

Blackman lifts Mavs past lifeless Jazz

DALLAS (AP) — Dallas Mavericks guard Rolando Blackman hadn't been himself since returning after missing 11 games with a sprained knee ligament.

Blackman, the Mavericks' three-time All-Star, had scored less than double figures in three of five games. Blackman hadn't had back-to-back games of fewer than 10 points since 1983 and Dallas fans were wondering if Blackman's injury might still be lingering.

Blackman gave his answer Tuesday night, hitting eight of 15 shots and scoring 18 points to help the Mavericks to a 124-93 rout of the Utah Jazz.

"I'd say Ro is back," said Mavericks coach John MacLeod. "He's turned the corner as far as conditioning is concerned. He was his old self tonight."

Blackman contended that his uncharacteristic performance since returning was more a product of a reduced role in the Mavericks offense than problems with the knee.

"The legs are here; they feel fine," he said. "The cardiovascular conditioning is there. It's fine. The thing is I was used more in the offense tonight. The next game, things might change again so we'll just wait and see what happens."

Derek Harper scored 7 of his 21 points during a 21-4 run in the final 4:48 of the third period to break the game open.

Roy Tarpley added 19 points and 13 rebounds as the Mavericks broke a four-game losing streak. Utah, which fell 7½ games behind front-running Dallas in fourth place in the Midwest Division, had won four straight before Tuesday night.

Blackman said greater attention to team defense was the reason the Mavericks broke their longest losing streak of the season. The Jazz committed 20 turnovers and Mavericks owned a 47-34 rebounding advantage.

"We were really intense on defense right from the start," Blackman said. "We've been really working on team defense in practice. Tonight we were switching and helping. That's what you have to do to beat a good team like Utah."

Utah coach Frank Layden was looking forward to Wednesday night's rematch in Salt Lake City.

"That's one good thing about the NBA," Layden said. "There's another game tomorrow."

All-Stars

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Wilkins, Spud Webb and "Air" Jordan. Also featured were Phi Slama Jama alumni Clyde "The Glide" Drexler and Greg "Cadillac" Anderson.

After Webb bombed in the first round by missing two of his three dunk attempts, the competition shaped up as a head-to-head battle between Wilkins and Jordan to determine who had the right stuff.

Wilkins executed dunks which received perfect scores of 50 from the panel of judges on his first two attempts.

But on his third dunk, 'Nique got nuked. Wilkins threw down a powerful two-handed windmill dunk that received an undeservingly low 45. That set up Jordan for the win.

Jordan misfired on the first attempt of his final dunk. Jordan looked to the sideline at the famed Dr. J, who motioned for him to take off from the free throw line.

Jordan dribbled the length of the court before lifting off from the stripe 15 feet away from the rim. With legs spread and tongue flapping in the wind, Jordan tomahawked the dunk for a 50 and the win.

For the coming months, children on playgrounds and driveways and players in musty gyms across the country will be spending long hours alone with a ball and a hoop.

They'll be emulating the moves of Bird, Jordan, Wilkins and the rest of the All-Stars. And that's what basketball is all about.

Olajuwon leads Rockets past Celts to end string of losses to Boston

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston's Akeem Olajuwon scored 30 points and Eric "Sleepy" Floyd, scoreless in the first half, added 14 clutch points to lead the Rockets to a 129-120 NBA victory over Boston Tuesday night.

Houston's victory was its fourth in a row and ended a 7-game losing streak against the Celtics.

Olajuwon and Floyd nullified a 44-point performance by Larry Bird.

Kevin McHale added 28 points and got 12 rebounds. Bird led Boston rebounders with 15.

The Celtics, whose final lead came early in the second quarter, pulled within four points at 123-119 with 1:15 left to play but two baskets by Floyd and one by Joe Barry Carroll ended the rally.

Rodney McCray scored 23 points for the Rockets and Purvis Short added 21.

The Rockets led by 10 points twice in the second quarter and took a 67-60 lead at halftime, paced by Olajuwon's 20 points and 9 first-half rebounds.

Bird scored 8 straight points for Boston in the third quarter, knotting the score at 77-77.

McHale later tied it at 79-79 before the Rockets outscored the Celtics 17-9 over the rest of the period for a 96-88 lead going into the fourth quarter.

Short hit three straight baskets to give the Rockets a 55-45 lead with 3:55 to go in the first half and a basket by Jim Petersen with 2:09 to go gave Houston a 61-51 lead.

A 3-point basket and a 2-pointer

by Bird helped the Celtics narrow the lead at the half.

