San Antonio Spurs guard Tony Parker (9) drives past Memphis Grizzlies guard Ben McLemore (23) during the second half of an NBA basketball game on Jan 24, in Memphis, Tennessee. (AP)

Celtics dump Clippers to end four-game slide

76ers subdue Bulls

PHILADELPHIA, Jan 25, (AP): Ben Simmons had 19 points, 17 rebounds and 14 assists for his fifth triple-double of the season to lead the Philadelphia 76ers to a 115-101 victory over the Chicago Bulls on Wednesday night.

Dario Saric added 21 points and 10 rebounds and Joel Embiid had 22 points for the 76ers, who have won seven of 10.

Bobby Portis scored 22 points and Zach LaVine had 21 for the Bulls.

Philadelphia played without guards JJ Redick (left leg), T.J. McConnell (personal) and Jerryd Bayless (left wrist), but Simmons picked up the slack.

The rookie was just two assists away from a triple-double in the first half when he helped the 76ers to a 55-41 halftime lead with 11 points, 13 rebounds and eight assists. His slam dunk with 7:40 left in the third quarter was part of a dominating period for Philadelphia.

Rockets 104, Mavericks 97

In Dallas, James Harden scored 25 points after getting named to his sixth straight Western Conference All-Star team and the Houston Rockets beat the Dallas Mavericks.

Trevor Ariza had 23 points as the Rockets beat their Texas rivals for the sixth straight time, a streak that started with a four-game sweep last season. Houston won its fourth straight game and seventh in the past nine.

Eric Gordon scored 17 points on 4-of-7 shooting from 3-point range. Southwest Division-leading Houston was up and down from beyond the arc, going 10 of 14 in the first quarter and 2 of 15 in the second. The Rockets finished two shy of their season high in 3s, going 21 of 51.

Wesley Matthews matched his season high with 29 points for the Mavericks, who lost for the seventh time in 10 games since a season-best four-game winning streak that helped lift them out of last place in the West.

Celtics 113, Clippers 102

In Los Angeles, Kyrie Irving scored 20 points, Jayson Tatum had 18 and the Boston Celtics defeated the Los Angeles Clippers to snap a season-high four-game losing streak.

The Celtics connected on 14 of 40 3-pointers and outrebounded the Clippers 47-40. Irving also had eight rebounds and seven assists.

Marcus Morris and Terry Rozier III each added 15 points for Boston.

Boston Celtics guard Kyrie Irving (left), shoots as Los Angeles Clippers guard Tyrone Wallace defends during the second half of an NBA basketball game on Jan 24, in Los Angeles. The Celtics won 113-102. (AP)

Blake Griffin led the Clippers with 23 points and Lou Williams had 20 in Los Angeles' third consecutive loss. Griffin, however, was 1 for 7 on 3-pointers and Williams 6 of 18 from the field.

The Clippers had won six straight before starting their current losing streak.

Trail Blazers 123, Timberwolves 114

In Portland, Ore, Damian Lillard had 31 points a day after getting his third All-Star nod and the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Minnesota Timberwolves.

CJ McCollum added 28 points in Portland's seventh straight win at home, longest streak of the season. Lillard made six 3-pointers and the Blazers had 17 3s in the game, one shy of their season high.

Andrew Wiggins had 24 points for the Timberwolves, who had won seven of their last nine games but trailed by 19 points during the fourth quarter.

Minnesota didn't have Jimmy Butler, who missed a third straight game with a sore right knee. Jamal Crawford returned after missing two games with a strained big toe on his left foot.

Spurs 108, Grizzlies 85

In Memphis, Tenn, Pau Gasol finished an assist short of a triple-double, Patty Mills scored 15 points and the San Antonio Spurs beat the Memphis Grizzlies.

Gasol had 14 points, 15 rebounds and nine assists, and Bryn Forbes and Danny Green also finished with 14 points each. Davis Bertans and Dejounte Murray each had 11 points.

Marc Gasol led the Grizzlies with 18 points and seven rebounds, while Deyonta Davis added 12 points as the Grizzlies were hampered by 43 percent shooting, including 2 of 18 from outside the arc, and 17 turnovers.

Between illness and rest, each team was down at least four players, creating some makeshift lineups. Spurs leading-scorer LaMarcus Aldridge took the night off for rest.

BASKETBALL

Pelicans 101, Hornets 96

In Charlotte, NC, Jrue Holiday and Anthony Davis each scored 19 points, DeMarcus Cousins had 16 points and 13 rebounds and the New Orleans Pelicans defeated the Charlotte Hornets for their sixth win in the last seven games.

Cousins had 16 points and 13 rebounds for the Pelicans.

Dwight Howard had 22 points and 16 rebounds in his 1,000th career game to lead the Hornets, who fell to 2-2 on the five-game homestand.

Holiday made a pair of driving layups late in the fourth quarter to help spark the Pelicans.

With 2:14 left, Holiday drove left through the lane and a made a tough contested shot over Nic Batum. After a turnover by the Hornets, Holiday took Michael Kidd-Gilchrist to the hole and scored again.

