

Sports

Warriors win big in Cousins' debut, extend winning streak to seven games

Irving scores 38 as Celts trip Grizzlies

NBA results/standings

LA Clippers 94, Golden State 112; Portland 128, New Orleans 112; Utah 115, Cleveland 99; Minnesota 113, San Antonio 116; Boston 122, Memphis 116; Detroit 98, Miami 93; Orlando 115, Brooklyn 117.

Eastern Conference

	W	L	PCT	GB
Milwaukee	32	12	0.727	-
Toronto	34	13	0.723	1.5
Indiana	29	15	0.659	3
Philadelphia	30	16	0.652	3
Boston	27	18	0.600	5.5
Brooklyn	24	23	0.511	9.5
Miami	21	22	0.488	10.5
Charlotte	21	23	0.477	11
Detroit	20	24	0.455	12
Orlando	19	26	0.422	13.5
Washington	19	26	0.422	13.5
Atlanta	14	30	0.318	18
New York	10	34	0.227	22
Chicago	10	35	0.222	22.5
Cleveland	9	37	0.196	24

Western Conference

Golden State	32	14	0.696	-
Denver	30	14	0.682	1
Portland	28	19	0.596	4.5
Oklahoma City	26	18	0.591	5
San Antonio	27	20	0.574	5.5
Houston	25	19	0.568	6
Utah	26	21	0.553	6.5
LA Lakers	25	21	0.543	7
LA Clippers	24	21	0.533	7.5
Sacramento	23	22	0.511	8.5
Minnesota	21	24	0.467	10.5
New Orleans	21	25	0.457	11
Dallas	20	24	0.455	11
Memphis	19	26	0.422	12.5
Phoenix	11	35	0.239	21

LOS ANGELES: Stephen Curry scored 28 points and DeMarcus Cousins added 14 in his Golden State debut as the visiting Warriors extended their winning streak to seven games with a 112-94 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers on Friday. Cousins, who missed nearly a year of action because of an Achilles injury, fouled out in just 15 minutes of court time. He shot 5 of 11 from the field, including 3 of 4 from 3-point range, while adding six rebounds. Kevin Durant added 24 points for the Warriors. Tobias Harris scored 28 points and Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 24 for the Clippers, who dropped their fifth consecutive game.

Celtics 122, Grizzlies 116

Kyrie Irving stalled a rally with two consecutive jumpers and later added a game-clinching 3-pointer to cap a 38-point effort as host Boston held on to beat Memphis. Marcus Smart and Al Horford also hit key late hoops to finish off high-scoring nights in helping the Celtics win their second straight and complete a two-game, season-series sweep of the Grizzlies. Mike Conley had 26 points to pace the Grizzlies, who lost their fourth straight.

Spurs 116, Timberwolves 113

Marc Belinelli canned two crucial free throws with 4.2 seconds left to play, and LaMarcus Aldridge poured in 25 points as San Antonio outlasted Minnesota in Minneapolis in a game featuring 27 lead changes and 17 ties through the middle of the fourth quarter. Gay scored 22 points for the Spurs, while Belinelli had 19 points, Derrick White added 15, and Davis Bertans and Bryn Forbes poured in 11 and 10 points, respectively, for San Antonio, which has won two straight. Karl-Anthony Towns and Rose led the Timberwolves with 23 points each. Wiggins tallied 17 points, while Teague had 15, Taj Gibson scored 14 points and grabbed 11 rebounds, and Josh Okogie contributed 10 points for Minnesota.

Trail Blazers 128, Pelicans 112

Damian Lillard scored 24 points while CJ McCollum and Jake Layman added 20 apiece as Portland downed visiting New Orleans. Jusuf Nurkic contributed 15 points and 12 rebounds for the Trail Blazers, who extended their home winning streak to six games. Al-Farouq Aminu scored 15 points and Maurice Harkless had 12 for Portland. Anthony Davis scored 27 points, Jrue Holiday chipped in 20 points and Julius Randle collected 19 points and nine rebounds for



LOS ANGELES: Danilo Gallinari #8 of the LA Clippers shoots the ball against the Golden State Warriors on Friday at STAPLES Center in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

the Pelicans, who fell to 6-19 on the road this season. New Orleans has lost three of four overall.

