Williamson finished with 37 points, a career high 15 rebounds and eight assists as the New Orleans Pelicans responded to a challenge from their coach to beat the Philadelphia 76ers 101-94 in New Orleans. Williamson's career night came just one game after his record streak of 25 consecutive games with at least 20 points on 50 percent or better shooting ended in a loss at Brooklyn. He now shares that record with former Los Angeles Lakers superstar Shaquille O'Neal.

"He played the game the way you're supposed to play the game. He was just tremendous," said Pelicans coach Stan Van Gundy. Williamson also shot 15-of-28 from the floor for the Pelicans, who have won two of their last six games. "My teammates were giving me confidence and saying we trust you and every move you make," Williamson said. "All that stuff plays a part." The Pelicans win also comes one game after Van Gundy lashed out publicly at his team after their defense collapsed in back-to-back losses at Atlanta (123-107) on Tuesday and at Brooklyn (139-111) on Wednesday.

Van Gundy said the Pelicans "got totally dominated at both ends of the floor" and called their defense against the Nets "absurd." Brandon Ingram



ATLANTA: Trae Young #11 of the Atlanta Hawks high fives Kevin Huerter #3 during the game against the Chicago Bulls on Friday at State Farm Arena in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP

returned from a five-game injury absence on Friday to score 17 points and Willy Hernangomez had 10 points and 10 rebounds. Jaxson Hayes chipped in with 12 points. Tobias Harris led the Sixers with 23 points, Joel Embiid had 14 on five-of-16 shooting, Furkan Korkmaz scored 12 and Ben Simmons 10.

Also, Jayson Tatum became the youngest player in Boston history to score at least 50 points in a

game as the Celtics needed overtime to beat the last-place Minnesota Timberwolves 145-136. Tatum, at 23 years and 37 days, scored 35 of his career-high 53 points in the second half. Jaylen Brown scored 26 points and Marcus Smart 24 points and eight assists. Karl-Anthony Towns had 30 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists to lead the Timberwolves. — AFP

De Villiers stars as Bangalore win IPL opener

CHENNAI: South Africa's AB de Villiers hit a quickfire 48 as Royal Challengers Bangalore prevailed in a last-ball thriller against holders Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League opener played behind closed doors on Friday. The 14th edition of the popular Twenty20 tournament kick-started in Chennai as Virat Kohli's Bangalore chased down a target of 160 to win by two wickets.

De Villiers single-handedly lifted the team from a precarious 122-6 to take the chase into the final over, but he got run out on the fourth ball. Harshal Patel, who claimed five wickets to restrict Mumbai to 159-9 in their 20 overs, got the winning run in a tense finish.

"AB is probably the only player who's so versatile and can do what he did on slow pitches today, so we have to understand," Kohli said on the team's decision to make de Villiers bat at number five. "If there's a partnership on, you might see a totally different order. But in a tricky chase you want some options in the back end, where the opposition thinks it's not over till he gets out."

Kohli won the toss and elected to field first at the start of the 52-day tournament that concludes on May 30. Kohli said he "felt like home" on IPL's return to India after last year's edition took place in the United Arab Emirates due to the pandemic.

Glenn Maxwell, who was bought by Bangalore for \$1.95 million in an intense February auction, got going with his captain in a key partnership of 52. Kohli fell to Mumbai fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah for 33 and Maxwell, promoted to number four, fell to tall South African quick Marco Jansen for 39 as Bangalore faltered. But de Villiers soon took charge as he hit four fours and two sixes in his 27-ball knock.

Earlier Patel struck three times in the final over of the Mumbai innings to set up victory for a side searching its first IPL title. Bangalore batsman Devdutt Padikkal missed the game after he was one of the four IPL players to test positive for COVID-19 ahead of the gala event. All eight teams are in strict bio-bubbles as case numbers in India have skyrocketed to more than 130,000 a day since players arrived to prepare for the eight-week spectacle.

"We are fortunate enough to be on the park playing cricket. That is more important, we can put a smile on people in India," said Mumbai skipper Rohit Sharma. "As a country we are going through tough times and it's important we give them something to look forward to. This tournament is going to be exciting." — AFP

Pau Gasol dons Barca shirt again, twenty years later

MADRID: Twenty years after leaving Barcelona for the riches of the NBA, 40-year-old Pau Gasol returned to the Spanish club on Friday, playing in a EuroLeague clash against Bayern Munich. Gasol, who was an NBA champion with the Los Angeles Lakers in 2009 and 2010, returned to Europe following two frustrating years in the United States where a serious left foot injury kept him sidelined at the Milwaukee Bucks.

