



Cincinnati Reds relief pitcher Jose De Leon (87) throws during the sixth inning of a baseball game against the Los Angeles Dodgers in Los Angeles. Reds won 6-5. (AP) — See Page 14

# Sports

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## Chelsea hold lackluster Madrid

Blues show strength in CL semis 1st leg

**MADRID, April 28, (AP):** With a dominant start and a milestone goal by Christian Pulisic, Chelsea showed their strength against Real Madrid in the Champions League semifinals.

Chelsea took control early in first leg to hold the Spanish powerhouse to a 1-1 away draw, with Pulisic becoming the first U.S. international to score in the tournament's last four. He also surpassed DaMarcus Beasley to become the top American scorer in Champions League history with five goals.

A red-hot Karim Benzema equalized for a lackluster Madrid squad on a rainy night at the Alfredo Di Stefano Stadium in the first Champions League match since the controversial Super League folded last week amid widespread criticism.

### SOCCER

The largely closed breakaway competition would have had Real Madrid as one of its leaders, and Chelsea also were among their founding members before dropping the idea along with the other English clubs. Madrid didn't officially back out of the Super League but had downplayed the possibility of retaliation by UEFA in its Champions League matches. There were no refereeing controversies in Tuesday's match.

The second leg is on May 5 in London.

Chelsea got off to a fast start and had chances to add to their lead after Pulisic opened the scoring with a nice finish in the 14th minute off a high pass by Antonio Rudiger inside the area. Pulisic calmly got past goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois before hitting the net past the Madrid defenders trying to block his shot at the goal line.

"It was a great finish, great composure," Chelsea captain Cesar Azpilicueta said of the 22-year-old Pulisic, who has been thriving after being marred by injuries early in the season. "He's an amazing player, he's a young player, he's growing and improving. I'm very pleased with his goal because he's an important player for the team."

Pulisic is the second U.S. international to play in a Champions League semifinal after Beasley for PSV Eindhoven in a first-leg game against AC Milan in 2005.

Madrid evened the match on Benzema's volley from inside the area in the 29th, and there were few significant chances either way during the rest of the game.

Benzema's goal came a few minutes after he clipped the post with a long-range shot. The French striker controlled a loose ball with his head before turning and firing a volley into the top of the net for his 13th goal in his last 14 matches. It was Benzema's 16th goal in his last 17 home games with Madrid.

Chelsea gave little space to Madrid and were the more dangerous team early on at the Di Stefano in Madrid's training complex. The hosts struggled defensively with their setup of three central defenders.

"We started the game very, very well — very aggressively, with a lot of quality," Chelsea coach Thomas Tuchel said. "We deserved to win the first half. We had a lot of chances. We should have scored at least one more when the chances and half-chances were there."

Not long before Pulisic's opener, Timo Werner had his strike from in front of the goal stopped by a superb reflex save by Courtois, a former Chelsea player.

"It's true that it was a complicated first half," Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said. "But we are still alive going into the second leg. We are happy with the result in general."

Former Chelsea forward Eden Hazard, coming off a long injury layoff, entered the match in the second half but couldn't find spaces to spark Madrid to victory.

Madrid, making a record 14th semifinal appearance, won three straight Champions League titles from 2016-18, before Cristiano Ronaldo left, but the 13-time champion was eliminated in the round of 16 in the last two editions.

Chelsea won the European title in 2012 and returned to the semifinals two years later, but hadn't been back to the last four since. Tuchel is trying to make it to a second consecutive final after a runner-up finish with Paris Saint-Germain last season. Chelsea has only two losses since the German coach took over in January.



