

Sports

Afridi leaves vacuum for fans — and advertisers

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Arsenal, Southampton launch top-four tussle

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 2015

A YEAR IN GOLF: TALES FROM THE TOUR

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PORTLAND: Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard (left) is fouled from behind by Toronto Raptors guard Kyle Lowry during overtime of an NBA basketball game. — AP

LAKERS STOP NUGGETS, CAVS STUMBLE

DENVER: Kobe Bryant had 23 points, 11 assists and 11 rebounds for his 21st career triple-double, and the Los Angeles Lakers held off the Denver Nuggets 111-103 Tuesday night to end a three-game losing streak. Bryant shot 6 of 11 from the floor, giving him 25,000 field goal attempts for his career. The only players who've attempted more shots in NBA history are Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (28,307) and Karl Malone (26,210), according to STATS.

The Lakers star played nearly 32 minutes in his second game back. He missed three games around Christmas because of overall soreness.

Carlos Boozer had 19 points and Ronnie Price added a season-high 18. Ty Lawson and Jusuf Nurkic both finished with 16 points for the Nuggets, who have lost four of five.

HAWKS 109, CAVALIERS 101

Paul Millsap took over for Atlanta in the fourth quarter to help hold off a Cleveland comeback, and the Hawks beat the Cavaliers, who were without LeBron James. James, celebrating his 30th birthday, was held out with a sore left knee.

The Hawks led by 17 points early in the second half but had to hold off a comeback by Cleveland, which got 35 points from Kyrie Irving.

After a jam by Tristan Thompson cut the Atlanta lead to 93-90, Millsap scored Atlanta's next eight points. Millsap led the Hawks with 26 points, including 10 in the fourth quarter.

Jeff Teague had 23 points and 11 assists, and Kyle Korver sank five 3-pointers while scoring 19 points. Thompson had 18 points and 13 rebounds for Cleveland. James' status is day to day.

GRIZZLIES 95, SPURS 87

Mike Conley had 30 points and six assists, and Marc Gasol added 17 points to help Memphis defeat San Antonio. Conley connected on 10 of 13 from the field, and missed only one of his five shots from outside the arc as the Grizzlies won their second straight and claimed at least a tie with the Spurs in the season series. Tayshaun Prince added 12 points for Memphis. Marco Belinelli and Cory Joseph scored 18 apiece for the Spurs. San Antonio went 5 of 22 from outside the arc.

WARRIORS 126, 76ERS 86

Marreese Speights scored 23 points, Stephen Curry added 13 points and nine assists, and Golden State beat Philadelphia.

Draymond Green had 10 points and 10 rebounds and Leandro Barbosa scored 17 off the bench for the Warriors, who won their 10th straight home game to improve to an NBA-best 25-5.

Golden State led by as many as 47 in a game that was even more lopsided than the final score. Warriors coach Steve Kerr pulled his starters early in the fourth quarter, only to see his reserves add to the lead. Henry Sims had 19 points and seven rebounds for Philadelphia. The 76ers (4-26) have dropped three straight following back-to-back road wins over Miami and Orlando.

MAVERICKS 114, WIZARDS 87

Monta Ellis scored 20 points in 27 minutes, and Dallas handed Washington its most lopsided loss of the season. Nine of Ellis' points came in the final 2:35 of the second quarter, when the Mavericks outscored the Wizards 36-21 for a 63-45 halftime lead. He shot 8 of 15 and finished with four steals without playing in the fourth quarter.

The Mavericks' 10 straight wins over Washington represent their longest active winning streak against any team. Chandler Parsons had 14 points, Dirk Nowitzki added 13 despite shooting 2 for 8 from the field, and Rajon Rondo had 11 points and five assists. Washington's John Wall had 11 points and eight assists. Dallas, which forced 23 turnovers, extended its winning streak to three games and ended the Wizards' three-game winning streak.

TRAIL BLAZERS 102, RAPTORS 97

Damian Lillard had 26 points and nine assists to help Portland rally past Toronto in overtime. LaMarcus Aldridge, who returned after missing three of the last four games because of an upper respiratory illness, had 23 points and 13 rebounds for the Trail Blazers, who won their fourth straight.

The Blazers (26-7) rallied in the fourth quarter after trailing by 13 points, but Amir Johnson's short jumper for the Raptors tied the game at 87 and sent it to overtime.

Portland took a 96-90 lead in the extra period on consecutive 3-pointers from Lillard, Wesley Matthews and Nicolas Batum.

Kyle Lowry finished with 24 points, and James Johnson had 14 points and 11 rebounds for his first double-double of the season for Toronto (24-8).

PELICANS 110, SUNS 106

Tyreke Evans scored 24 points, including eight straight for New Orleans in the final 2 minutes, and the Pelicans stopped Phoenix's winning streak at six games.

Anthony Davis had 19 points with a season-high 18 rebounds, and Jrue Holiday scored 17 of his 21 points in the second half for New Orleans. Evans' step-back jumper with 49.9 seconds left, coupled with a late steal by Dante Cunningham, helped the Pelicans hang on.

The Pelicans made their last eight free throws after hitting only 10 of their previous 21 attempts. Goran Dragic led Phoenix with 22 points, and Eric Bledsoe added 21.

NETS 96, BULLS 82

Brook Lopez had a season-high 29 points, Joe Johnson had 20 points and 11 rebounds, and Brooklyn snapped Chicago's seven-game winning streak.

