

Pro Basketball

Celtics rally from 17-point deficit to beat Warriors in possible Finals preview

By KYLE HIGHTOWER Associated Press

BOSTON — Kyrie Irving had 11 of his 16 points in the fourth quarter, including two free throws that put Boston ahead in the closing seconds, and the Celtics beat the Golden State Warriors 92-88 on Thursday night for their 14th straight victory.

Jaylen Brown had 22 points and seven rebounds, and Al Horford added 18 points and 11 rebounds.

Kevin Durant has 24 points for Golden State. The defending champion Warriors had won seven in a row.

Playing his second game since suffering a facial fracture, Irving shed his protective mask in the second quarter. Then, with the game tied at 88, he was fouled on his layup attempt and calmly made a pair of free throws. Durant then came up empty



Boston Celtics' Jaylen Brown (7) dunks over Golden State Warriors' Kevin Durant during the first quarter of Thursday's game in Boston.

AP Photo/Michael Dwyer

on his jumper on the other end.

Golden State led by as many as 17, but had to lean heavily on its reserves as its trio of Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson and Durant struggled offensively.

Curry, who returned to action after missing a game with a bruised right thigh, was the most ineffective. He was 3 of 14 from the field — 2 of 9 from the 3-point line

— and had nine points.

Curry sat for a long stretch after picking up his fourth foul early in the third quarter.

Boston came in limiting opponents to just 94.5 points per game, the stingiest mark in the NBA this season. It did even better against a Warriors team that entered the night averaging an NBA-best 119.6 points per game.

The Warriors went without a point from Durant's 20-foot pull-up with 4:49 left in the third quarter until Omri Casspi's floater with 34.5 left tied it at 68 — a 19-2 Celtics' run.

Curry, Durant and Thompson were just 7 of 26 combined from the field in the first half. But the Warriors were able to maintain their lead thanks to 14 fast-break points.

Durant was the only one of the three to score during a 12-0 Warriors run late in the second quarter.

Boston trailed by just 47-42 at the half, closing the quarter with a 13-2 spurt.

TIP-INS

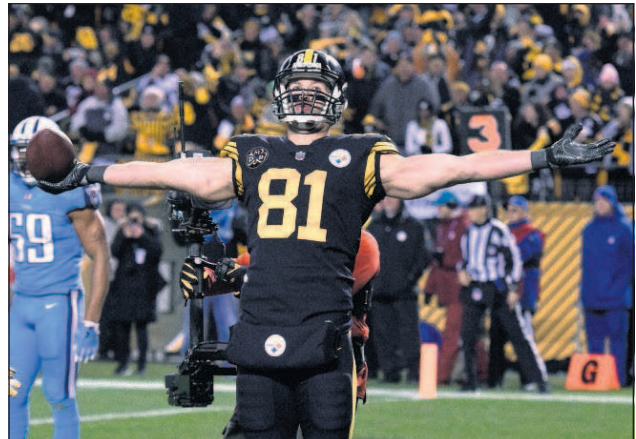
Warriors: Their 88 points was a season-low. Had seven turnovers in third.

Celtics: Horford registered a double-double in consecutive games for the second time this season. He failed to record back-to-back double-doubles at any point last season.

UP NEXT Warriors: Continue their four-game road trip Saturday at Philadelphia.

Celtics: Visit Atlanta on Saturday to begin a three-game trip.

Pro Football



Pittsburgh Steelers tight end Jesse James (81) celebrates his touchdown catch during the second half of Thursday's game against the Tennessee Titans.

Steelers drill Titans

Associated Press



PITTSBURGH — Ben Roethlisberger threw for 299 yards and four touchdowns, three to Antonio Brown, and the Pittsburgh Steelers pulled away from the Tennessee Titans in a 40-17 victory on Thursday night.

Running the no-huddle offense extensively for the first time all season, Roethlisberger completed 30 of 45 passes to help the Steelers (8-2) win their fifth straight.

Brown caught 10 passes for 144 yards and the three scores, including an acrobatic grab in the back of the end zone in which he pinned the ball to his helmet before

bringing it in to put Pittsburgh up 20 in the fourth quarter.

Marcus Mariota ran for a touchdown and threw for another but also was picked off four times as the Titans (6-4) saw their four-game winning streak come to a crashing halt. Mariota finished 22 of 33 for 306 yards but was under pressure much of the night, absorbing five sacks and rarely finding room to move outside the pocket.

WINTER SPORTS: Bulldogs wrestling aims for 11th-and-final OSA state title

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game at Dufur, and hosts Pilot Rock for its first home game on Dec. 12.

HERMISTON WRESTLING

Hermiston High School is known for its top-notch wrestling program, winners of 10 state championships since the turn of the century. But as with Hermiston set to compete in the WIAA next school year, the Bulldog wrestlers, like every other sport, will want to leave their lasting mark with another state title.