Pistons 98, Heat 93

Blake Griffin collected 32 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists, and Detroit overcame the early departure of Andre Drummond to edge visiting Miami. Luke Kennard scored 22 points off the bench and Reggie Bullock had 19 for the Pistons. Dwyane Wade led the Heat with 20 points and eight assists off the bench. Tyler Johnson contributed 16 points and Justise Winslow added 15 with nine rebounds. Miami guard Josh Richardson missed the game due to an illness. The Pistons lost two key players in the opening half. Drummond, the league's top rebounder, sustained a nasal injury when he was struck by a James Johnson elbow. Ish Smith departed shortly after entering the game due to groin tightness.

Nets 117, Magic 115

D'Angelo Russell scored a season-high 40 points to lead

visiting Brooklyn to a comeback win over Orlando. Spencer Dinwiddie added 20 points for the Nets, who have a winning record for the first time this season, 24-23. Brooklyn, which trailed by 21 points in the second quarter Friday, was 10 games below .500 through Dec. 5 but has gone 16-5 since. Aaron Gordon led the Magic with 23 points, but he exited the game in the fourth quarter with lower back tightness and did not return. Nikola Vucevic had 16 points and 17 rebounds.

Jazz 115, Cavaliers 99

Donovan Mitchell scored 24 points as Utah rolled to an easy victory over Cleveland in Salt Lake City. Rudy Gobert added 19 points on 8-of-10 shooting and collected 15 rebounds as Utah extended its season-best winning streak to six games. Royce O'Neale had 16 points and 11 rebounds, Derrick Favors had 12 points and 10 rebounds, and Jae Crowder scored 11 points for the Jazz. Ante Zizic contributed 15 points and 10 rebounds for the Cavaliers, and Collin Sexton also had 15 points. — Reuters

Hazlewood ruled out of Sri Lanka Tests

MELBOURNE: Australia suffered a big blow yesterday with star fast bowler Josh Hazlewood ruled out of their two upcoming Tests against Sri Lanka with a back injury, and Jhye Richardson replacing him.

The vice-captain has hurt the same part of his back that sidelined him last year. But Cricket Australia phys-

iotherapist David Beakley said he was confident Hazlewood would recover in time for the World Cup in England and Wales.

"Josh has reported some back soreness over the last few days and scans have revealed a very early stage stress fracture in the same lower back area as his previous injury from last summer," he said on the Cricket Australia website.

"He will now begin a rehabilitation program and we are confident he will be available for selection ahead of the ICC Cricket World Cup in the UK later this year," Richardson, who has impressed in the one-day series against India, joins Mitchell Starc, Pat Cummins and

Peter Siddle as the pace attack in the squad to face Sri Lanka. The first Test—a day-nighter—starts next Thursday in Brisbane, with the second in Canberra. "Jhye has had an impressive first half in his Sheffield Shield season and no-one could deny he has now continued that form in ODI matches for Australia," said national selector Trevor Hohns.

"We consider Jhye to be an ideal replacement in the squad for Josh." Revised Australia squad: Joe Burns, Pat Cummins, Marcus Harris, Travis Head, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Tim Paine (capt), Will Pucovski, Matt Renshaw, Jhye Richardson, Mitchell Starc, Peter Siddle. — AFP

Isles blank Caps, move to first place

WASHINGTON: Thomas Greiss stopped 19 shots as the New York Islanders defeated the host Washington Capitals 2-0 Friday night to move into first place in the NHL's Metropolitan Division. Josh Bailey and Cal Clutterbuck scored 2:26 apart early in the third period for the Islanders, who won their fourth in a row and improved to 14-3-0 in their past 17 games to move a point ahead of the Capitals and Columbus. The Blue Jackets lost 4-1 Friday night to Montreal. Braden Holtby stopped 23 of 25 shots for the Capitals, but their losing streak reached a season-high four games (0-3-1). Islanders coach Barry Trotz, who led the Capitals to their first Stanley Cup championship last season, was honored with a video tribute during a stoppage in play with 13:41 remaining in the first period.