Lopez, playing his fifth game since returning from a lower back strain, started in place of Kevin Garnett and was 13 for 21 from the field. Johnson was 8 for 14. Mike Dunleavy led the Bulls with 23 points on 9-for-15 shooting, including 5 of 9 on 3-pointers. Jimmy Butler, who averaged 26.4 points during the winning streak, had just eight points. Derrick Rose managed only four. Brooklyn had just one previous win this season against a team with a winning record.

PISTONS 109, MAGIC 86

Jodie Meeks scored a season-high 34 points off the bench, shooting 9 for 11 on 3-pointers, and Andre Drummond added 17 points and 22 rebounds to lead Detroit over Orlando.

Drummond, the NBA's No. 2 rebounder, sat out the final 14 minutes after coming within three rebounds of the league's season high. The Pistons (8-23) have won three straight for the first time since February last season.

Reserve guard D.J. Augustin had 11 points and 10 assists. Victor Oladipo led the Magic, who were also seeking a third straight win, with 16 points. Tobias Harris added 15 points and eight rebounds.

JAZZ 100, TIMBERWOLVES 94

Gordon Hayward scored 11 of his 26 points in the final 4 minutes to rally Utah past skidding Minnesota. Trey Burke set a career high with 26 points and Derrick Favors had 15. Before the game, the Jazz announced that starting guard Alec Burks will have shoulder surgery and miss the rest of the season. Shabazz Muhammad scored a career-best 30 points, including a jumper that gave the Timberwolves a 92-84 lead with 4:22 to play.

Utah then mounted its comeback with Hayward's 3-pointer and a steal-and-dunk sequence. Hayward capped the 11-0 run that gave the Jazz their first lead of the fourth quarter with another steal and layup with 1:38 remaining.

Andrew Wiggins scored 21 points but the Timberwolves have lost nine in a row - their worst skid since dropping 11 consecutive games in 2012. Meanwhile the Jazz have won six of eight, extending their best stretch of the season. —AP

NBA results/standings

Detroit 109, Orlando 86; Atlanta 109, Cleveland 101; Brooklyn 96, Chicago 82; Memphis 95, San Antonio 87; New Orleans 110, Phoenix 106; Dallas 114, Washington 87; LA Lakers 111, Denver 103; Utah 100, Minnesota 94; Portland 102, Toronto 97 (OT); Golden State 126, Philadelphia 86.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference				
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB				
Toronto	24	8	.750	-	Portland	26	7	.788
Brooklyn	15	16	.484	8.5	Oklahoma City	15	17	.469
Boston	10	18	.357	12	Denver	13	19	.406
NY Knicks	5	28	.152	19.5	Utah	11	21	.344
Philadelphia	4	26	.133	19	Minnesota	5	25	.167
Central Division				Pacific Division				
Chicago	22	10	.688	-	Golden State	25	5	.833
Cleveland	18	13	.581	3.5	LA Clippers	21	11	.656
Milwaukee	16	16	.500	6	Phoenix	18	15	.545
Indiana	11	21	.344	11	Sacramento	13	18	.419
Detroit	8	23	.258	13.5	LA Lakers	10	22	.313
Southeast Division				Southwest Division				
Atlanta	23	8	.742	-	Memphis	23	8	.742
Washington	22	9	.710	1	Houston	21	9	.700
Miami	14	18	.438	9.5	Dallas	23	10	.697
Orlando	13	22	.371	12	San Antonio	19	14	.576
Charlotte	10	22	.313	13.5	New Orleans	16	15	.516

VAN GAAL WANTS HAPPY AWAY-DAYS IN 2015

LONDON: Louis van Gaal has challenged his Manchester United players to replicate their impressive home form on the road ahead of a testing New Year's Day visit to Stoke City.

Since losing at home to Swansea City on the opening day of the season, United have turned Old Trafford into a fortress, winning seven and drawing one of the subsequent eight games on their home turf. But they have won just twice on their travels-victories at Arsenal and Southampton that the demanding Van Gaal concedes were fortunate-and the Dutchman is demanding an improvement in 2015.

"When I'm saying that every week we are improving, then we have to show that against Stoke City," said the United manager, whose side start the year in third place in the table.

"We have to do it in an away match. We have to dominate in away matches because we have won everything except Swansea City at home, the first match.

"In away matches, (we have beaten) only Arsenal and Southampton; then, we were the lucky team. I have said that also. "We have to dominate in away matches, and I hear from (assistant coach) Ryan (Giggs) that Stoke City is a very difficult pitch. We have to show that in spite of it being very difficult at Stoke. Maybe we can show that."

From their long injury list, United have

defenders Chris Smalling, Luke Shaw and Rafael da Silva back at full fitness, although winger Angel di Maria is still out with a pelvic problem.

Midfielder Ander Herrera and winger Adnan Januzaj, meanwhile, are edging ever closer to returns. "Herrera has trained with us for the first time, but he does not have much rhythm," Van Gaal said. "Januzaj has also trained for two sessions, but he was ill and you have to recover from illness."

Meanwhile, Van Gaal has paid tribute to the backing his team have been shown by the club's supporters despite their slow start to the campaign.

"The fans are fantastic," he said. "We were at a moment with 10 matches and 13 points. That's not good. In spite of that, the fans have supported us always, and in the right way.

"I want to thank the fans for that. They always have belief in the players and their manager. I think the main reason that they have supported us is because of the fighting spirit of my team.

"We were not always ahead in matches, but they have fought until the end and, a lot of times, with good success." Stoke manager Mark Hughes knows United better than most following his successful playing days at Old Trafford and believes they made the right call by appointing Van Gaal as the successor to David Moyes.—AFP