Chelsea's Reece James, (center left), jumps for the ball with Real Madrid's Nacho during the Champions League semifinal first leg soccer match between Real Madrid and Chelsea at the Alfredo di Stefano stadium in Madrid, Spain. (AP)



Minnesota Timberwolves forward Anthony Edwards dunks on a fast break during the first quarter against the Houston Rockets in an NBA basketball game in Houston. (AP)

Bucks avoid sweep as short-handed Mavs pound Warriors

## Nets rally past Raptors, clinch playoff spot

**TAMPA, Fla., April 28, (AP):** Kevin Durant scored seven of his 17 points in the fourth quarter, Jeff Green had 22 points and the Brooklyn Nets beat the Toronto Raptors 116-103 Tuesday night and clinched a playoff spot.

Durant, who was playing his second game after returning from a thigh injury, added 10 rebounds in 33 minutes for his eighth double-double of the season. Durant hit a 3-pointer with 1:47 remaining and glared at the Toronto bench after putting his team up 111-101.

Kyrie Irving finished with nine points, six rebounds and four assists while making just 3 of 13 shots. But the other seven Nets who played all finished in double figures on the night Brooklyn became the first Eastern Conference team to lock up a postseason berth.

The Nets won for a third straight time and the fourth time in five games to prevent Toronto from pulling off the season sweep. The Raptors, who were led by Kyle Lowry's 24 points and six 3-pointers, had their five-game home winning streak end. One of those victories was a 114-103 defeat of the Nets in Tampa last week.

Newly signed guard Mike James scored all of his 11 points in the fourth quarter as the Nets rallied from an 83-80 deficit to start the final period. Blake Griffin scored 17 points off the bench, while Joe Harris added 16 points and four 3-pointers. Brooklyn shot 48.2%, hit 18 3-pointers and handed out 30 assists.

### Bucks 114, Hornets 104

In Charlotte, N.C., Gianni Antetokounmpo had 29 points and 12 rebounds, Brook Lopez added 22 points and the Milwaukee Bucks held off the Charlotte Hornets 114-104 to avoid a sweep of the teams' regular-season series.

Kris Middleton scored 17 points and Jrue Holiday chipped in with 12 points and 10 assists for the Bucks, who bounced back from a 111-104 loss to the short-handed Atlanta Hawks on Sunday.

Devonte Graham scored 25 points and Miles Bridges added 21 points and 10 rebounds for the Hornets, who had their two-game win streak snapped.

The Hornets beat the Bucks by 12 at home in January, and then by eight on April 9 in Milwaukee.

Antetokounmpo seemed determined not to let that happen again.

The two-time NBA MVP played with aggression, finishing 11 of 19 from the field and also dishing out eight assists. He got fired up midway through the game when he felt Charlotte's P.J. Washington tried to trip

him after Antetokounmpo stole the ball from him.

Milwaukee built a 62-45 halftime lead behind 15 points and eight rebounds from Antetokounmpo while the Bucks' defense held the Hornets to 4-of-18 shooting from beyond the arc.

### Mavericks 133, Warriors 103

In San Francisco, Luka Doncic scored 39 points and the short-handed Dallas Mavericks jumped on Golden State from the start to thump the Warriors 133-103.

Stephen Curry scored 27 points with five more 3-pointers, extending his NBA record for 3-pointers in a month to 90 in April after he reached 85 on Sunday night to pass James Harden's 82 set in November 2019.

Tim Hardaway Jr. added 13 points and seven rebounds off the bench as the Mavericks led by as many as 43 and got 60 points from their reserves a night after losing 113-106 in Sacramento.

Just when the Warriors were determined to gain some momentum for the important stretch run, they delivered a dud and had their four-game home winning streak snapped.

The Warriors went 9 minutes, 40 seconds without scoring spanning the first and second quarters and were just 5 for 27 midway through the second quarter. That drought eventually led to a 47-16 hole.

Doncic shot 15 for 23 and added eight assists and six rebounds. Dallas has won seven of nine against Golden State and four in a row on the Warriors' home floor.

### Timberwolves 114, Rockets 107

In Houston, Karl-Anthony Towns

scored 31 points and the Minnesota Timberwolves beat the Houston Rockets 114-107 for their third straight victory.

