

Sports

No Curry, no problem as Warriors rout San Antonio Spurs 113-92

Raptors win, Simmons shines in Sixers rout

SAN FRANCISCO: The Golden State Warriors fired a warning to their rivals as the NBA playoffs got under way on Saturday, routing the San Antonio Spurs 113-92 to serve notice they will not be dethroned easily despite Stephen Curry's knee injury. Klay Thompson scored a game-high 27 points on 11-of-13 shooting, including 5-of-6 from 3-point range, and Kevin Durant added 24 points, eight rebounds and seven assists to power Golden State.

"We played well. We played hard. We need to do even better next time," Durant said before praising Thompson's long-range heroics. "Klay knocked down shots. He was really good. He was penetrating as well," Durant said. "We won't always make shots at that rate but we need to play good defense like that as well."

In Saturday's other games, Eastern Conference top seed Toronto outlasted Washington 114-106 while the Philadelphia 76ers trounced the Miami Heat 130-103. New Orleans dug deep to defeat Portland 97-95 in the late Western Conference game.

Earlier, the host Warriors updated star guard Curry's left knee sprain before playing, saying he was making progress and will be re-evaluated next Saturday. Curry, who missed Golden State's last 10 regular-season contests after the March 23 setback, will intensify his rehabilitation work in the next few days with more running and lateral movement, the team said in a statement. Curry averaged 26.4 points, 6.1 assists and 5.1 rebounds for the Warriors, who have played without several top players during the season due to injuries. Despite the setbacks, Golden State won 58 games and are solid contenders for a third title in four seasons and fourth consecutive trip to the NBA Finals. "We're a championship ball club. We know

what it takes this time of year in order to win," said Warriors forward Draymond Green. "We're primed for this. A lot of people have tended to forget what we're capable of. But we know, and we intend to show that." The Warriors struggled down the stretch of the regular season and finished with only the third-best record in the NBA behind Western Conference leader Houston and Eastern Conference pace-setter Toronto. "Everybody kept our individual games on point," Durant said. "At the end of the season, our minds weren't on it. They were on the playoffs. "Today they were on the present."

JaVale McGee scored 15 points and played aggressive defense while Green had 12 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds. Reserve Rudy Gay led the Spurs with 15 points while LaMarcus Aldridge and Bryn Forbes each added 14 for San Antonio.

At Philadelphia, the 76ers overcame a spirited first half display from Miami before stamping their class on their series opener with a devastating second half display.

Australian-born rookie Ben Simmons finished with 17 points, 14 assists and nine rebounds while J.J. Redick led the scoring with 28 points. Miami led 60-56 at half-time but were unable to respond to a second-half onslaught from the in-form 76ers, who have now won 17 games straight. The Sixers outscored the Heat 74-43 in the second half, making full use of an offensive line-up that saw five players finish with double-figures. At Toronto, the Raptors snapped a streak of losses in all nine prior playoff openers in club history.

"It's big for us. We got the job done," said Raptors star Kyle Lowry. "Now we're just going to try to continue to build on that." The Raptors struggled into the fourth quarter against a Wizards squad that had the



OAKLAND: Kevin Durant #35 of the Golden State Warriors handles the ball against the San Antonio Spurs in Game One of Round One of the 2018 NBA Playoffs on Saturday at ORACLE Arena in Oakland, California. — AFP

most losses of any playoff team and split four regular-season games against Toronto.

But Raptors reserve Delon Wright scored five points and C.J. Miles added a 3-pointer in a 10-0 Toronto run in the fourth quarter for a 105-96 lead the Wizards never overcame.

Serge Ibaka led the Raptors with 23 points and 12 rebounds while Wright added points 18 and DeMar

DeRozan netted 17. Lowry contributed 11 points and nine assists.

