

NBA

# Harden, Rockets pull out OT win after firing McHale

**Houston Rockets' James Harden (13) shoots between Portland Trail Blazers Allen Crabbe, C.J. McCollum (3) in the second half of an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2015, in Houston. The Rockets won 108-103 in overtime.**

AP Photo/Pat Sullivan



By **JORDAN GODWIN**  
Associated Press

HOUSTON — James Harden knew something had to change, and he didn't mean the coach.

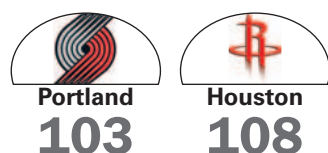
Hours after the unexpected firing of Kevin McHale, Harden shrugged off his slow start following his MVP runner-up season with 45 points, including all nine for Houston in overtime of a 108-103 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers on Wednesday night.

"Making shots or missing shots, I've got to get my game where it needs to be to get this team where it wants to go," Harden said. "Picking my energy up - tonight was the beginning of it."

Corey Brewer made an off-balance 3-pointer to force overtime and Harden took over from there, finishing with 11 assists, eight rebounds and five steals as the Rockets capped off an emotional day at the Toyota Center.

It nearly ended with a fifth straight loss before Brewer made his shot with 0.9 seconds remaining to tie it at 99.

"When somebody makes a shot like that, it can wake up everybody," Brewer said. "If that shot changes the season around, I'm happy to make it, but now it's time to start winning."



The Rockets played much of the game with sloppy mistakes and dreadful shooting. Interim coach J.B. Bickerstaff, son of longtime NBA coach Bernie Bickerstaff, served in his first game as head coach.

"The way it happened is the way it needed to happen," Bickerstaff said of the dramatic win. "Our guys were down, but for us to show perseverance, show fight, show the grit, toughness and togetherness speaks volumes."

The Blazers dropped their seventh straight, their worst losing streak since closing 2012-13 on a 13-game skid.

"In the NBA, strange things can happen," Portland coach Terry Stotts said. "We weren't able to close it out, and Corey Brewer hits a one-legged runner from the logo, and that's the way it goes."

Damian Lillard led Portland with 23 points, C.J. McCollum had 19 and Al-Farouq Aminu added 16.

Houston snapped its longest skid since the 2012-13 season in its first game without McHale. "We're going to miss him

being around," Dwight Howard said. "But we've got to still fight for him and try to win this championship. Things started out a little rocky, but we're going to turn this thing around."

Howard hauled in 19 rebounds, Trevor Ariza had 18 points, and Brewer scored 16 off the bench.

Rockets owner Leslie Alexander watched from the first row at midcourt as his seemingly uninspired team entered halftime in a 46-35 hole. The struggles continued and the Rockets ended the third with a 15-point deficit after Marcus Thornton's jump shot wedged awkwardly between the rim and the backboard.

Rockets 38-year-old point guard Jason Terry got his first start of the season, replacing struggling guard Ty Lawson, who was acquired from Denver in the offseason. Lawson finished the game with two points on 1-of-8 shooting.

**TIP-INS**  
Blazers: PF Meyers Leonard missed his fifth consecutive game with a shoulder injury but participated in pregame workouts. ... Allen Crabbe scored 15 points off the bench. ... The Blazers have lost four straight games that are within one-possession in the final three minutes.

# T-WOLVES: Blue Mountain opens with back-to-back home games

**Continued from 1B**  
points on the board. As good as the defense is in this league, if you can't put points on the board you're going to struggle."

The Timberwolves ranked dead last in the NWAC East with 71.7 points per game last season, and also finished last in the standings with a 2-12 East record.

Only two starters return from that squad, and guard Jared Schultz and forward Luke Meyers are taking on leadership roles as sophomores.

Meyers, who averaged 8.0 ppg and 3.2 rebounds per game as a freshman, said the faster pace is more demanding but the results from their scrimmages have been positive.

"We're doing it pretty well so far," said the Boise, Idaho native. "It means some more conditioning, it means we might have to run with some smaller guys. If we have the effort there and everyone does what they're supposed to do, we'll be OK."

