

Sports

# Celtics down Lakers to spoil LeBron James's return, Warriors beat Pistons

## Suns rally to beat Mavs; short-handed Nets outlast Magic

LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles superstar LeBron James scored 23 points in his return from an eight-game injury absence but the Boston Celtics spoiled the Lakers' welcome back party with a dominant 130-108 NBA victory.

James made 10 of 16 attempts, including three of seven from three-point range. He pulled down six rebounds and handed out two assists in his first game since suffering an abdominal strain in a victory over the Houston Rockets on November 2. James used his jump shot, rarely driving through Boston's defense. He had just one free-throw attempt and missed it, just the 23rd time in 1,317 career contests that he failed to make a foul shot in a game.



James with 23 points on 10-16 shooting



BOSTON: Jayson Tatum #0 of the Boston Celtics and LeBron James #6 of the Los Angeles Lakers collide during a game at TD Garden on Friday in Boston, Massachusetts. — AFP

The Celtics, meanwhile, finished with 56 points in the paint. They trailed by 14 early, but out-scored the Lakers 33-21 in the third quarter to take an 11-point lead into the final period. The fourth quarter also belonged to Boston, who out-scored the Lakers 37-26 in the final period as they rolled to victory.

"They turned it up a notch and we didn't," said Lakers guard Russell Westbrook, who scored 12 points. Boston's Jayson Tatum led all scorers with 37 points and pulled down 11 rebounds. Marcus Smart added 22 points and former Laker Dennis Schroder added 21. Anthony Davis paced the Lakers with 31 points. He said he thought James "looked like his old

self" but said the team would inevitably need to make adjustments after playing without him for two weeks.

James said there was work to do after yet another dismal third quarter performance from the Lakers. But, he added: "There's no level of panic. There should be a sense of urgency anytime we hit the floor. We have to figure out how we can keep that sense of urgency as close to 48 minutes as possible." James said physically he "felt OK." "I'm more looking forward to seeing how

I feel tomorrow when I wake up. That is the tell-tale sign if I'm going in the right direction with my injury," he said.

### Short-handed Warriors win

In Detroit, Golden State's Jordan Poole stepped up with superstar Stephen Curry sitting out, scoring a season-high 32 points to propel the league-leading Warriors to a 105-102 victory over the Pistons.

Andrew Wiggins added 27 points and Nemanja Bjelica added 14 off the bench for Golden State, who were without Curry a day after he scored 40 points despite a sore hip in a 104-89 victory over the Cavaliers in Cleveland.

The Warriors were also missing Draymond Green — nursing a bruised thigh in the wake of the game in Cleveland — Andre Iguodala and Otto Porter Jr because of injuries, but still improved their NBA-best record to 14-2. Poole and Wiggins combined for 14 early points as the Warriors grabbed a 17-4 early lead.

The Pistons narrowed the gap, but when Poole returned from a spell of rest on the bench the Warriors went on a 16-6 run to regain control. Poole had 22 points in the first half to help the Warriors take a 56-51 lead at the interval. Golden State never trailed in the second half, pushing their lead to as many as 16 points.

The Phoenix Suns, fueled by 19 points from both Mikal Bridges and Devin Booker, rallied to beat the Dallas Mavericks 112-104 and stretch their winning streak to 11 games. Dallas, playing without injured Luka Doncic, led 84-79 heading into the fourth quarter, but a 10-2 scoring run put Phoenix ahead for good with 9:27 left to play.

The short-handed Brooklyn Nets, with Kevin Durant sidelined by a sprained right shoulder, eked out a 115-113 victory over the Orlando Magic. James Harden led the Nets despite connecting on just seven of 15 shots from the field — three of 13 from beyond the arc.

Harden made 19 of 20 free-throws as the Nets rallied from an early 19-point deficit. Brooklyn outscored the Magic 37-21 in the third quarter to take a 90-83 lead. The Magic clawed back to lead by two early in the fourth, but a three-point play by LaMarcus Aldridge put the Nets back in front for good with 6:25 remaining. — AFP

## Players must be vaccinated for Australian Open

MELBOURNE: All players at the Australian Open must be vaccinated, tournament chief Craig Tiley confirmed yesterday, piling more pressure on world number one Novak Djokovic, who has refused to reveal if he has been inoculated.

