

Sports

Kansas comeback stuns North Carolina for US college crown

NEW ORLEANS: The University of Kansas staged the biggest comeback in the history of the US collegiate basketball national championship game to defeat North Carolina on Monday. The top-seeded Kansas Jayhawks had trailed 40-25 at half-time against the eighth-seeded North Carolina Tar Heels at the Caesars Superdome in New Orleans.

But a superb second-half performance saw Kansas reel in North Carolina to claim a dramatic 72-69 victory. David McCormack and Jalen Wilson dragged Kansas over the line with 15 points apiece as North Carolina were outscored 47-29 in a pulsating second half. Kansas had trailed by 16 points at one stage, and seemed to be heading towards defeat against a fired-up North Carolina team who were chasing a seventh title after wins in 1957, 1982, 1993, 2005, 2009 and 2017.

But Kansas star McCormack revealed the

Jayhawks had never lost hope despite a daunting half-time deficit. "I was in the locker room at half-time smiling to my teammates, they thought I was crazy. I just said 'Yo, we come out here in the second half and have fun, do what we was born to do, do what got us to this moment,'" McCormack said. "And we just executed."

McCormack nudged Kansas into a 70-69 lead after hauling in a rebound with 1:16 remaining, and then added another two-point basket to put the Jayhawks 72-69 ahead with 22.3 seconds on the clock. There was still time for North Carolina's Caleb Love to attempt a game-tying three-pointer on the buzzer, but the air ball drifted harmlessly wide of the target as Kansas erupted in celebrations. The Kansas comeback eclipsed the previous biggest mark from 1998, when Kentucky overturned a 10-point deficit to defeat Utah. —AFP



NEW ORLEANS: Kansas Jayhawks players and coaches hold up the trophy after defeating the North Carolina Tar Heels 72-69 during the 2022 NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament National Championship at Caesars Superdome on April 4, 2022. —AFP

Becker denies giving officials 'runaround' over missing trophies

LONDON: German tennis great Boris Becker told a London court on Monday he had not given officials the "runaround" over missing trophies. Becker was declared bankrupt in 2017 and is on trial accused of failing to hand over assets including nine trophies and medals from a glittering career including six Grand Slam singles titles.

During proceedings at Southwark Crown Court on Monday, prosecutor Rebecca Chalkey asked Becker, 54, if he had given the trustee of bankruptcy "the runaround" in an attempt to conceal the prizes. She said: "You reportedly claimed that you didn't know where the missing trophies were. That's simply not true Mr Becker is it? You gave him the runaround."

But the former player, who has also worked as a BBC commentator and a brand ambassador for firms including sports equipment and clothing manufacturer Puma, replied "that's not correct". Former world number one Becker, who won 49 singles titles in 77 finals over 16 years, denies 24 charges under the Insolvency Act.

Some of his trophies were auctioned off for £700,000 (\$917,000) to pay his debts and he has made various appeals to try to locate them, the court heard. Among the awards he is accused of failing to hand over after he was declared bankrupt are two of his three Wimbledon men's singles titles, his 1992 Olympic gold medal and Australian Open trophies from 1991 and 1996.

Becker, the youngest men's singles champion in Wimbledon history when he won the grasscourt title as a 17-year-old in 1985, has a previous conviction for tax evasion and attempted tax evasion in Germany in 2002, the court was told.

It also heard Becker earned a "vast amount" of money, winning about \$50 million in prize money and sponsorship deals during his playing career. But Becker, who went on to coach current tennis star Novak Djokovic, said his earnings "reduced dramatically" following his retirement in 1999. —AFP

B'desh to complain over South Africa umpiring, sledging

DHAKA: Bangladesh will formally complain to the International Cricket Council over claims of biased umpiring and "unbearable" sledging in the first Test against South Africa, officials said Tuesday. The side was furious after several close calls went against them in Durban, where they remained competitive for most of the match before a batting collapse saw them dismissed for 53 in the second innings.

Players have since taken issue with their opponents for on-field taunts they said crossed the line into abuse. "You all have seen how biased the umpiring was. On the field, sledging was also unbearable," Bangladesh Cricket Board cricket operations chief Jalal Yunus told AFP. "We will write a formal complaint to the ICC match referee manager," he added.

Jalal said they raised similar issues to match referee Andy Pycroft after their 2-1 one-day international series win - their first on South African soil. "Our manager spoke to him several times. But he paid no attention to our complaint," Jalal said by phone from Durban. "We want the ICC to appoint neutral umpires in Test series as soon as possible. We are also ready to welcome neutral umpires in our home series," he said.

Umpires from host countries have been used exclusively since 2020, when the pandemic imposed worldwide travel restrictions, and



DURBAN: Bangladesh's Mehidy Hasan Miraz delivers a ball as South Africa's Keshav Maharaj and South African umpire Adrian Holdstock looks on during the second day of the first Test match at the Kingsmead stadium on April 1, 2022. —AFP

South African umpires Marais Erasmus and Adrian Holdstock were standing in the Durban Test. Skipper Mominul Haque said umpires did not intervene when South African players sledged their Bangladeshi opponents.