The Rockets scored their most points against the Celtics since a 132-117 victory Oct. 24, 1973, in Boston Garden.

The Celtics got little help from their bench. They were outscored 45-7 by the Rockets reserves.

"They take one guy out and here comes another," Boston Coach K.C. Jones said. "They've got Short and Joe Barry coming off the bench. How many footprints can someone put on your butt?"

The Rockets took the lead early in the second quarter and never trailed again.

"We played with full intensity," Olajuwon said. "We always want to beat Boston and now we have proved that we can do it."

Wales teams nip Campbell teams in battle between hockey All-Stars

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Mario Lemieux capped a record-breaking night with his third goal and sixth point of the game at 1:08 of overtime as the Wales Conference beat the Campbell Conference 6-5 Tuesday in the 39th NHL All-Star Game.

Lemieux, who set up the Wales Conference's first three goals and scored the fourth, had given his team a 5-4 lead at 8:07 of the third period. But Luc Robitaille tied the score by beating goaltender Patrick Roy for his second goal of the game with 3:32 to go in regulation, sending the game into overtime.

But Lemieux, the NHL's leading scorer, wasted little time in getting the game-winner. He picked up a

feed from Mats Naslund, who finished with a record-setting five assists, shook off a check in front and put a backhand through the legs of goaltender Mike Vernon.

Lemieux, of the Pittsburgh Penguins, was named the game's Most Valuable Player for the second time, having captured the award in 1985.

The victory was the fourth in a row and 10th in 12 games for the Wales Conference since the current format was adopted in 1975.

Lemieux set up a first-period goal by Tomas Sandstrom and assisted on second-period goals by Mike Gartner and Peter Stastny before scoring his first goal at 11:34 of the second period to give the Wales Conference a 4-2 lead.

After Denis Savard's goal at 5:19 evened the score at 4-4, Lemieux made it 5-4 with 11:53 to play in regulation by beating Vernon with a high shot after taking a pass from Naslund.

It also broke the All-Star record of four points in a game, held by six players.

The game, before a standing-room-only crowd of 17,878, was played under the cloud of the death of former St. Louis Blues defenseman Barclay Plager, who died of a brain tumor last Saturday. Plager, who was scheduled to be an honorary co-captain of the Campbell Conference team, was honored in pre-game ceremonies.

North Korea using Games to unify nation

CALGARY, Alberta (AP) — North Korea will not let its love for the Olympics prevent it from using the Games to try to reach its goal of reunification with the South, a top Pyongyang sports official said Tuesday.

Chang Ung, secretary general of the North Korean Olympic Committee, also said the government and Olympic organizers in Seoul had been the main obstacle to a settlement on the issue, which has led to a boycott of the Games by the North and two close allies.

In an hourlong interview, Chang said repeatedly that discussions on the North's involvement in the Games must now be part of larger discussions directly between the two countries aimed at reunifying the peninsula.

The International Olympic Committee has mediated four sets of talks between North and South and has offered Pyongyang all or parts of five sports.

"We love the Olympics," said Chang, who is here with North Korea's six-member team for the Winter Olympics. "But first, we have to consider our nation's fate."

"It is a sign of the unity of Korea. First, we have to protect national interests. If the Olympics should make certain contributions to the reunification of our divided nation, it is OK. But if anything should make some obstacles for the unification of the whole nation, then we cannot agree."

The North, he said, has proposed holding preliminary discussions Feb.

19 in Panmunjom to set the stage for meetings between politicians, leading dignitaries and Olympic officials on the reunification question.

Those talks, he said, would deal with reducing military expenditures and easing tensions between the two sides, as well as Olympic issues.

"I hope something comes out good for us. So we are waiting and will see what developments will be," Chang said.

The North Korean official said the Olympic phase of such direct talks would focus on such points as splitting television rights fees, allowing free access to the North for Olympic athletes, officials and journalists, and other technical and logistical questions.

UT's Mays, SMU's Bluitt players of week

DALLAS (AP) — Texas guard Travis Mays earned men's basketball player-of-the-week honors, while Southern Methodist's Felicia Bluitt was named women's player of the week, the Southwest Conference announced Tuesday.

Mays, from Ocala, Fla., accounted for 42 points, 19 rebounds and three assists in helping the Longhorns to victories over Baylor and Arkansas. Mays had 25 points and 13 rebounds against first-place Arkansas and 17 points and six rebounds against Baylor.

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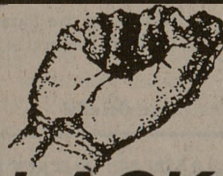
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