

Sports

Antetokounmpo leads Bucks in Nets blowout, LeBron's Lakers stumble

Durant's 32 points, Harden's 20 not enough for Brooklyn in Irving's absence

LOS ANGELES: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 32 points as the Milwaukee Bucks launched the defense of their NBA crown on Tuesday with a 127-104 victory over the Brooklyn Nets, as LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers were outgunned by the Golden State Warriors.



MILWAUKEE: The Milwaukee Bucks receive the 2021 NBA Championship ring before the game against the Brooklyn Nets on Tuesday at the Fiserv Forum Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



LOS ANGELES: Stephen Curry (right) of the Golden State Warriors goes to the hoop under pressure from Anthony Davis and LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers during their NBA season opener in Los Angeles, California on Tuesday. — AFP photos

Warriors win behind Curry's triple-double

Antetokounmpo picked up where he left off in guiding the Bucks to victory in the NBA Finals last season, leading an emphatic all-round offensive display that included 14 rebounds and seven assists. The two-time NBA Most Valuable Player was one of five Bucks who cracked double figures on a night when Milwaukee's fans celebrated as the team raised its first championship banner in 50 years at the Fiserv Forum.

Khris Middleton had 20 points while Pat Connaughton also made 20 off the bench. Jordan Nwora added 15 points while Jrue Holiday, who left the game with an injury early on, had 12 points. Antetokounmpo was pleased with the way the Bucks turned their attention to the challenge of the Nets after the pre-game festivities.

"It was hard — we all were excited to get the rings, and seeing our banner," Antetokounmpo said. "It's kind of hard to

balance that, to go from that excitement and emotional state to go and play a game. But I think we did a great job. We were able to focus on our gameplan and ourselves and get a win. We've got a deep team. Everyone's ready to step up and ready to play. We play hard and play together."

'It wasn't good'

It was a chastening loss for Brooklyn, who have started the season without the services of Kyrie Irving. The Nets have left Irving out of the line-up for the foreseeable future because of his refusal to take the COVID-19 vaccine, which makes him ineligible for home games in New York due

to city laws. In Irving's absence, Kevin Durant led the Brooklyn scorers with 32 points while James Harden had 20. New signing Patty Mills added 21 — making seven-from-seven from three-point range — while Nic Claxton had 12 points.

"It wasn't good obviously," Nets coach Steve Nash said. "We weren't as sharp as we needed to be, we weren't as physical as we needed to be, we weren't as organized as we needed to be. We just didn't play well tonight." In Tuesday's other season-opener, the new-look Los Angeles Lakers suffered a humbling 121-114 loss to the Warriors at the Staples Center. James led the Lakers scorers with 34 points while Anthony Davis chimed in with 33.

But the Lakers stars were the only two Los Angeles players to make double figures, while blockbuster new signing Russell Westbrook was restricted to eight points, five rebounds and four assists. Instead it was the Warriors who looked the more cohesive unit, with Stephen Curry leading the way with 21 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists — Curry's first triple-double since 2016.

"This is a good feeling," Curry said. "We had a lot of excitement coming into this season — a new cast of characters mixed with our core. We weathered the storm tonight. I played like trash — shot the ball terribly — but if we can win a game like that where we just stuck with it

defensively, it's a good omen for us."

Six Warriors players made double figures, with Jordan Poole just behind Curry with 20 points. The Lakers led 59-53 at half-time but were blown away by the Warriors after the break. Lakers coach Frank Vogel said his team remained a work in progress but was heartened by the scoring of James and Davis.

"Those two guys were spectacular," Vogel said. "We're going to be pretty good if we get those type of performances. We just have to be better defensively. This is a team which is all new to each other. Everyone is finding their way a little bit, and each day they're getting a little bit better." — AFP



ABU DHABI: Namibia's David Wiese (right) and JJ Smit celebrate their victory at the end of the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup cricket match between Namibia and Netherlands at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi yesterday. — AFP

Master-blaster Wiese gives Namibia first T20 World Cup win

ABU DHABI: David Wiese bludgeoned an unbeaten 66 as Namibia stayed alive at the T20 World Cup yesterday with a six-wicket triumph over the Netherlands. In a sweltering Abu Dhabi, where temperatures soared to 36 degrees, former South Africa international Wiese hit five sixes and four boundaries as Namibia chased down their target of 165 with six balls to spare.

