

## Photo of the Day



Domen Skofic climbs the Trbovlje Chimney in Trbovlje, Slovenia. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

# Heat cool off red-hot Jazz, Celtics snap losing streak

## Raptors beat Rockets without six members of coaching staff

LOS ANGELES: Jimmy Butler scored a season high 33 points as the Miami Heat beat the NBA-leading Utah Jazz 124-116 on Friday to extend their winning streak to five games. Butler also added 10 rebounds and eight assists to lead giant-killers Miami, who have toppled the NBA's two most recent champions in the past week — the Toronto Raptors and the defending champion Los Angeles Lakers. "I don't want to say that we're good yet," Butler said. "We've got so much more that we can be better at. Myself, anybody, I don't want us to get complacent and think that we're cool."

Goran Dragic scored 26 points, center Bam Adebayo had 19 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists in the win. "We just tried to take away their easy shots," Dragic said. "And we did." Donovan Mitchell shot 11-of-26 from the field and finished with 30 points for the Jazz, who dropped to 26-7 overall but still have the best record in the NBA.

The Jazz also got 17 points from Bojan Bogdanovic as well as 15 points and 12 rebounds from Rudy Gobert. They missed their last seven shots and were three-for-16 from the floor in the final eight minutes.

"We just made a lot of mistakes, had too many breakdowns on both ends," Jazz coach Quin Snyder said. Utah beat Miami 112-94 in Utah earlier this month in the only previous meeting between the teams this season.

### Celtics snap streak

In Tampa, Kyle Lowry recorded a triple double as the Toronto Raptors beat the Houston Rockets 122-111 despite missing six members of their coaching staff, including head coach Nick Nurse. The Raptors announced just prior to the game that the six would be unavailable for the NBA contest because of COVID-19 health and safety protocols. Toronto forward Pascal Siakam also sat out the game due to the same protocols.

The 53-year-old Nurse, who is the reigning league coach of the year, is in his third season as Toronto's head coach. Assistant coach Sergio Scariolo took charge of the Raptors bench against the Rockets. The Raptors led by eight points at the half, had a 23-point lead at one stage in the third and took a 15-point lead into the final quarter.

Lowry finished with 20 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists to post his 16th career triple-double as a Raptor. Victor Oladipo had 27 points and John Wall had 21 points and 12 assists for the Rockets, who lost their 10th straight game. Eric Gordon had 17 points and P.J. Tucker and Danuel House each scored 11 points.

Elsewhere, Kemba Walker scored a season-high 32 points as the Boston Celtics recovered from a slow start to defeat the Indiana Pacers 118-112. Daniel Theis had 17 points and Jaylen Brown 15 as the Celtics snapped a three-game losing streak, winning for just the fourth time in their last 12 games. "We had a slow start, but we stuck together. That was the best part about it. The only way you can get out of struggles is by doing it together," said Walker. — AFP



TAMPA: Acting Head Coach Sergio Scariolo and Norman Powell #24 of the Toronto Raptors talk during the game against the Houston Rockets on Friday at Amalie Arena in Tampa, Florida. — AFP

## LeBron James to Ibrahimovic: 'I am the wrong guy to go at'

LOS ANGELES: Four-time NBA champion LeBron James hit back at Swedish soccer star Zlatan Ibrahimovic on Friday, saying there is no reason why he cannot have just as big an impact off the basketball court as he does on it. James has been a force for social change in America, focusing much of his attention on police brutality and racial injustice against African Americans.

He was outspoken about the police shooting of Jacob Blake in Wisconsin last summer, against Donald Trump, and he worked with other NBA stars to try and get Black people out to vote during the recent US election that brought Joe Biden to power. "I am kind of the wrong guy to go at because I do my homework," said James after the Los Angeles Lakers 102-93 win over the Portland Trail Blazers on Friday night.

James was responding to Ibrahimovic's comments earlier this week that athletes should "stay out" of politics, mentioning James by name and calling him out over his political activism. "(LeBron) is phenomenal at what he's doing, but I don't like when people have some kind of status, they go and do politics at the same time," Ibrahimovic said.