FLAMES 6, RED WINGS 4

Sam Bennett scored twice, including the game-winner, in a three-point outing as host Calgary erased four different deficits to beat Detroit. The Flames tallied three power-play goals and a short-handed score, and scored four times in the final period. Goalie Mike Smith made 31 saves in the wild win that has Western Conference-leading Calgary on a 6-0-1 roll. Jimmy Howard stopped 30 shots for the Red Wings, who had a modest two-game winning streak snapped.

PENGUINS 3, COYOTES 2 (OT)

Phil Kessel deflected a shot by Sidney Crosby for an overtime power-play goal to lift Pittsburgh past Arizona in Glendale, Ariz. After Richard Panik was penalized for hooking Pittsburgh's Brian Dumoulin, Kessel was in front of the net when he shoveled Crosby's shot past goaltender Darcy Kuemper with 49.9 seconds left in overtime. Penguins goaltender Matt Murray made 30 saves to improve to 10-1-0 in his past 11 starts. He is 4-0-0 in his career against the Coyotes. Kuemper, who had won four consecutive starts, stopped 32 of 35 shots for the Coyotes. Arizona had won four of its previous five games.

CANADIENS 4, BLUE JACKETS 1

Tomas Tatar and Joel Armia each scored twice as Montreal earned a win at Columbus. The victory gave Montreal its first four-game winning streak of the season and a 10-4-0 record over its last 14 games. The Canadiens won for the first time in their past five visits to Columbus. The defeat snapped the Blue Jackets' four-game winning streak. The Blue Jackets outshot the Canadiens 35-26, yet Carey Price was a difference-maker in net. Price stopped 34 of 35 shots, giving Montreal an 8-0-0 record this season when he has made 33 or more saves in a game.

CANUCKS 4, SABRES 3

Loui Eriksson's goal at 5:57 of the third period to break



GLENDALE: Goaltender Matt Murray #30 of the Pittsburgh Penguins follows the play as Jordan Weal #10 of the Arizona Coyotes sets up during the second period of the NHL game at Gila River Arena on Friday in Glendale, Arizona. — AFP

a 3-3 tie gave host Vancouver a win over Buffalo. Thatcher Demko stopped 36 of 39 shots as Vancouver earned only its second win in the past six games (2-2-2). The Sabres dropped their fourth decision in five games. Brock Boeser led the Canucks with a goal and an assist, while Alex Edler and Sven Baertschi also tallied. Bo Horvat, whose status was in question after he took a hard hit Wednesday against Edmonton, furnished two assists. Evan Rodrigues, Kyle Okposo and Sam Reinhart scored for the Sabres.

PANTHERS 3, MAPLE LEAFS 1

Vincent Trocheck, playing for the first time since he fractured his right ankle on Nov. 19, earned an assist and helped Florida snap a seven-game losing streak by defeating Toronto in Sunrise, Fla. Florida had been on its longest skid since dropping nine in a row in 2013-14. Trocheck, a 2017 All-Star who scored 54 goals over the past two sea-

sons, missed 27 games. He had played all 82 games in each of the two previous seasons. Mike Hoffman, Mike Matheson and Frank Vatrano scored for Florida. Roberto Luongo earned the win, making 20 saves. Ron Hainsey scored Toronto's goal.