Batum answered with a 3 from the wing to cut the lead to one with one minute remaining — but that was as close as the Hornets would get.

Pacers 116, Suns 101

In Indianapolis, Thaddeus Young scored 22 points, Victor Oladipo had 21 points and nine assists and the Indiana Pacers pulled away from the Phoenix Suns. The Pacers have won five of six, blowing out the Suns for the second time in 10 days.

Josh Jackson had 20 points, while Greg Monroe had 16 points and a season-high 17 rebounds to lead Phoenix, which never led and didn't get closer than 10 over the final three quarters. The Suns have lost two straight and five of six.

Indiana sealed it by closing the first half with a 13-4 flurry to make it 63-44. It opened the second half on a 16-2 run to make it 79-46 with 9:20 left.

Devin Booker and Troy Daniels each scored 19 points.

McIlroy lurks

Donaldson leads Dubai Desert Classic

DUBAI, Jan 25, (AFP): Jamie Donaldson led the Dubai Desert Classic with a first round 10-under par 62 on Thursday with two-time winner Rory McIlroy three shots off the Welsh leader.

With hardly any wind at Emirates Golf Club, a slew of low scores were produced, none better than the 42-year-old Donaldson who has a one-shot lead over English duo David Horsey and Anthony Wall.

Another Englishman, Tyrrell Hatton, was fourth at 64, with the tournament's headline act McIlroy among a group of five players tied fifth at seven-under par 65.

Spain's world number 8 Sergio Garcia, the defending champion, opened with a five-under par 67.

Last week's champion in Abu Dhabi and reigning European number one Tommy Fleetwood made 69 while world No10 Henrik Stenson submitted a card of 70 after a late double bogey.

Donaldson, who won in Abu Dhabi in 2013 and represented Europe in the 2014 Ryder Cup in Gleneagles as then world No23, has endured a disappointing couple of years which saw his world ranking slip to 292.

After starting from the 10th tee, Donaldson was bogey-free for his round with an eagle on the par-5 13th and moved to 11-under par after four birdies in a row from the fourth hole onwards.

With two holes to play, he had a shot at Ernie Els's 24-year-old course record of 61, and more importantly, a chance to shoot the first-ever 59 on the European Tour.

He almost holed his chip from the edge of the green for a birdie before settling for par on the eighth hole, and then closed with a bogey on the ninth after hitting his drive into the fairway bunker.

"I didn't know the course record. I was only thinking of 59, really. Probably shouldn't really be thinking that. Should have been concentrating on hitting fairways and hitting greens, giving myself chances," said Donaldson, whose last of three wins on the European Tour came at the Czech Masters in August 2014.

"I don't know, I fancied it. Wasn't to be. I knew I had to chip that one in on the eighth. It was close. Didn't go in and that was it then.

"But I'm very happy with how I've played.

"59 is only a bonus, isn't it? It's icing on the cake. Everybody wants to shoot 59, but it's something that is only if you're playing really good golf, and that's gone now. Now, it's just a case of more of the same moving on."

Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy plays a shot on the 10th hole during the first round of the Dubai Desert Classic golf tournament in Dubai, UAE on Jan 25. (AP)

GOLF

McIlroy said the conditions were benign and he was glad to make the most of it. "I don't think you could have got better conditions out there.

"The greens in the morning are perfect and there wasn't much wind for probably the first 12 or 13 holes. So you needed to take advantage of it. Thankfully I was able to do that," said the world No.11.

NBA Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, Jan 25, (RTRS): Results from the NBA games on Wednesday.

New Orleans	101	Charlotte	96	Houston	104	Dallas	97
Utah	98	Detroit (OT)	95	San Antonio	108	Memphis	85
Indiana	116	Phoenix	101	Portland	123	Minnesota	114
Philadelphia	115	Chicago	101	Boston	113	LA Clippers	102
Toronto	108	Atlanta	93				

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Boston	35	14	.714	-
Toronto	32	14	.696	1-1/2
Philadelphia	23	21	.523	9-1/2
New York	21	27	.438	13-1/2
Brooklyn	18	30	.375	16-1/2

Central Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Cleveland	27	19	.587	-
Indiana	26	22	.542	2
Milwaukee	24	22	.522	3
Detroit	22	24	.478	5
Chicago	18	30	.375	10

Southeast Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Miami	27	20	.574	-
Washington	26	21	.553	1
Charlotte	19	27	.413	7-1/2
Atlanta	14	33	.298	13
Orlando	14	33	.298	13

Western Conference

Northwest Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Minnesota	31	19	.620	-
Oklahoma City	27	20	.574	2-1/2
Portland	26	22	.542	4
Denver	24	23	.511	5-1/2
Utah	20	28	.417	10

Pacific Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Golden State	38	10	.792	-
LA Clippers	23	24	.489	14-1/2
LA Lakers	18	29	.383	19-1/2
Phoenix	17	31	.354	21
Sacramento	14	33	.298	23-1/2

Southwest Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Houston	34	12	.739	-
San Antonio	32	18	.640	4
New Orleans	26	21	.553	8-1/2
Memphis	17	30	.362	17 1/2
Dallas	16	32	.333	19

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