At 6-foot-4, Meyers is an undersized post, but Ellis expects him to be one of the team's key scorers this season.

"He's kind of your just get down and get to work kind of guy," he said. "He's really crafty. He can score it outside and he's really good around the rim. I don't think I've ever seen anybody who finishes as well as he does around the rim."

"He's kind of a converted post. The reason we play him at the post is he's just so strong and he creates a lot of mismatches because he has guard skills but his ability to be physical allows him to kind of bang down there a little bit."

Schultz averaged 10.2

points and 4.5 rebounds last season, and is another player Ellis sees taking big steps forward this season.

"He's probably the most steady guy that we have with consistent effort every day," he said. "He just doesn't make a lot of mistakes."

But with sophomore Quincy George missing time early with a freshly fractured wrist, guard Justin Rivas (7.9 ppg, 2.3 steals per game) is the only other returning player that saw significant minutes for BMCC last season.

"It's mainly freshmen heavy. Our sophomores are huge impact guys but our freshmen coming in will take a lot of minutes," Ellis said. "Right now I think we're really comfortable with where guys are about eight, nine deep. I think we've got a pretty dominant three or four guys that we know are going to be pretty consistent in the starting lineup. There's a couple of guys that might rotate out depending on match-ups."

Ellis said freshman guard Gunnar Blankenship has one of the best jump shots on the team, and point guard La'Quan Hawkins creates points with his passing and defense.

But it's freshman D'Quan Crockett, a 6-foot-3 guard out of Las Vegas, that will soon be a fan favorite.

"He can pretty much score in a variety of ways. He's got a really nice jumper and he can hit the three, but he's also really long and he can attack the rim as well," he said. "He'll be the one that will probably get a lot of the showtime stuff, he's really athletic."

The Timberwolves open with back-to-back home games and will host Edmonds on Saturday at 4 p.m.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

**BMCC's Tyler Thurman shoots a fadeaway jump shot over teammate LaQuan Hawkins during practice Wednesday in Pendleton.**

Hawkins said the team is looking to make a statement to its fans early.

"We just want to come out and we want to play hard on defense, and just let everybody know that we are not the team from last year," he said. "We're going to come out and we're going to play hard, we're going to play fast, and we just want to let everybody know that we're here and we ain't going nowhere."

Here are few more things to consider as the T-Wolves prepare for the start of the season:

STEPPING UP THE

Meyers said. "So if we're not hitting our defense is going to have to buckle down to get those stops."

Meyers said the team's goal is to hold every opponent below 65 points this season.

**NEW BLOOD, NEW VIBES:** Sometimes a change in mindset can do wonders for a team, and the T-Wolves said that's hopefully the case with all the fresh faces in the locker room this season.

"I'd say our biggest strength is our heart," Meyers said. "Last year sometimes we felt like we just didn't deserve to be in games. But no matter where we're at, every player on this team wants to win and knows we're going to do whatever it takes to do that."

"Staying together as a team is going to be really important, because when you get down into crunch time and things are getting hard, you can't be blaming other people."

**HOME COOKING:** The T-Wolves open the 2015-16 season with three home games sandwiched around a tournament in Portland and one in nearby Walla Walla. It's much different from last season when the team played four of its first six games on the road.

"It's definitely much more exciting than last year," said Schultz. "Last year was a lot of beginning the year on the road, which was tough on us freshmen. Going from playing high school basketball to college basketball, and then instantly going on the road."

"We're excited for it. It's definitely a lot funner playing here in front of our fans."

**LOOKING FOR PROGRESS:** Ellis said more than wins, he's looking for progress out his young team in the

preseason schedule.

"I think steady improvement is the biggest thing. I think sometimes we'll come out of the gate (fast), like last year. We looked really good in Game 1, then we kind of went downhill for quite a while. So I think steady progression is the thing for us."

He expects a preseason that includes two games against Mt. Hood, one against Clackamas and tournaments in Portland, Eugene and Miles City, Montana, should provide plenty of tests.