On paper, it may be a challenge for the Bulldogs this season as perennial state qualifiers such as CJ Hendon

and Valen Wyse have graduated. But with competitors like Joey Gutierrez, AJ Tuia and Beau Blake still around and a the program's tradition, the Bulldogs can never be counted out.

CRC GIRLS TITLE UP FOR GRABS: In the brief existence of the Columbia River Conference, winning the girls basketball league title pretty much became a tradition for Hermiston.

However, last season the Pendleton Buckaroos shocked the rival Bulldogs by halting a 28-game winless streak with a pair of victories, which helped claim the Buckaroos' first league title since 2005. Pendleton

appears ready for another solid season under second-year coach Kevin Porter, returning all-league players Kalan McGlothlan, Maureen Davies and Lauren Richards, as well as contributors Elli Nirschl, Katie Bradt and Hallie Porter.

On the other side, Hermiston has worked all off-season to get back on top of the league, and they have the firepower to do so. Sophomore Jazlyn Romero looks like a star in the making and Maddy Juul is a force inside for the Bulldogs, while players like Jordan Thomas, Hannah Thompson and Regan Meyers are primed for breakout seasons.

The two teams first meet up on Jan. 30 in Pendleton.

CBC BASKETBALL

A TOSS UP: Last season, the Stanfield Tigers boys ran away with the Columbia Basin Conference title on their way to a state title game appearance, while Pilot Rock and Weston-McEwen controlled the girls side.

But on paper, there doesn't appear to be any clear-cut favorites for both titles this season. On the girls side, Weston-McEwen returns some solid players starting with all-league guard Chelsea Quaempts and Alyssa Finifrock, but has a lot of holes to replace with the likes of Sarah

Finifrock, Sara von Borstel and Bailey Hillmick; Pilot Rock returns some talent with Kayla Deist, Sara Weinke and Grace Austin, but must replace do-it-all guard Bekah Roe and shooters Rachel Willingham and Jacey Wilson.

Culver could make a jump with defending district Player of the Year Irma Retano returning, and Heppner is expected to be much-improved with leading scorer Jacee Curring back.

And on the boys side, Stanfield has just one returning contributor from last year's squad in forward Brody Woods, while Weston-McEwen must

replace it's 1-2 punch of Shaw Broncheau and Ethan Reger. Heppner and Pilot Rock just missed out on a playoff spot last year, and the Mustangs no longer have district Player of the Year Logan Grieb to rally around but gain some height with some new faces, while the Rockets return some talent with starters Riley Lankford, Chris Weinke and Bryson Pierce.

League games get started mid-January, and should provide a fun race through mid-February.

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MVP: NL voting closest since Stargell, Hernandez tied for award in 1979

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"It's not a rule that you have to be 6-foot or you have to be really strong to play baseball and become a good player," he added.

Altuve beat out a player who couldn't be more different. The 6-7 Judge won the AL Rookie of the Year award Monday after setting a rookie record with 52 home runs. Judge's moonshot homers dominated the highlights, and

his No. 99 jersey was the top seller in baseball. Even Altuve has said he would have voted for Judge.

Judge had 8.2 wins above replacement compared to Altuve's 7.5, per Fangraphs, while WAR metric preferred Altuve 8.3 to 8.1. Yet Judge got only two first-place votes, with the other going to third-place finisher Jose Ramirez of the Indians.

Altuve was the second Houston player to win

an MVP — Jeff Bagwell earned the 1994 NL award.

While Altuve is set to defend his title in Houston, Stanton may be taking a piece of Marlins history elsewhere. He earned the franchise's first MVP in the same week new team executive Derek Jeter said the club is listening to trade offers for Stanton. The 28-year-old outfielder is owed \$295 million over the final decade of his record \$325 million, 13-year contract.

"It's an interesting feeling and situation for me," Stanton said.

Stanton would prefer to stick around and wants the team's pitching situation "to be thoroughly addressed, not just somewhat addressed." He's not convinced the Marlins are ready to do that.

"I'm not entirely sure, to be honest," he said. "I know all teams have plenty of money."

The 6-6 Stanton led the big leagues with 59 home

runs, most in the majors since 2001, when Barry Bonds hit a record 73 and Sammy Sosa had 64.

Stanton got 10 first-place votes and 302 points. Votto, who led the majors with a .454 on-base percentage, also got 10 firsts and had 300 points. Arizona's Paul Goldschmidt was third.

"I felt like it was going to be so close and I felt like I had a legitimate shot," Votto said. "It just feels like it's exactly kind of how I

thought it would play out."

The last time an MVP race was so close, Willie Stargell and Keith Hernandez tied for the NL prize in 1979.

Stanton became only the sixth player to win from a losing team. The Marlins were 77-85.

Stanton joins Dan Marino and LeBron James as the only Miami pro athletes in a major sport to win MVP. "That's definitely good company," Stanton said.

SCOREBOARD

Table with multiple columns for Local, Football, Prep Football, Basketball, Hockey, and other sports results.