Melbourne, where January's Grand Slam is held, has spent more than 260 days under lockdown during the pandemic and the government of the state of Victoria made clear last month there would be no concessions for unvaccinated players. Tiley said the playing group know they must get the jab to compete at Melbourne Park.

"There's a lot of speculation about vaccination and just to be really clear, when the (Victoria) premier announced that everyone on site... will need to be vaccinated, we made that clear to the playing group," he told Channel Nine television. "All the playing group understands it, our patrons will need to be vaccinated, all the staff working at the Australian Open will need to be vaccinated."

This includes nine-time champion Djokovic. Tiley said the Serbian superstar, who would be gunning for a record 21st Grand Slam singles title if he competes in Melbourne, "has said that he views this as a private matter for him".

"We would love to see Novak here. He knows that he'll have to be vaccinated to play here," he added. "He's won the Australian Open nine times, I think he'd love to make it double digits and win it 10 times."

Djokovic said this month he would await official confirmation on the requirements from Tennis Australia before making a decision. "I am going to decide on whether I go to Australia after I see an official statement from Tennis Australia," he said on the eve of the Paris Masters. "There has been no official announcement or statement and until that is out I won't be talking about this any more. I do not



TURIN: Serbia's Novak Djokovic arrives for his first-round singles match of the ATP Finals against Britain's Cameron Norrie at the Pala Alpitour venue in Turin on Friday. — AFP

want to be part of the stories about the assumptions and what ifs."

Just 50 percent of players were fully vaccinated six weeks ago, but it shot up to 80 percent after the Victoria government's announcement, Tiley said, adding that it was "continuing to track towards 100 percent".

### Phenomenal athlete

The Australian Open went ahead this year, but players were forced to spend two weeks in hotel quarantine, crowds were restricted and a five-day snap lockdown was called mid-event. Organizers expect it will run as scheduled in 2022 from January 17, with fully vaccinated players set to enter Australia without being quarantined or confined to bio-secure bubbles.

Bumper crowds will also be permitted, with

Victoria hitting 90 percent vaccination, allowing long-standing restrictions to be swept aside, including capacity limits on sporting events. While doubt remains over Djokovic, Tiley said Rafael Nadal will return in search of a 21st Slam crown, although fellow 20-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer has been ruled out with a persistent right knee injury.

Top-ranked Ashleigh Barty will make another attempt to win her home major on the women's side, and defending champion Naomi Osaka will also play. Tiley said Serena Williams was also expected as she continues to target a 24th Slam title to equal Margaret Court's all-time record.

"We've been in regular touch with Serena Williams, who is in full training and planning to be back in 2022," he said. "A phenomenal athlete and formidable competitor, Serena absolutely still has the fire to make and break records." — AFP



PISA: Kuwait's Paralympic fencer Suleiman Al-Tamimi (right) raises Kuwait's flag after winning the silver medal in the men's foil category during the IWAS Wheelchair Fencing World Cup, held currently in Pisa, Italy.

## Kuwait wins silver in IWAS Wheelchair Fencing World Cup

PISA: Kuwait's Paralympic fencer Suleiman Al-Tamimi won the silver medal in the men's foil category during the IWAS Wheelchair Fencing World Cup, held currently in Pisa, Italy. France's Laurent Vadon was the victor, while Poland's Patryk Banach and Italy's Michele Massa were third.

The tournament concludes today with the men's sabre and women's foil competitions. Kuwait will be represented in the women's foil category by Khuloud Al-Mutairi and Ayesha Matar. Chairman of the Kuwait Paralympic Committee Torky Al-Shimmari expressed lauded Tamimi's achievement, which came in his first international participation following the COVID-19 pandemic. "We were able to hoist Kuwait's flag in a world Paralympic championship despite tough competition from many outstanding fencers," he said. "This is an indication of the high technical level Kuwait fencers have reached."

# Classifieds

## Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000	Khalidiya	24848075
Amiri Hospital	22450005	Kaifan	24849807
Maternity Hospital	24843100	Shamiya	24848913
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700	Shuwaikh	24814507
Chest Hospital	24849400	Abdullah Salem	22549134
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010	Nuzha	22526804
Adan Hospital	23940620	Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300	Qadsiya	22515088
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000	Dasmah	
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9	22532265	
		Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
		Shaab	22518752
		Qibla	22459381
		Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
		Mirqab	22456536
		Sharq	22465401
		Salmiya	25746401

## Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144

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