Speaking in an interview for UEFA for Discovery+

in Sweden, the outspoken striker said it is a "mistake" when athletes step out of their lane. "I don't do politics... That is the first mistake people do when they become famous and they become in a certain status. Stay out of it. Just do what you do best because it doesn't look good," Ibrahimovic said.

James helped found the More Than a Vote organization which boosted voter turnout in Black areas. The group organized more than 40,000 volunteers to work at the polls during the November federal election. James says winning championships is one thing but inspiring and empowering people and bringing Americans together is just as rewarding.

"At the end of the day I would never shut up about

things that are wrong. I preach about my people and I preach about equality, social injustice, racism, voter suppression. Things that go on in our community," James said. "There is no way I would ever just stick to sports. I know how powerful my voice is."

James said he likes to think he is the start of something much bigger in sports. "You see young guys speaking about things they feel is unjust," he said. "For a long time we heard, 'as athletes you should be thankful to be able to throw a ball, dribble a ball, swing a baseball bat. You shouldn't be able to speak about anything else.' That is not the case anymore. It won't be the case for a long time." — AFP



LOS ANGELES: In this file photo taken on Friday LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers smiles as he warms up before the game against the Portland Trail Blazers at Staples Center in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

## Tiger Woods in 'good spirits'

LOS ANGELES: Tiger Woods is recovering and in "good spirits" after a second day of treatment at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center following his horrific rollover solo car smash that left him with serious leg injuries. The golf superstar was transferred to Cedars-Sinai on Wednesday night after undergoing emergency surgery the day before at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center to repair compound fractures sustained in each leg in addition to a shattered ankle. "Tiger and his family want to thank you all for the wonderful support and messages they have received over the past few days," said a statement on Woods' Twitter account. "We will not have any further updates at this time. Thank you for your continued privacy."

The 15-time major champion Woods was driving alone Tuesday morning in a south Los Angeles suburb when his SUV hit the center median, crossed into the opposing lane, struck a tree and then rolled over several times. Friday's statement did not go into detail about what type of follow up treatment Woods is receiving at Cedars-Sinai which is located about 15 kilometers (nine miles) west of Los Angeles and is renowned for treating Hollywood's rich and famous. Woods' surgery included the insertion of a rod into Woods' shin bone and the use of "a combination of screws and pins" to stabilize his foot and ankle. Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva said on Wednesday that Woods wouldn't face charges related to the crash. "This remains an accident. Accident is not a crime. They do happen, unfortunately," he said. Woods has won the second most major championships in history behind Jack Nicklaus' 18. He has 82 PGA Tour victories which is tied with Sam Snead for the all-time record. — AFP



BROOKLYN: Kevin Durant #7 of the Brooklyn Nets looks on during the game against the Sacramento Kings on February 23, 2021 at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York. — AFP

## Durant out through NBA All-Star break

NEW YORK: Brooklyn Nets star forward Kevin Durant will remain sidelined through the NBA All-Star break with a left hamstring strain, the team said Friday. Durant has missed six games with the injury, the Nets originally saying on February 14 that he would be sidelined for at least two.

Coach Steve Nash had predicted this week that he would return before the All-Star break begins on March 5, but an MRI exam prompted them to revise his return timeline. "The latest images provided a clearer picture of the hamstring and while we are confident that Durant will return at full strength, this extra recovery time will allow him to perform at the level at which he has been playing this season once he returns," the Nets said in a statement.

Durant, who is averaging 29 points, 7.3 rebounds and 5.3 assists, will be re-assessed following the All-Star break, which runs from March 5-10. Durant had been slated to captain one of the All-Star teams against a team led by Los Angeles Lakers star LeBron James.

Shortly after the Nets' announcement, NBA commissioner Adam Silver named Indiana Pacers forward Domantas Sabonis to take his place in the All-Star Game on March 7 in Atlanta. Sabonis set a Pacers franchise record by opening the season with 16 consecutive double-doubles.

He ranks second in the NBA this season overall with 24 double-doubles and had three triple-doubles. Despite the honor of an All-Star nod, many players have said they would have preferred to have the break without the game this year in view of the short offseason and continuing complications posed by the coronavirus pandemic. — AFP