SENATORS 4, HURRICANES 1

Magnus Paajarvi, Bobby Ryan, Mark Stone and Christian Wolanin scored for Ottawa in a victory that included two goals in a 13-second span at Raleigh, N.C. Cody Ceci supplied two assists for the Senators, who have won four of their past five games. Warren Foegele scored for Carolina, which doesn't have another home game until February. Senators goalie Anders Nilsson stopped 33 shots. Carolina goalie Petr Mrazek made 22 saves. He also gave up four goals Jan. 6 at Ottawa, but the Hurricanes won that game 5-4. — Reuters

Windies stand by Pybus appointment

ST. JOHN'S: West Indies cricket chiefs insisted they were standing by the decision to name Richard Pybus as their new head coach despite a storm of criticism which greeted the Englishman's appointment.

Pybus, who previously worked as director of cricket for the West Indies from 2013 to 2016, will coach the team for the forthcoming series against England, the World Cup and the visit of India in July and August.

"Following a meeting of the board of directors, the organisation affirmed that the appointment of Pybus was made with the support of more than two-thirds of its board to ensure the team had strong leadership ahead of the busy cricket season this year," said a Cricket West Indies (CWI) statement.

Pybus, who has had brief spells as coach of Pakistan and Bangladesh, was blamed by former captain Darren Sammy for causing the West Indies squad to strike on the 2016 India tour.

"Moses led God's children out of Egypt and a 40days journey took them 40years because of stubbornness. The 2019 worldcup will be 40years since WI won," tweeted Sammy. "Come on (CWI president) Dave Cameron aka Pharaoh, please let WI people go. I know for sure Pybus is not Moses." —AFP

India praised for 'perfect finish' to historic Australia tour

NEW DELHI: India's cricketers are being hailed a once-in-a-generation side as the World Cup looms, capping off a "perfect finish" to their historic Australia tour with a maiden one-day international bilateral series victory.

The Men in Blue will return home to India triumphant without having lost a Test or limited-overs series—a first on Australian soil.

The Test victory was India's first in 71 years of trying in Australia, a crowning achievement burnished by another historic first as the visitors clinched the ODI series 2-1 in Melbourne on Friday. India earlier drew a three-match Twenty20 showdown 1-1 after one match was washed out, ending the tour without losing a series in any format. "Perfect Finish To Dream Tour", declared the Mail Today daily on page one yesterday.

"One-Day wonder Down Under", ran a front page headline in the weekend edition of the Indian Express newspaper. Other Indian dailies called it a "perfect ending" and "series of firsts".

Captain Virat Kohli, riding on a high, is already looking ahead to the World Cup in May, confident his men have hit their stride as the coveted ODI cup looms. "We are feeling confident and balanced as a side with the World Cup in mind," the skipper said. "In all the three series we bounced back in different stages, and I think that builds team character ahead, especially when the World Cup is so near. If everyone contributes at different stages, it is then you win a big tournament."

The India side is being tipped as one of the best in years. "The teams that used to come here (to Australia), you can't compare those teams to this (one)," veteran commentator Harsha Bhogle told broadcasters Sony Six after India's seven-wicket win in the third ODI.

"It has only happened twice in history that a visiting team has won a Test and ODI series in Australia." Indian cricketer-turned-commentator Sanjay Manjrekar also praised their "nonchalant" confidence on foreign soil and pointed to "signs that they are setting themselves high standards" going forward. Special praise was reserved for veteran wicketkeeper-batsman Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who defied critics to smash an unbeaten 87 and register his third straight ODI half-century.

The 37-year-old had been accused by some of losing his lustre as a finisher but was named man of the series after driving India's tricky 231-run chase at the MCG.

Legendary batsman Sachin Tendulkar praised Dhoni on Twitter, saying he "once again played the role of the anchor beautifully!"

India now head to New Zealand for a limited-overs series, starting with the first of five ODIs in Napier on January 23. The 50-over World Cup begins in England on May 30. — AFP