

Sports

Murray sinks Lakers to put Nuggets on brink of reaching first NBA finals

Davis led Lakers' scoring with 28 points while James, Reaves added 23 apiece

LOS ANGELES: Jamal Murray scored 37 points as the Denver Nuggets routed the Los Angeles Lakers 119-108 on Saturday to move within one win of reaching the NBA finals for the first time in the team's history.

A dazzling first-half shooting performance from Denver point guard Murray laid the foundation for a deserved road win that leaves the Nuggets with a commanding 3-0 lead in the best-of-seven Western Conference finals series.

After claiming back-to-back victories at home in games one and two, Denver delivered a performance of ruthless precision to dispatch LeBron James and the 17-time champion Lakers at the Crypto.com Arena. Murray finished with 37 points, seven rebounds and six assists while Nikola Jokic added 24 points—including 15 in the fourth quarter—to steer Denver to victory.

"We stayed with it," Murray told ESPN afterwards. "We just had a hit first mentality that we've had through the playoffs. We kept them at a distance for most of the game. "I just felt like we executed throughout the game and hit first."

Anthony Davis led the Lakers' scoring with 28 points while James and Austin Reaves added 23 points apiece. Lakers coach Darvin Ham admitted his team had been unable to handle Murray early on. "He got off scorching," Ham said of Murray. "He's one of those players, man, once he starts to see them go in, it's just he catches fire, and he rolls them off pretty quickly, which he did in that first half."

"Basically carried them offensively through that half," the Lakers coach added, paying tribute to top-seeded Denver's all-round potency. "They have been at the top of the food chain for a reason and

have a plethora of guys that can hurt you, as was on full display tonight," Ham said, refusing to concede defeat in the series.

"Circumstances are what they are. Difficult but not impossible." A typically star-studded crowd with the likes of Hollywood actors Jack Nicholson and Denzel Washington sitting at courtside were unable to inspire the Lakers, who now must win game four on Monday to avoid a clean sweep.

The Nuggets took control with a dominant first quarter performance that saw Murray pick up where he had left off in game two with another devastating shooting clinic. Murray, who scored 23 points in the fourth quarter of Denver's game two win on Thursday, rattled in 17 points in the first on Saturday in a dream start for the Nuggets.

While Los Angeles managed to contain Jokic effectively, the Lakers had no answer to Murray, who was eight-of-10 from the field as the Nuggets surged into a double-digit lead. Murray's early success rate was more than the entire Lakers line-up combined, with the hosts shooting only 7-of-23 in the first quarter.

The Lakers however came roaring back in the second, opening with a 10-4 run that cut the Denver lead to six points. While Murray continued to threaten, draining a three-pointer to restore Denver's double-digit advantage at 51-41, the Lakers refused to roll over.

Reaves got the hosts to within five with a superb driving layup that made it 55-50 and shortly afterwards drew a foul from Jokic that sent him to the free throw line to tie it at 55-55. The Nuggets however restored their advantage in the final seconds of the first half, with Kentavious Caldwell-Pope draining a



LOS ANGELES: Jamal Murray #27 of the Denver Nuggets drives to the basket against the Los Angeles Lakers during Game Three of the Western Conference Finals. — AFP

corner three to make it 58-55 at the break.

An attritional third quarter saw Denver struggling to generate the offensive fluency that marked their first half display, and an out-of-sorts Jokic was subbed out after picking up his fourth foul with seven minutes remaining in the quarter.

The Lakers were unable to cash in on the absence of the two-time NBA Most Valuable Player however, and Denver led 84-82 heading into the final frame. Jokic returned at the start of the fourth and the Nuggets asserted their dominance once more, scoring with regularity to pull away for a convincing victory. — AFP

El Salvador soccer stadium stampede kills twelve

SAN SALVADOR: Twelve people were killed and hundreds injured Saturday in a stampede at an El Salvador soccer stadium, police and emergency services said. Authorities said initial reports pointed to a crush of fans who tried to enter Cuscatlan Stadium in the Central American country's capital San Salvador to watch a local tournament match between teams Alianza and FAS.

The match was suspended as emergency personnel evacuated people from the stadium, where hundreds of police officers and soldiers gathered as ambulance sirens wailed. "Salvadoran soccer is in mourning," National Civil Police (PNC) director Mauricio Arriaza told reporters as he confirmed the death toll of 12.

In a statement Sunday, FIFA president Gianni Infantino offered his condolences to the families and friends of the victims, calling the stampede "tragic." Among the survivors, Sandra Guzman, 40, left a capital hospital early Sunday with a bandage on her left knee, walking with difficulty alongside her

friend, Javier Ramirez, 31. Both said this was the "first and last time" they would experience such a misfortune because they would not return to the stadium. "A large crowd of people fell on me. I couldn't even breathe, they were choking me," Guzman told AFP.

When she was in front of a stadium gate, she said "people were pushing me to get in, they didn't give me a chance to go back. When I came to see, I panicked, I had a lot of people on top of me. "I fainted, and when I woke up I was in the hospital." Health Minister Francisco Alabi said earlier that the country's hospital network was "providing medical care to all patients." Carlos Fuentes, spokesman for the emergency services group Comandos de Salvamento, said they were treating more than 500 people.

About 100 people in serious condition were taken to hospital, with some showing signs of asphyxia and other types of trauma, Fuentes said. The stampede apparently started after a stadium gate fell, causing people to crowd together, he said. At least two of the injured were in critical condition, according to police.