"Preseason wise we've got some really tough match-ups, some match-ups we're really excited about, but it's going to be a lot of learning for a lot of these guys," he said. "I think the biggest thing for us is to make sure that game in and game out we're seeing some sort of improvement."

**TOUGH EAST:** Big Bend, Columbia Basin, Wenatchee Valley and Treasure Valley were the playoff teams from the East Region last season, and Ellis said all of them had strong recruiting classes again this year.

He said Walla Walla also has one of the best freshmen classes in the league, and Spokane should be a tough with lots of returners.

"I think every team game in and game out, league-wise, is going to be a battle," Ellis said. "I think we're capable. I think this team that we put on the floor is capable of doing whatever they set their mind to, it's like I said before, just continually progressing day in and day out."

"This is a hungry group and I think that they understand the process, and I think we'll be OK."

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## SCOREBOARD

**Local Slate**

**PREP FOOTBALL**

**Saturday**  
(2A Semifinals)  
Heppner vs. Regis (at Liberty HS), Noon  
Stanfield vs. Kennedy (at Liberty HS), 5 p.m.

**COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL**

**Today**  
(INWAC Championships Rd 1) Blue Mountain vs. SW Oregon (at Tacoma, Wash.), 9 a.m.

**Friday-Sunday**  
Blue Mountain vs. TBD at NWAC Championships (at Tacoma, Wash.), TBD

**COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL**

**Friday**  
Eastern Oregon vs. Metropolitan St. (at Caldwell, Idaho), 4 p.m.  
Air Force Base at Blue Mountain, 7 p.m.

**Saturday**  
Edmonds at Blue Mountain, 4 p.m.  
Eastern Oregon vs. Montana Tech (at Caldwell, Idaho), 4 p.m.

**COLLEGE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL**

**Friday**  
Blue Mountain vs. TBD at Yakima Tip-Off, TBD

**Saturday**  
Blue Mountain vs. TBD at Yakima Tip-Off, TBD  
Eastern Oregon at Xavier (La.) 9 a.m.

**Sunday**  
Blue Mountain vs. TBD at Yakima Tip-Off, TBD

**COLLEGE WOMEN'S SOCCER**

**Saturday**  
Biola at Eastern Oregon, 9 p.m.

**COLLEGE CROSS COUNTRY**

**Saturday**  
Eastern Oregon at NAIA National Championships, (Charlotte, N.C.) 7:30 a.m.

**Football**

**Friday, Nov. 20**  
Class 6A  
Quarterfinals

Beverton at Jesuit, 7 p.m.  
Clackamas at Sheldon, 7 p.m.  
Oregon City at West Linn, 7 p.m.  
Lincoln at Sherwood, 7 p.m.

**Saturday, Nov. 21**  
Class 5A Semifinals  
Summit vs. Crater (at Grants Pass HS), Noon  
Wilsonville vs. Ashland (at Grants Pass HS), 5 p.m.  
Class 4A Semifinals  
North Bend vs. Scappoose (at Cottage Grove HS), 3 p.m.  
Cascade vs. Banks (at Hillsboro Stadium), 3:30 p.m.  
Class 3A Semifinals  
Vale vs. Scio (at Hermiston HS), 11 a.m.  
Blanchet Catholic vs. Santiam Christian (at Cottage Grove HS), 11 a.m.

**Class 2A Semifinals**  
Heppner vs. Regis (at Liberty HS), Noon  
Stanfield vs. Kennedy (at Liberty HS), 5 p.m.

**Semifinals**  
Dufur vs. Perrydale (at Hillsboro Stadium), Noon  
Crane vs. Adrian (at Hermiston HS), 3 p.m.

**NCAA**  
No. 1 Clemson vs. Wake Forest, 12:30 p.m.  
No. 2 Ohio State vs. No. 9 Michigan State, 12:30 p.m.  
No. 3 Alabama vs. Charleston Southern, 1 p.m.  
No. 4 Oklahoma State vs. No. 10 Baylor, 4:30 p.m.  
No. 5 Notre Dame at Boston College, 4:30 p.m.  
No. 6 Iowa vs. Purdue, 9 a.m.  
No. 7 Oklahoma vs. No. 11 TCU, 5 p.m.  
No. 8 Florida vs. FAU, 9 a.m.  
No. 12 North Carolina at Virginia Tech, 9 a.m.  
No. 13 Houston at UConn, 12:30 p.m.  
No. 14 Michigan at Penn State, 9 a.m.