"Sledging is a normal thing. But if it comes

to the stage of abuse, that is very bad," he said. "I think they abused us in the worst manner and umpires did not notice." South Africa won by 220 runs in Durban after the tourists' batting collapse in the second innings. The second Test will start in Gqeberha on April 8. —AFP

Avesh's four wickets help Lucknow beat Hyderabad in IPL

MUMBAI: Fast bowler Avesh Khan returned figures of 4-24 as newcomers Lucknow Super Giants beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by 12 runs to register their second successive win in the IPL on Monday. Avesh rattled the top and middle-order and fellow quick Jason Holder bowled a good final over to keep down Hyderabad to 157 for nine while chasing 170 in Mumbai.

Holder, the West Indian all-rounder playing his first game for Lucknow, took three wickets including two in the 20th over when Hyderabad needed 16 for victory. Earlier skipper KL Rahul and Deepak Hooda hit half-centuries to guide

Lucknow, one of the two new teams added to the Indian Premier League this season, to 169-7.

Rahul, who made 68, and Hooda, who smashed 51 off 33 deliveries, put on 87 runs to lift Lucknow from 27-3 after being put into bat first. Hyderabad skipper Kane Williamson said: "If you look at the performance, it was certainly much improved from our first outing. "The start with the ball was outstanding. We were in a strong position...if we could just break that next partnership. Credit to Hooda and Rahul."

Opener Quinton de Kock (one) and Evin Lewis (one) fell early to Washington Sundar's spin but Rahul and Hooda rebuilt the innings. The batting pair survived an express spell of pace bowling from Umran Malik, who bowled the fastest ball of the match at over 152 km/h, before they took the attack to the opposition.

Hooda hit three fours and three sixes as he

reached his fifty in 31 balls, but soon fell to Hyderabad's new West Indies import Romario Shephard. Rahul kept up the attack with Ayush Badoni, who got useful runs in the final two overs with his 19 off 12 balls, before being trapped lbw to T Natarajan.

Lucknow then pegged Hyderabad back with Avesh removing the openers including Williamson for 16. Rahul Tripathi (44) helped put the chase back on track before Nicholas Pooran (34) and Sundar (18) raised hopes of a win, but Lucknow's bowlers kept coming back with wickets.

Krunal Pandya took the wickets of Tripathi and Aiden Markram with his left-arm spin as Hyderabad suffered a second loss in as many games. The expanded 10-team Twenty20 tournament will conclude on May 29 with league matches restricted to four venues in Mumbai and Pune with limited crowds. —AFP

Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five tournament biggest of its kind

KUWAIT: Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five, the massive global five-a-side football tournament returns in April to discover the 2022 championship team that will represent Kuwait on the world stage. The qualifying round will take place over several days, starting on April 11. The qualifiers will continue on April 12 and 13 at the Boulevard Fields in Salmiya. All events start at 8:30 PM, so teams are encouraged to arrive early to allow them enough time to get settled in before their matches.

The Kuwait Country Finals are set for April 21 at a soon to be announced location. Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five is the most participated in 5-a-side football tournament in the world. The matches are always 10 minutes long, and played on a smaller field, with players being allowed to utilize the walls for a bounce pass, and no goalkeepers are allowed. The goals themselves are also smaller. Each time one team scores a goal the opposing team loses a player until no players are left or time runs out.

These matches are known to be concentrated with excitement, and a true sight to see for fans. In addition to the 5-on-5 tournament, a second online-only freestyle football competition, Jr's



Global Five, will be taking place in parallel on social media. This will be a returning complimentary event for the ever-popular football tournament. Entrants can use any personal football footage of their choosing in the competition.

To enter into Jr's Global Five, players simply need to record their routine of no longer than 60 seconds and upload it to Instagram with the correct tags. They must tag their entry with #outplaythmall22 and @redbullneymarjr'sfive and add their country flag as well. The Jr's Global Five competition will run until May 31, 2022.

In 2021, one of the seven Jr's Global Five team members chosen was from Kuwait. This news should encourage even more creative Kuwaitis to enter this year for a chance to be on the elite team chosen by Neymar Jr and his scouts. The Kuwait



champions will earn the right to compete at the Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five World Finals in Qatar, later this year. Any winners from the Jr's Global Five social media competition will also be in attendance, where Neymar Jr will personally be there to cheer on and congratulate and participate as well.

While the world final is usually held at Neymar Jr's very own Instituto Neymar in his hometown in Brazil, this year the world final's stage will be set in Qatar, host of this year's FIFA World Cup. Team

registrations are now open and all athletes are asked to do so through the official website here.

Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five also encourages spectator attendance and the event is open to all. The proud sponsors for the athletic event are Acqua Eva water and the Kuwait Times. To find out more about Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five, follow @RedBullKuwait on Instagram and Twitter, and @RedBull on Facebook, or visit redbull.com/events/redbull-neymar-jrs-five-kuwait.