On Friday, he ended the game with nine points and four rebounds as the German side ran out 82-72 winners. "Pau is doing well, he increases in intensity with each workout, he likes it here and I think that now we are thinking about giving him a few minutes, but we do not yet know how much," Barca coach Sarunas Jasikevicius had said on Thursday. Gasol started Friday's match alongside Greece's Nick Calathes, Leo Westermann of France and Spanish pair Sergi Martinez and Victor Claver. Barcelona were already assured of first place in the table and guaranteed a spot in the quarter-finals. — AFP



BARCELONA: FC Bayern Munich's German center Leon Radošević (left) challenges Barcelona's Spanish center Pau Gasol during the Euroleague basketball match between Barcelona and Bayern Munich at the Palau Blaugrana arena in Barcelona on Friday. — AFP

Japan swimmer Ikee claims clean sweep but misses Olympic spot

TOKYO: Leukemia survivor Rikako Ikee completed a clean sweep of four wins at Japan's Olympic swimming trials yesterday — but missed out on an individual place at the Tokyo Games. Ikee, who only resumed training in March last year after being diagnosed with cancer in February 2019, won both the 50m butterfly and 50m freestyle to add to the two victories she claimed earlier in Tokyo.

She had already secured her place in Japan's medley and 4x100m freestyle relay teams for the coronavirus-delayed Tokyo Games going into the final day of the trials, which doubled as Japan's national championships. But her time of 24.84sec in the 50m freestyle — her only qualifier of the day as the 50m butterfly is not an Olympic event — was not enough to earn her an individual berth at the Games. "I want-

ed a better time, but the most important thing was that I won my fourth title, so I'm very happy," said Ikee, who had insisted before the trials that she was focusing on the Paris Games in 2024.

"I wasn't sure what the result was going to be right up until the race, but as soon as I came out to the pool, I was determined to win," she added. Ikee was named MVP of the 2018 Asian Games after claiming six golds and two silvers, and was expected to be one of the stars of the Tokyo Games. But she was hospitalized for around 10 months after being diagnosed with leukemia, and only resumed competing in August last year.

She won the 50m butterfly at the Tokyo Open in February to claim her first victory since her comeback. And she capped it off at this week's trials by winning the 100m butterfly and booking her spot on Japan's medley relay team. She went on to win the 100m freestyle to claim a place in the 4x100m relay team, but thought about dropping out of the 50m events after suffering fatigue. Now she is determined to "make a contribution to the relay team" when the Games begin this summer. "Once I decided to compete, I knew I had to do it properly," she



TOKYO: Japan's Rikako Ikee reacts after winning the women's 50m freestyle final during the Japan National Swimming Championships, which doubles as a qualifier event for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre yesterday. — AFP

said. "I've got a few months to go before the Olympics, and I think I can build up some strength before then." — AFP

Match-play mindset helps revive Masters leader Justin Rose

AUGUSTA: Once Justin Rose shook off a miserable start and reminded himself he was still leading the Masters, the 40-year-old Englishman was able to play well enough to stay ahead. The reigning Olympic champion birdied three of the last six holes Friday after making bogeys on four of the first seven and held a one-shot lead after 36 holes at Augusta National. "The finger was heading towards the panic button a little bit," Rose admitted.

Rose, whose only major win was the 2013 US Open, opened Thursday with a 65 for a four-stroke lead, only to see it shrink to a single shot as he walked up the eighth fairway. That's when he decided to shift to a match-play mindset against Augusta National.

"I started to take the leaderboard out of it and I felt really good out there on the back nine. It was a solid round of golf," Rose said. "I had a little talk with myself on eight and said you're still leading the Masters and started to play match play against the golf course. I scratched a line on my scorecard and told myself I was three down and could I go ahead and beat the golf course from that point on."

Rose didn't beat the famed layout, but he put up

enough of a fight in a draw to stay ahead of all those pesky stroke-play rivals, his par 72 putting him on seven-under 137, one ahead of Americans Brian Harman and Will Zalatoris. "Had a putt on 18 to win my match 1-up, but unfortunately it just slipped by," Rose said. "But an honorable draw."

The two-time Masters runner-up, a heartbreak playoff loser to Sergio Garcia in 2017, said he was better off for the struggle and fightback. "I felt like I grew a little bit from today, which is good," Rose said. "It was a worthwhile day for me. There were some key moments in that front nine where I was pretty proud of myself for just keeping things ticking forward."

Rose provided some insight into the crucial conversion in his head that helped reverse his scorecard woes. "I told myself going up the eighth hole, 'You're leading the Masters. Your frame of reference is a little bit different. Four ahead is something, but you're still leading so just enjoy it and keep going.' I was able to do that... could then just walk onto the back nine and try to build something fresh and new."

Asked what happened to cause his lackluster round, Rose replied, "Augusta National happened. That's just the way it can be out there. That round could easily have been 74." Rose will try to keep the same frame of mind for the weekend. "That will be my mindset for tomorrow," he said. "Just tidy it up a little bit, get off to a better start and build a round from there."

With major winners such as US stars Jordan Spieth and Justin Thomas gaining ground, Rose isn't worrying about what number it might take to win.



AUGUSTA: Justin Rose of England plays his shot from the 12th tee during the second round of the Masters at Augusta National Golf Club on Friday in Augusta, Georgia. — AFP

"You can see the leaderboard and who is stacking up behind," Rose said. "I feel like there's a lot of firepower there where you can't ever really hold anyone back to a number." — AFP