It was Namibia's first ever win at the World Cup and kept alive their hopes of making the Super 12 stage. In their opening game on Monday, they had crashed to 96 all out and lost by seven wickets to 2014 champions Sri Lanka. Defeat almost certainly means the Dutch, who lost their opener to Ireland, also by seven wickets, will be eliminated. Even a win over Sri Lanka in their concluding Group A game on Friday may not be enough.

Wiese, the 36-year-old all-rounder who played for his native South Africa in the 2016 T20 World Cup, set Namibia on their

way with a half-century off 29 balls. He was well-supported by captain Gerhard Erasmus who contributed 32 off 22 balls with the pair putting on 93 for the fourth wicket. In a desperate attempt to stem the barrage, Dutch skipper Pieter Seelaar employed seven bowlers.

Earlier, opener Max O'Dowd made a second successive half century to lead Netherlands to 164-4 after being put into bat. The New Zealand-born O'Dowd batted for virtually the entire innings, making 70 off 56 balls with one six and six boundaries.

He was eventually run out off the third ball of the final over after a knock which followed on from his 51 in his side's opening loss to Ireland. Colin Ackermann also played a solid role with the bat as the South African hit 35 off 32 balls. Scott Edwards added a quickfire, unbeaten 21 from 11 balls to give the Dutch innings added extra impetus. — AFP

Bellinger blast rescues Dodgers, Astros tie series

LOS ANGELES: Cody Bellinger smashed a three-run homer as the Los Angeles Dodgers rallied to beat the Atlanta Braves 6-5 on Tuesday while the Houston Astros recovered to score a series-levelling 9-2 victory over the Boston Red Sox.

Bellinger's monster eighth-inning home run off Atlanta reliever Luke Jackson turned a 5-2 deficit into a 5-5 tie game just as the Dodgers appeared to be sliding towards a third straight defeat in their National League Championship Series. Chris Taylor singled to keep the inning alive before Mookie Betts drove in a run-scoring double to put the Dodgers ahead at 6-5 heading into the ninth, allowing closer Kenley Jansen to lock down the win.

After Atlanta stunned the Dodgers with walk-off victories in the opening two games of the best-of-seven series, Tuesday's game three at Dodger Stadium had acquired must-win status for the reigning World Series champions.

But until Bellinger's homer, the Dodgers looked to be heading for defeat after a fitful display from starting pitcher Walker Buehler and a spluttering offensive performance. "Man, pure elation, joy — it's just hard to imagine a bigger hit that I can remember," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said of Bellinger's game-changing homer.

"We were dead in the water. You could see it," Roberts added. "It just flipped everything. We needed that kind of shot in the arm." The Dodgers' victory left Atlanta



LOS ANGELES: Cody Bellinger #35 of the Los Angeles Dodgers hits a 3-run home run during the 8th inning of Game 3 of the National League Championship Series against the Atlanta Braves at Dodger Stadium on Tuesday in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

2-1 ahead in the series. "Right now, any win is huge, but the way we won tonight shows we're still fighting," said Dodgers leadoff hitter Betts, paying tribute to team-mate Bellinger.

"He's been huge. This is the Belli we know. Throughout the season he's battled some injuries, but now he's ready to go," Betts said. The Dodgers had taken the lead in the first inning with a two-run homer from Corey Seager.

But with Buehler looking vulnerable, the Braves poured it on with a flurry of scoring in the fourth inning to take a 4-2 lead, before Adam Duvall's single scored Ozzie Albies to make it 5-2 in the top of the fifth. Braves manager Brian Snitker backed his team to recover from the shattering loss. "They will be fine, they will be ready to play," Snitker said. "They're going to pre-

pare as always. We have lost tough games before and bounced back and done really good things."

In Boston, 2017 World Series champions Houston erupted with eight runs in the final two innings to defeat the Red Sox in game four at Fenway Park. Boston had looked to be closing in on a 3-1 American League Championship Series lead after Xander Bogaerts' two-run homer put them 2-1 up in the first inning. The Sox preserved that lead until the eighth inning, when Jose Altuve tied it up at 2-2 with a home run.

Altuve's homer opened the floodgates, with Jason Castro driving in a run for Carlos Correa in the ninth. Michael Brantley then emptied the bases with a three-run triple to make it 6-2 before Yordan Alvarez, Correa and Kyle Tucker extended the Astros' lead to 9-2. — AFP

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Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700	Abdullah Salem	22549134
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