



SAN FRANCISCO: Stephen Curry #30 of the Golden State Warriors smiles during the game against the Chicago Bulls on Friday at Chase Center in San Francisco, California. —AFP

Warriors improve to NBA-best 11-1 record

Schroder shines as Celtics outlast Bucks; Mavs cruise in Texas showdown

LOS ANGELES: Stephen Curry scored 40 points, including nine three pointers, as the Golden State Warriors clamped down on defense early and breezed to a 119-93 lopsided victory over the Chicago Bulls on Friday.

Curry, who scored 50 points in a win over the Atlanta Hawks on Monday, drained nine of his 17 three point attempts and shot 15 of 24 overall in 34 minutes of playing time. He has now made nine or more threes a league record 36 times. This was also the 52nd time he has scored 40 or more points in a game.

The Western Conference-leading Warriors improved to an NBA-best 11-1 on the season as Friday's win capped an eight-game, 16-day homestand. Andrew Wiggins had 15 points, Kevon Looney grabbed 10 rebounds and Draymond Green tallied nine points, nine rebounds and seven assists for the Warriors, who opened their lengthy homestand with a loss to the Memphis Grizzlies, before racking up seven consecutive wins.

Zach LaVine had 23 points and DeMar DeRozan 18 for the Bulls, who began a five-game trip without

Nikola Vucevic who tested positive for the coronavirus earlier in the week. Golden State shot 15-for-46 from three-point range, outscoring the Bulls 45-24 from beyond the arc. Chicago made just eight threes overall.

Chicago got off to a solid start to lead 24-14 in the first quarter. But they would score just five points in the remaining three minutes of the first as the Warriors defense got untracked. Golden State held the Bulls' offense to just 33 points in the second and third quarters and waltzed to victory from there.

Bucks' struggles continue

In Boston, Dennis Schroder scored eight of his season-high 38 points in overtime and Jayson Tatum tallied 27 points and 11 rebounds as the Boston

Celtics beat the short-handed Milwaukee Bucks 122-113. The Celtics raised their level of play in the extra session, outscoring the NBA champion Bucks 14-5 as Schroder led the assault. He also finished with eight rebounds to help the Celtics win for the

fourth time in five games after a dismal 2-5 start to the season.

"I tried to attack and get some early buckets," said Schroder. "I wanted to be aggressive, get into the paint and look for my teammates." Marcus Smart added 19 points and Robert Williams had 12 points

and 10 rebounds for Boston. The Celtics won despite being without Jaylen Brown for the third consecutive contest with a hamstring injury.

Milwaukee was missing all-star Giannis Antetokounmpo, who was ruled out just prior to

tipoff with a right ankle sprain. They were already without Khris Middleton, who missed his seventh straight game after testing positive for COVID-19. The Bucks had six scorers in double digits, including Bobby Portis, who had 22 points.

This was just the Celtics' second win at home this season after they were clobbered by Toronto in a 32-point blowout in their home opener on October 22. The club's fortunes at home began to change after Marcus Smart called out the team's stars for a lack of passing following a 128-114 loss to Chicago on November 1. They avenged that earlier loss to the Raptors with a 104-88 home victory on Wednesday.

"We kept our composure and kept battling on defense to get stops," Schroder said. "We got guys playing defense first and that has to be our mentality. We get the stops and then we get out and run." Elsewhere, Kristaps Porzingis scored a season-high 32 points and Luka Doncic added a triple-double as the Dallas Mavericks cruised to a 123-109 win over the San Antonio Spurs. — AFP



Curry with 40 after 50 points barrage

Australia, New Zealand seek history in T20 World Cup final

DUBAI: Kane Williamson's New Zealand eye a second global crown in a single year when they take on Australia at the Twenty20 World Cup final that will witness a new winner today. New Zealand and Australia renew their trans-Tasman rivalry in Dubai as both teams look to clinch their maiden world title in the shortest format.

It's a hat-trick of ICC finals for the once perennial underdogs of world cricket after they outplayed India to win the inaugural Test championship in June. They beat favorites England in the semi-final to avenge their 2019 defeat in a dramatic 50-over World Cup final at Lord's when they went down on boundary count after a super over.

Head coach Gary Stead said the Black Caps are excited to take on the Australian challenge in what will be their first ever T20 World Cup final appearance. "That's probably a final that I'm not sure too many people would have predicted a month or so ago, Australia and New Zealand," said Stead.

The Kiwis though have suffered an injury blow after wicketkeeper Devon Conway was ruled out following a broken hand when he punched his bat on his dismissal in the semi-final. Jimmy Neesham played a key part in the team's semi-final win over England as he hit 27 off 11 balls to turn the game on

its head and win with an over to spare. "I am sure there will be a bigger outpour of emotion if we manage to get across the line," he said.

Sunday's clash will bring back memories of the 2015 50-over final when Australia beat New Zealand by seven wickets to clinch their fifth ODI World Cup. Aaron Finch's Australians beat title favorites Pakistan by five wickets in the second semi-final. "They've got a bunch of guys who are real match winners," said Stead. "And we're going to have to make sure that our planning, our scouting is right on point and we've got really clear plans for their players because they can like rip a game open pretty quickly."

Australia were in trouble at 96-5 while chasing 177 on Thursday when Marcus Stoinis (40) and Matthew Wade (41) put on an unbeaten partnership of 82 and win by an over to spare. Wade smashed Pakistan pace ace Shaheen Shah Afridi for three straight sixes including two audacious scoop shots - the final one sailing over fine leg to silence the Pakistan crowd.

'Piece to the puzzle'

Stoinis said a T20 World Cup title will "mean a bloody lot to us." "Obviously Test cricket and the Ashes, that's what we grew up when we played. Then the transformation of T20 cricket. It's not a hit and a giggle anymore in terms of the pressure," said Stoinis.

"I don't think many people gave us a chance leading into this tournament apart from the players and coaching staff. So it's definitely going to mean a bloody lot to us and we will be super proud when



DUBAI: Australia's Matthew Wade plays a shot on the nets during a practice session at the ICC academy in Dubai yesterday, ahead of tomorrow's Twenty20 World Cup final match between Australia and New Zealand. — AFP

we bring that home to Australia."

Coach Justin Langer said: "We have got such a rich history and it'll be nice to add this piece to the puzzle." Key will be the form of opener David Warner who has plundered 236 runs at the tournament. Langer lauded the Black Caps for their brand of cricket and said the Aussies will have to bring

their best for a maiden title.

"The way New Zealand have gone about their business for the last few years has been outstanding," said Langer. "They are a really good bunch of blokes. They get on with the job and get it done. We have to be at our best like we have been throughout this tournament to beat New Zealand." — AFP