John Wall led Washington with 23 points and 15 assists while Markieff Morris added 22 points and 11 rebounds. In the late Western Conference game, Anthony Davis scored 35 points to lead New Orleans to a series-opening win over the Trail Blazers in Portland. — AFP

Chicago Cubs late rally stun Atlanta

CHICAGO: Javier Baez hit a three-run double to highlight a big eighth inning as the Chicago Cubs erased an eight-run deficit to beat the Atlanta Braves 14-10 on a cold, wet and windy Saturday at Wrigley Field. Atlanta led 10-2 heading into the bottom of the sixth inning before the bullpen unraveled. The Cubs scored a run in the sixth and two in the seventh, then exploded for nine in the eighth inning to complete the comeback. Baez found the gap in left-center field to clear the bases and tie the game 10-10, and Braves reliever Sam Freeman walked in two runs to give Chicago the lead in the eighth. The Cubs scored twice more on a wild pitch and an error. Chicago scored nine runs on just three hits in the eighth. Albert Almora hit a solo home run and made a diving catch in the first inning to help the Cubs get out of a jam.



CHICAGO: Kyle Schwarber #12 of the Chicago Cubs scores on a wild pitch as Peter Molyan #30 of the Atlanta Braves covers home plate during the eighth inning on Saturday at Wrigley Field in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

DIAMONDBACKS 9, DODGERS 1

Paul Goldschmidt had three hits, including a two-run home run, and A.J. Pollock added two homers as visiting Arizona defeated Los Angeles for the 11th consecutive regular-season meeting. The Diamondbacks also clinched their fifth consecutive series victory in five tries on a night when they lost a home run because of a baserunning snafu. Arizona's previous best for consecutive series victories at the start of a season was two. The Diamondbacks' Deven Marrero appeared to hit a three-run home run in the fourth inning off Dodgers starter Rich Hill, but it was determined via replay that Marrero inadvertently passed Alex Avila near first base. Avila was retreating on Marrero's towering drive and seemed unsure if the ball was caught by Los Angeles left fielder Joe Pederson.

MARINERS 10, A'S 8

Mitch Haniger homered for the second consecutive night and drove in three runs as Seattle defeated visiting Oakland for its fourth win in a row. Chasen Bradford (1-0) got the victory with 1 2/3 scoreless innings of relief, and Edwin Diaz pitched a scoreless ninth for his AL-leading sixth save. Seattle's Jean Segura, Kyle Seager and Daniel Vogelbach and Oakland's Mark Canha, Khris Davis and Stephen Piscotty also homered.

BREWERS 5, METS 1

Chase Anderson became the first Milwaukee starting pitcher this season to last into the seventh inning, allowing just two hits over 6 1/3 frames as the Brewers beat host New York. The win by the Brewers (8-7) snapped a nine-game winning streak by the Mets (11-2), who are still off to the best 13-game start in franchise history. The loss cost New York manager Mickey Callaway a chance to tie Joe Morgan (12-1 with the 1988 Boston Red Sox) for the best 13-game start ever for a rookie manager. Anderson (1-1) allowed one run, walked two and struck out

five. He did not allow a hit for the opening 4 2/3 innings before Amed Rosario bounced an infield single behind second base.

NATIONALS 6, ROCKIES 2

Michael A. Taylor drove in the go-ahead run on a squeeze bunt. Moises Sierra added a two-run double in a four-run sixth and Max Scherzer gave Washington seven strong innings in a win over visiting Colorado. The victory ended a three-game losing streak for Washington. The Nationals scored three runs in the first 23 innings of the teams' four-game series-Colorado won the first two games and three straight overall-until the four-run sixth. Scherzer (3-1) gave up just one hit, striking out 11 and walking one. The right-hander threw 103 pitches, 70 of which were strikes, in another dominating performance. The lone hit he allowed was a two-run homer by Charlie Blackmon in the first.

