

Sports

Jazz rally in second half, rout Trail Blazers, 122-103

Portland led at halftime but Utah took over with a 25-4 run in the third quarter

By John Coon
Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Strong second-half defense helped the Utah Jazz break open a close game and extend their franchise-record home winning streak.

Donovan Mitchell scored 37 points to lead Utah to its 23rd straight victory at home, a 122-103 win over the Portland Trail Blazers on Thursday night, April 8.

Rudy Gobert had 18 points and 21 rebounds, Joe Ingles added 13 points and six assists and Utah dominated the glass by outrebounding Portland 58-41 while snapping a two-game skid.

"This was a must-win," Mitchell said. "We kind of put our focus on that, not letting three go to teams who are playoff bound."

Damian Lillard scored 23 points and C.J. McCollum added 19 to lead the Trail Blazers, who lost for the third time in four games.

"We couldn't get stops," Lillard said.

Utah surged on offense in the third quarter when it erased a six-point deficit and built a double-digit lead while scoring 40 points on 57% shooting from the field.

Defense keyed the surge. The Jazz held Portland to 19 points on 32% shooting in the quarter. They also had a 19-6 advantage on rebounds.

"Our defense was the biggest thing," Utah coach Quin Snyder said. "And our defensive rebounding in the



Tribune News Service

Portland's C.J. McCollum, shown here on April 3 against Oklahoma City, scored 19 points in the Blazers' loss at Utah on Thursday, April 8.

third quarter really broke the game open."

The Jazz went on a 25-4 run over a six-minute stretch to take a 93-72 lead with 30 seconds left in the third quarter. Mitchell, Gobert, and Ingles combined to make 10 free throws during that stretch. Ingles and Mitchell also combined to score or assist on seven baskets during the decisive run.

"It's almost like we got better throughout the game," Gobert said. "Communication got better. Our aggressiveness got better."

Portland trailed by double digits the entire fourth quarter.

"We had a good defensive first half, obviously the third quarter was poor offense and

poor defense, so it kind of went hand in hand to a bad quarter," Trail Blazers coach Terry Stotts said.

Both teams struggled with generating consistent offense in the first half. Utah shot 41% from the field and Portland shot 43%. Each team finally settled into a rhythm late in the second quarter.

The Jazz went up 46-42 when Mitchell scored back-to-back baskets and assisted on a pair of others over a 2½-minute stretch. Mitchell scored or assisted on 10 of Utah's 20 first-half baskets.

Portland answered with a 12-0 run and took a 54-46 lead just before halftime. McCollum and Lillard scored back-to-back baskets to finish off the run.

TIP INS

• Trail Blazers: Jusuf Nurkic played on a minutes restriction after a one-game absence due to right knee inflammation. Nurkic finished with 10 points, six rebounds, and four assists in 22 minutes. ... Portland outscored Utah 10-7 in fast-break points.

• Jazz: Jordan Clarkson did not play because of a sprained right ankle. It was the first game Clarkson missed this season. ... Derrick Favors passed Mehmet Okur for 10th place on the Jazz career scoring list. Favors has scored 7,527 points with Utah. He finished with seven points against Portland. ... Utah is now 9-1 in games with zero days rest.

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

Twins welcome fans by beating Mariners, 10-2

By Dave Campbell
AP Sports Writer

MINNEAPOLIS — The Minnesota Twins welcomed their fans back to the ballpark by hitting like they wanted to give them all souvenirs.

Though Target Field was at coronavirus-limited capacity, the Twins played like the place was full.

Mitch Garver, Byron Buxton and Luis Arraez hit home runs to back another strong start by José Berríos, and the Twins beat the Seattle Mariners 10-2 on Thursday, April 8.

Berríos (2-0), who no-hit Milwaukee over six innings in his first turn, threw two more hitless innings before surrendering his first run of the season in the third. Pulled with two outs in the sixth, Berríos tipped his cap to the sellout crowd of 9,675 as he strutted off the mound.

"We've been waiting for this moment a really long time. Everybody knows here the fans are great people. They like baseball and are always cheering for us no matter what happens," Berríos said.

Said Arraez: "They're everything for us." Garver had the three-run shot that got the Twins going in their home opener, a straightaway screamer to center field that landed in the living wall of junipers for a 3-1 lead in the third inning against Mariners starter Marco Gonzales (0-1).

SUMMER OLYMPICS

Tokyo raises COVID alert level to help curb spread

By Mari Yamaguchi
Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan announced Friday, April 9 that it will raise the coronavirus alert level in Tokyo to allow tougher measures to curb the rapid spread of a more contagious variant ahead of the Summer Olympics.

Japan's national vaccination drive has lagged and most people in the capital still have not been inoculated as infections have surged.

The raised status announced by Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga will allow Tokyo's governor to mandate shorter opening hours for bars and restaurants. The measures are to begin Monday and continue through May 11.

Many of Tokyo's cases have been linked to nightlife and dining, though they have recently spread to offices, elderly care facilities and schools, experts say.

Just over 1 million people in Japan, or less than 1% of the population, have received the first of two vaccine doses. The Olympics are set to start July 23.

