

Sports

McCollum outduels Harden, leads Blazers to overtime win

By Erik Garcia Gundersen
Associated Press

PORTLAND — CJ McCollum scored 44 points, including a 3-pointer with 6.3 seconds left that gave the Portland Trail Blazers a 128-126 win over the Houston Rockets on Saturday night.

Damian Lillard had 32 points and nine assists to help Portland get its first win. McCollum also had eight assists.

McCollum finished 17 for 30 from the field, including 9 for 16 on 3s. Lillard was 5 for 13 from beyond the arc.

“I think besides Steph (Curry) and Klay Thompson, we’re the only backcourt in the league that empowers the other,” McCollum said of his partnership with Lillard. “I don’t try to take over the game from him. We work together.”

James Harden finished with 44 points and 17 assists for Houston, and Christian Wood added 31 points and 13 rebounds. Harden also had a game-ending turnover on the final possession of overtime.

Lillard’s layup pushed the Blazers ahead 125-123 with 30 seconds left in overtime, but Harden made a 3 to push the Rockets ahead with 15.3 seconds left.

Then with 6.3 seconds left, the ball found McCollum again and the Blazers’ guard hit another long range shot putting Portland ahead 128-126.

“We tried to do everything that it takes as a team to stop whoever has the hot hand,” Harden said of the



Sean Meagher/The Oregonian File Photo

Portland’s Damian Lillard, seen here in an earlier game against Houston, scored 32 points on Saturday night to help the Blazers beat the Rockets in overtime.

Blazers’guards. “They both started off slow and then the rest of the game they caught fire.”

McCollum’s jumper with 2:03 left in overtime pushed Portland’s lead to 123-118, forcing a Rockets timeout. After Wood cut the Blazers lead to 123-120 with a layup, Harden tied the game again at 123 with 38.6 seconds left.

A layup by Wood with less than a minute left in regulation tied the score at 111. Then Lillard put the Blazers ahead at 113-111 with 52 seconds left. Harden responded with a basket of his own to tie it again at 113 with 38.9 seconds left.

After a missed 3-pointer by Lillard, Houston’s PJ Tucker was called for a loose ball foul on the rebound with 32 seconds left. Houston’s challenge of the call was unsuccessful, but they were rewarded after Jusuf Nurkic missed both free-throws.

Both teams exchanged empty possessions and the game went into overtime.

After Portland jumped out to an early lead, Harden’s impact on the game was much more noticeable. Harden had eight assists, to go along with six points, in the first quarter alone.

“I feel like my conditioning could be better obviously,” Harden said. “But I think we let it get away from us. I didn’t surprise myself at all. I know what I’m capable of.”

For Portland, Lillard made good on his promise to be

more aggressive after scoring only nine points in the opener, getting 21 in the first half.

But despite the better start and a more aggressive Lillard, things once again went sideways for the Blazers in the second quarter. The Rockets pushed their lead to 40-30 with 8:16 left, all with Harden watching from the bench, forcing a Blazers timeout. Houston pushed its lead to 16 in the first half.

Harden, who had a double-double of 17 points and 10 assists by halftime, also looked like he already had great chemistry with free agent acquisition Wood, who had 15 points in the first half, as Houston led 68-58 at the break.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BOWLS

Liberty denies Coastal Carolina a perfect season

By Dick Scanlon
Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Liberty ended Coastal Carolina’s perfect season with a blocked kick in overtime.

Elijah James blocked Massimo Biscardi’s 42-yard field goal attempt to give No. 23 Liberty a 37-34 victory over No. 9 Coastal Carolina in a wild finish Saturday night in the FBC Mortgage Cure Bowl.

Liberty (10-1) took the lead on Alex Barbir’s 44-yard field goal on the first extra possession.

Coastal Carolina (11-1) got a huge break in regulation when Liberty’s Joshua Mack fumbled inside the 1 with 41 seconds left in the fourth quarter. Safety Alex Spillum recovered the fumble to end the long drive.

“I thought it was a touchdown but they called it a fumble,” said Liberty quarterback Malik Lewis, who set several records in the game. “But the next opportunity we got, we took advantage of it.”

Willis ran for 137 yards and four touchdowns and completed 19 of 29 passes for 220 yards with two interceptions.

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Utah star dies in accidental shooting

DALLAS (AP) — Ty Jordan, a star freshman running back for the University of Utah, died at a Dallas-area hospital after accidentally shooting himself, authorities said Sunday.

University officials announced Jordan’s death Saturday, a day after he was named Pac-12’s newcomer of the year, but did not release details.

Jordan, 19, died in an emergency room at a hospital in Denton around 10:45 p.m. on Christmas Day, according to medical examiner’s records.

Police officers had responded about an hour earlier to reports of a shooting at a home in Denton, a city 40 miles northeast of downtown Dallas. The officers found a man had accidentally shot himself in the hip and began giving first aid, Denton police spokeswoman Allison Beckwith told The Associated Press Saturday. She said the man later died at a hospital and that investigators did not know how he came to shoot himself.

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Art for Everyone

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Crossroads Carnegie Art Center thanks our community for their support of our 2nd Annual Oktoberfest on October 17th, which was COVID-19 Friendly.

Crossroads raised over \$20,000 to support our critical programs and we did so safely with a Drive-Thru Dinner and a Virtual Auction.

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