RED SOX 10, ORIOLES 3

Hanley Ramirez launched a two-run homer and finished with three RBIs in his return to the lineup as host Boston spoiled Alex Cobb's debut with Baltimore. Ramirez missed the series-opening 7-3 win with a bruised right wrist after being hit by a pitch in Thursday's game against the New York Yankees. He returned and hit third, going 2-for-5 with a strikeout. Boston's Andrew Benintendi also had three RBIs. Cobb (0-1), a Massachusetts native who spent his first six major league seasons with Tampa Bay before signing with Baltimore, struggled mightily in a park in which he has fared well historically. He allowed eight runs (seven earned) on 10 hits—including two homers—and a walk in 3 2/3 innings.

ANGELS 5, ROYALS 3

Garrett Richards pitched five effective innings as visiting Los Angeles topped Kansas City. Richards (2-0) retired the first 12 batters he faced. He wound up yielding one

run on one hit and three walks while striking out five. Luis Valbuena, Justin Upton and Mike Trout homered for the Angels. The Angels have won seven straight while the Royals have dropped five in a row.

RANGERS 6, ASTROS 5 (10 INNINGS)

Ronald Guzman reached on a 10th-inning infield single with the bases loaded, capping Texas' rally from a five-run deficit to beat host Houston. Alex Claudio got the last out in the bottom of the 10th, stranding a pair of runners, for his first save. Guzman plated Jurickson Profar with his sharp grounder off the glove of Astros right-hander Will Harris (0-1). Trailing 5-2 entering the eighth inning, the Rangers mounted a rally against Astros right-hander Brad Peacock, with Joey Gallo and then Guzman slugging home runs to erase that deficit. Gallo bashed his fifth homer off the foul pole in right field, scoring Profar. Two batters later, Guzman golfed his first career homer just over the right field wall.

PIRATES 1, MARLINS 0

Pittsburgh bunted its way past host Miami in the ninth inning. With Starling Marte on third and Josh Bell on first, Corey Dickerson popped up a bunt that went over the head of Miami reliever Brad Ziegler to score Marte with the winning run. Marte had reached base with a one-out bunt earlier in the inning. George Kontos (1-1) earned the victory as four Pittsburgh pitchers held Miami to six hits. Felipe Vazquez retired all three batters in the ninth to record his fifth save in five attempts. The second game of the series was a pitchers' duel from the start between Pittsburgh's Jameson Taillon and Miami's Trevor Richards. Taillon hurled six scoreless innings, giving up four hits in his third quality start of the season. Richards kept the Pirates off the board over seven innings in his best outing in the big leagues. He allowed just two hits, struck out two and walked one. —Reuters

Kuwait Sports Club beat Al-Qadisiya in basketball

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Sports Club forced a deciding match to determine the champion of the basketball league by beating Al-Qadisiya 60-57 during the match they played at Kuwait Sports Club in the final round, which also witnessed Al-Nasser defeating Jahra 68-61 and Kazma beating Al-Arabi 85-53.

Kuwait and Al-Qadisiya has 19 points each so they have to play a deciding match as rules stipulate. Kazema and Al-Nasser has 13 points each and Al-Arabi with 11 points.

The match was strong from the onset as Al-Qadisiya has control during the first quarter which ended 21-10. Al-Qadisiya remained in control during the second quarter through the rebounding of Ahmad Darweesh, besides the scoring of Fahad Al-Subaie, Abdelrahman Al-Sahao, Saleh Al-Yousuf until the score was 32-16, then Kuwait's Hamad and Mohammad Adnan took



over the score under the basket and reduced the difference to 4 points as the second quarter ended (32 - 36).

Al-Qadisiya once again increased the difference by 9 points in the first two minutes of the third quarter through counter attacks, then Kuwait made the score 41-42, and the third quarter ended 51-49 in favor of Al-Qadisiya.

Kuwait returned to its form through Hussein Al-Khabbaz and Abdallah Al-Shimmari and Kuwait went ahead by the score 56-54 then ended the match in its favor by the score of 60-57.



Khalid Al-Hajras being honoured on occasion of his retirement.