'Everyone will be investigated'

El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele said the PNC and the Attorney General's Office would investigate the incident and those responsible would be punished. "Everyone will be investigated: teams, managers, stadium, box office, league, federation," Bukele said on Twitter.

many's largest city and playing at the 75,000-seat Olympic Stadium, Hertha have the ingredients to be a powerhouse.

However, other than two wins in the now defunct pre-season League Cup in 2002 and 2003, Hertha's last piece of major silverware came in 1931, when the club won the second of their two German titles. In 2019, German tech millionaire Lars Windhorst bought a 37.5 percent stake in the club.

Hertha adopted 'Big City Club' as a slogan and brought in sporting director Fredi Bobic. In January, after losing 2-0 at home to Union, the club fired Bobic. Former ultra and now club president Kay Bernstein said Hertha would go back to their roots by embracing local juniors, while declaring "it's a good day to bury the 'Big City Club' label."

Bernstein declared manager Sandro Schwarz safe in January, but the coach was fired in April, Hertha bringing back club legend Pal Dardai with six games remaining. Dardai, who joined Hertha as a player in 1997 before becoming manager, saved the club from relegation in 2020-21 but was unable to do so this season.

Before Hertha's clash with Bochum, Dardai criticised the club for signing "players who are satisfied



SAN SALVADOR: Supporters are helped by others following a stampede during a football match between Alianza and FAS at Cuscatlan stadium in San Salvador. — AFP

He warned that "whoever the culprits are, they will not go unpunished." Arriaza of the PNC said the investigation would determine responsibility "either by action or omission of some of those in charge." Police also aim to learn "why the fans made the decision to break through one of the gates on the south side" of the stadium. — AFP



BERLIN: Hertha Berlin's French midfielder Lucas Tousart (R) and Bochum's German forward Philipp Hofmann vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match between Hertha Berlin and VfL Bochum in Berlin, Germany. — AFP

with their life, their car and their chic looks" rather than those with "imagination and development potential." In total, the club has spent an estimated 374 million euros (\$412 million) under Windhorst. — AFP

Waratahs 'stay in fight' to enter quarter-finals

SYDNEY: NSW Waratahs coach Darren Coleman says his team have learned to "stay in the fight" after a late-season surge ensured an appearance in the Super Rugby Pacific quarter-finals.

The Sydney-based club overcame the threat from Fijian Drua 32-18 on Saturday to make it four straight wins for the first time since 2018, with Wallaby Mark Nawaqanitawase bagging two tries. The victory propelled them to sixth on the ladder after round 13, guaranteeing they will play in the eight-team final series with the ninth-placed club, Otago Highlanders, unable to catch up with two games left.

It has been a remarkable turnaround for Coleman's side, who were in a "hole of confidence and form" after winning just one of their first six matches but are now unbeaten since crashing 55-21 to the Auckland Blues in round nine.

"There's definitely some things we could have done a little better around our breakdown or a couple of kicks that didn't go out, but we just stayed in the fight and the effort was good throughout," said Coleman.

"We're not there yet, but we're getting to a point where we're relatively consistent and not too many things are fazing us." Winger Nawaqanitawase, who made his Wallabies debut last year, scored twice with young fullback Max Jorgensen instrumental as he too makes a case to be in Eddie Jones' Australian World Cup squad.

Dylan Pietsch, Langi Gleeson and Mahe Vailanu also dotted down to leave the Fijians in 10th place on the 12-team ladder. They can still make the finals, with a must-win home clash next week against bottom-placed Moana Pasifika.

The 'Tah's travel to Christchurch to play reigning champions Canterbury Crusaders, which Coleman said would be a real test of how far they have come. "I'm content. I wouldn't say I'm stoked. Obviously the start we had, it takes a while to make up for that," he said of their early-season struggles.

"I know we haven't played many of the top teams again, but we've now set ourselves up to go to Christchurch and really test where we're at, which we're excited about." — AFP

Relegated Hertha cast envious eyes at Union

BERLIN: Hertha Berlin's 10-season stay in the German Bundesliga ended Saturday and as they slipped through the relegation trapdoor, they were left to cast envious glances at upwardly-mobile city rivals Union.

Hertha only escaped relegation last season by winning a two-legged playoff against Hamburg. They had finished 10th or lower in the four previous seasons. On Saturday, Hertha's luck ran out when a 1-1 draw with Bochum condemned them to the drop and their future could be even bleaker if they fall foul of financial regulations. Unlike other Bundesliga sides at the lower end of the table who have punched above their weight despite a lack of resources and support, the 'Old Dame' have in recent seasons boasted enviable riches.

Rubbing salt into the wounds is the rise of Union Berlin, who are on the cusp of an unlikely maiden Champions League appearance after just four years in the top division. As the most popular club in Ger-

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300

Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507

Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

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I, MURTAJA, holder of Indian Passport No: S9914200 having permanent address VP Mohammedipura, near Fakri Well Sagwara Distt: Durgapur, Rajasthan, Pin: 314025, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under given name: **MURTAJA** and surname: **LALJIWALA**. (#3535) 22/5/2023.

I, Khan Nazia Nurulla, holder of Indian Passport No. T2418372 having permanent address H.No. 81/3, near Ameeniyah High School, Islampur, Baina Vasco-Da-Gama, South Goa, India- 403802. Residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under: Nazia Can. (#3534) 19/5/2023.