No. 15 Stanford vs. California, 7:30 p.m.  
No. 16 Florida State vs. Chattanooga, Noon

No. 17 LSU at No. 25 Mississippi, 12:30 p.m.  
No. 18 Utah vs. UCLA, 12:30 p.m.  
No. 19 Navy at Tulsa, 4 p.m.  
No. 20 Northwestern at No. 21 Wisconsin, 12:30 p.m.  
No. 22 Southern Cal at No. 23 Oregon, 12:30 p.m.  
No. 24 Washington State vs. Colorado, 7:45 p.m.

**NFL**

**Thursday's Game**  
Tennessee (4-3) at Jacksonville, 5:25 p.m.

**Sunday's Games**  
N.Y. Jets (2-5) at Houston, 10 a.m.  
Denver (4-1) at Chicago, 10 a.m.  
Oakland (2) at Detroit, 10 a.m.  
Indianapolis (+6) at Atlanta, 10 a.m.  
Tampa Bay (+5.5) at Philadelphia, 10 a.m.  
St. Louis (+2.5) at Baltimore, 10 a.m.  
Dallas (PK) at Miami, 10 a.m.  
Washington (+7) at Carolina, 10 a.m.  
Kansas City (-3) at San Diego, 1:05 p.m.  
San Francisco (+12.5) at Seattle, 1:25 p.m.

Green Bay (+1) at Minnesota, 1:25 p.m.  
Cincinnati (+5) at Arizona, 5:30 p.m.  
Open: Cleveland, N.Y. Giants, New Orleans, Pittsburgh

**Monday's Game**  
Buffalo (+7) at New England, 5:30 p.m.

**Basketball**

**NCAA**  
**How the Men's Top 25 fared Wednesday**  
1. North Carolina (3-0) beat Wofford 78-58. Next: at Northern Iowa, Saturday.  
2. Kentucky (3-0) did not play. Next: vs. Wright State, Friday.  
3. Maryland (2-0) did not play. Next: vs. Rider, Friday.  
4. Kansas (1-1) did not play. Next: at Chamaine, Monday.  
5. Duke (2-1) did not play. Next: vs. UCU, Friday.

Friday  
6. Virginia (1-1) did not play. Next: vs. Bradley, Thursday.  
7. Iowa State (2-0) did not play. Next: vs. Chattanooga, Monday.  
8. Oklahoma (1-0) did not play. Next: vs. McNeese State, Friday.  
9. Wichita State (1-1) did not play. Next: vs. Emporia State, Saturday.  
10. Gonzaga (1-0) beat Northern Arizona 91-52. Next: vs. Mount St. Mary's, Saturday.  
11. Villanova (2-0) did not play. Next: vs. ETSU, Friday.  
12. Arizona (2-0) did not play. Next: vs. Boise State, Thursday.  
13. Michigan State (2-0) did not play. Next: vs. Arkansas-Pine Bluff, Friday.  
14. Indiana (2-0) did not play. Next: vs. Creighton, Thursday.  
15. California (2-0) did not play. Next: vs. East Carolina, Friday.  
16. Utah (2-0) did not play. Next: vs. Texas Tech, Thursday.  
17. Vanderbilt (2-0) did not play. Next: vs. Stony Brook, Thursday.  
18. Notre Dame (2-0) did not play. Next: vs. UMass-Lowell, Saturday.  
19. UConn (2-0) did not play. Next: vs. Furman, Saturday.  
20. Baylor (1-1) did not play. Next: vs. Jackson State, Friday.  
21. Purdue (3-0) beat Incarnate Word 96-62. Next: vs. Old Dominion, Saturday.  
22. Butler (1-0) did not play. Next: vs. Missouri State, Thursday.  
23. LSU (2-0) did not play. Next: vs. South Alabama, Thursday.  
24. Michigan (2-0) did not play. Next: vs. Xavier, Friday.  
25. Oregon (2-0) did not play. Next: vs. Savannah State, Friday.