Predicting the NFL Draft: Part 2

In about five weeks, the National Football League's attention will be focused on Cleveland, where futures of young prospects and organizations will forever be changed in the 2021 NFL Draft.

Part one of my mock draft was published in the Thursday, April 8 issue.

16. Arizona Cardinals (8-8): Christian Darrisaw, offensive line, Virginia Tech

The Cardinals have signed Rodney Hudson to help protect star quarterback Kyle Murray, and I see them drafting Darrisaw to further bolster the offensive line. A three-year starter for the Hokies, Darrisaw has proven ability, although he needs to improve his run blocking.

17. Las Vegas Raiders (8-8): Azeem Ojulari, linebacker, Georgia

Ojulari proved with the Bulldogs that he is a remarkable pass rusher who can also drop back in coverage. He needs to gain some more muscle as he's listed at about 240 pounds, and needs to be more aware when he plays in space, two things that can easily be worked on at the pro level.

18. Miami Dolphins (10-6): Kwity Paye, edge rusher, Michigan

After drafting Devonta Smith at wide receiver earlier, the Dolphins address their next biggest need, getting an edge rusher in Paye. He is an incredibly explosive athlete.



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He does lack in size, and also may be a health liability, as he missed some games in the past due to a groin injury.

19. Washington Football Team (7-9): Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah, linebacker, Notre Dame

Although drafting an offensive lineman makes sense, the talent of Owusu-Koramoah is too appealing to pass up with this pick. Though he needs to get better at tackling and shedding blockers, he will be a valuable addition.

20. Chicago Bears (8-8): Caleb Farley, cornerback, Virginia Tech

Farley has a sizable frame and great speed, and although he could improve on his instincts, he will be an upgrade for the Bears' depleted secondary.

21. Indianapolis Colts (11-5): Teven Jenkins, offensive tackle, Oklahoma State

For the second straight year, the Colts have a new man under center in Carson Wentz. They have one of the best linemen in the game with Quenton Nelson, and to get him a battery mate to protect Wentz, who has a pretty rough injury history, so Jenkins will be a good choice. Though his weaknesses are out of his control (reach) he shows a lot of promise with the versatility to play on either side of the line.

22. Tennessee Titans (11-5): Jaycee Horn, cornerback, South Carolina

Horn can have a great impact for the Titans' secondary. He's versatile, but what concerns me is whether he can keep up with some of the faster receivers.

23. New York Jets (2-14) (Acquired from Seattle in the Jamal Adams trade): Najee Harris, running back, Alabama

The Jets will complement their newly acquired quarterback — I have them taking BYU's Zach Wilson with the second pick — with the top running back in the draft. Though not overly physical and with only decent speed, Harris has great vision and acceleration.

24. Pittsburgh Steelers (12-4): Kadarius Toney, wide receiver, Florida

This pick is logical because Toney can help address the Steelers' biggest problem in most of their games late in the season — inconsistent offense. Toney is an explosive playmaker with top-notch speed.

25. Jacksonville Jaguars (1-15) (Acquired from LAR in Jalen Ramsey trade): Gregory Rousseau, edge rusher, Miami

As a team that needs help at almost every position, the Jaguars will get the next best talent on the board, keeping Rousseau in Florida. He has excellent length, really knows how to shed blocks, and has a knack for forcing fumbles. This would be a low risk, high

reward pick for new coach Urban Meyer.

26. Cleveland Browns (11-6): Christian Barmore, defensive line, Oklahoma

If you told me a year ago that the Browns would be drafting late in the first round in 2021 I would have been shocked. However, after a great season with a playoff berth, the Browns need someone to line up with star edge rusher Myles Garrett, and Barmore is a good choice.

27. Baltimore Ravens (11-6): Joseph Ossai, edge rusher, Texas

Ossai shows immense promise, and when he hits, he hits hard. He needs to play more fluidly.

28. New Orleans Saints (12-4): Jayson Oweh, edge rusher, Penn State

Oweh will need time to adjust to the league, and he'll benefit from playing beside Cam Jordan. Oweh needs to improve his instincts and add some weight, but he can thrive in the culture that defines the Saints' organization.

29. Green Bay Packers (13-3): Sami Cosmi, offensive tackle, Texas

Cosmi couldn't be a better fit for the Packers. He's a highly skilled pass protector.

30. Buffalo Bills (13-3): Greg Newsome II, cornerback, Northwestern

A team that expects to compete for a Super Bowl bid, the Bills will look to tie up loose ends and getting Newsome can make their secondary so

much better. He has great awareness, and is really good at staying with elite receivers.

31. Kansas City Chiefs (13-3): Jalen Mayfield, offensive tackle, Michigan

After failing to win a second consecutive Super Bowl, the Chiefs are looking to revamp their offensive line, so drafting Mayfield makes sense.

32. Tampa Bay Buccaneers (13-3): Terrace Marshall Jr., wide receiver, LSU

The Buccaneers achieved their main goal this offseason in resigning every member of the Super Bowl-winning roster, so giving Tom Brady another weapon is a bonus. Marshall is a solid deep threat, and he will learn a lot from the Bucs' receiving crew.



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