**NBA**

**EASTERN CONFERENCE**

Atlantic Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	6	5	.545	—
Toronto	7	6	.538	—
New York	6	6	.500	½

Brooklyn	2	10	.167	4½
Philadelphia	0	12	0.000	6½
<b>Southeast Div.</b>	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	9	5	.643	—
Miami	6	4	.600	1
Washington	5	4	.556	1½
Orlando	6	6	.500	2
Charlotte	6	6	.500	2
<b>Central Division</b>	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	8	3	.727	—
Cleveland	8	3	.727	—
Indiana	7	5	.583	1½
Detroit	6	5	.545	2
Milwaukee	5	6	.455	3

**WESTERN CONFERENCE**

Southwest Div.	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	9	2	.818	—
Dallas	8	4	.667	1½
Memphis	6	6	.500	3½
Houston	5	7	.417	4
New Orleans	1	11	.083	8½
<b>Northwest Div.</b>	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	7	5	.583	—
Utah	6	5	.545	½
Denver	6	6	.500	1
Minnesota	5	7	.417	2
Portland	4	9	.308	3½
<b>Pacific Division</b>	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	12	0	1.000	—
L.A. Clippers	6	4	.600	5
Phoenix	6	5	.545	5½
Sacramento	4	8	.333	8
L.A. Lakers	2	9	.182	9½

**Wednesday's Games**  
Indiana 112, Philadelphia 85  
Orlando 104, Minnesota 101, OT  
Charlotte 116, Brooklyn 111  
Dallas 106, Boston 122  
Houston 108, Portland 103, OT  
Oklahoma City 110, New Orleans 103  
Atlanta 103, Sacramento 97  
San Antonio 109, Denver 98  
Utah 93, Toronto 89  
Chicago 103, Phoenix 97

**Today's Games**  
Sacramento at Miami, 4:30 p.m.  
Milwaukee at Cleveland, 5 p.m.  
Golden State at L.A. Clippers, 7:30 p.m.

**Hockey**

**NHL**

**EASTERN CONFERENCE**

**Atlantic Division**

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Montreal	19	14	3	2	30	67	42
Ottawa	18	8	5	2	21	54	57
Detroit	19	9	8	2	24	42	47
Florida	18	8	7	3	19	49	45
Tampa Bay	20	8	9	3	19	46	49
Boston	17	8	8	1	17	56	54
Buffalo	18	8	9	1	17	41	49
Toronto	19	6	9	4	16	46	55

**Metropolitan Division**

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
N.Y. Rangers	18	14	2	2	30	67	38
Washington	17	12	4	1	25	52	40
N.Y. Islanders	19	10	6	3	23	54	44
Pittsburgh	18	11	7	0	22	40	40
New Jersey	18	10	7	1	21	46	43
Philadelphia	18	6	8	4	16	35	53
Carolina	18	6	10	2	14	35	53
Columbus	19	7	12	0	14	48	63

**WESTERN CONFERENCE**

**Central Division**

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Dallas	19	15	4	0	30	68	48
Nashville	17	11	3	2	25	53	40
St. Louis	19	12	6	1	25	51	46
Minnesota	17	10	4	3	23	51	47
Chicago	19	11	7	1	23	53	47
Winnipeg	20	9	9	2	20	54	50
Colorado	18	7	10	1	15	50	63

**Pacific Division**

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Los Angeles	18	12	6	1	24	46	37
San Jose	18	10	8	0	20	50	48
Vancouver	20	7	7	6	20	56	54
Arizona	18	9	8	1	19	50	54
Anaheim	19	6	9	4	16	35	49
Calgary	20	7	12	1	15	49	74
Edmonton	19	6	12	1	13	50	62

NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

**Wednesday's Games**  
Winnipeg 4, Vancouver 1  
Washington 2, Detroit 1, OT  
Chicago 4, Edmonton 3, OT