Anthony Edwards had 19 points and nine rebounds, and D'Angelo Russell added 15 points and seven assists for the Timberwolves, who have won three in a row for the first time since starting 3-0 in the 2019-20 season.

Minnesota won in Houston for the first time since Feb. 17, 2012, snapping a 14-game losing streak.

Kelly Olynyk had 28 points and nine rebounds for Houston. Christian Wood had 24 points and 18 rebounds, Jae'Sean Tate scored 20 points, and Kenyon Martin Jr. added 15 points off the bench.

### BASKETBALL

The Rockets have lost five straight and 10 of their last 11. They're 4-37 since Feb. 4.

Houston tied the game at 102 with 2:38 remaining. On the following play, Towns fouled out of the game with an offensive foul. He added seven rebounds and five assists.

Without Towns, Minnesota closed out the game on a 12-5 run.

The game matched the teams at the bottom of the Western Conference standings. Minnesota improved to 19-44, going 3 1/2 games up on Houston (15-47).

### Trail Blazers 133, Pacers 112

In Indianapolis, Anfernee Simons scored 27 points on nine 3-pointers, one shy of Damian Lillard's franchise record, and the Portland Trail Blazers routed the Indiana Pacers 133-112 to

end their five-game losing streak.

Lillard added 23 points and the Blazers shot a season-best 57.1% from beyond the arc to end their longest skid of the season. Simons was 10 for 10 on 3-pointers.

Malcolm Brogdon and Oshae Brissett each finished with 18 points for the Pacers, who had a three-game winning streak end.

With the Trail Blazers going 20 of 35 from 3-point range, Indiana never really had a chance.

Portland broke open the game in the second quarter by taking advantage of a 13-5 discrepancy in offensive rebounds and, of course, the long-range shooting.

The second of Lillard's four 3s broke a 50-all tie and spurred 21-5 run that gave the Trail Blazers a 71-55 lead late in the first half. A flagrant foul against CJ McCollum in the final minute allowed the Pacers to claw their way back within 11 and a technical foul on Lillard after the first half ended got Indiana within 73-63 before the start of the second half.

But Portland prevented the Pacers from making a serious challenge and used its second 3-point barrage to close the third quarter with a 113-78 lead.

### Thunder 119, Celtics 115

In Boston, Lu Dort scored 24 points, Darius Bazley added 21 points and 10 rebounds, and the Oklahoma City Thunder snapped a 14-game skid with a 119-115 win over the Boston Celtics.

Isaiah Roby and Ty Jerome each finished with 15 points for the Thunder, who won their first game since March 31 against Toronto.

Oklahoma City committed 27 turnovers but went 13 of 30 from 3-point range to beat back a furious late charge by Boston.

Jaylen Brown had 39 points for the Celtics, who have lost four out of five as they fight to maintain their position in the tight Eastern Conference playoff race.

Payton Pritchard added a career-high 28 points for Boston.

The Celtics made the Thunder work in the closing minutes.

Oklahoma City had its 11-point lead erased in the third quarter before taking a 106-95 edge on a layup by Bazley with 2:25 left in the game.

It was 110-100 before the Celtics reeled off seven straight points. Boston applied pressure, but Bazley got in the lane for a dunk.

Boston cut it to 112-109 on a pair of free throws by Pritchard with 30.8 seconds remaining. The Celtics then fouled Theo Maledon, who hit two free throws.

### NBA Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, April 28, (AP): NBA results and standings on Tuesday.

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Portland	133	Indiana	112	
Milwaukee	114	Charlotte	104	
Oklahoma City	119	Boston	115	
Brooklyn	116	Toronto	103	
Minnesota	114	Houston	107	
Dallas	133	Golden State	103	

  

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
x-Brooklyn	42	20	.677	-
Philadelphia	40	21	.656	1-1/2
New York	34	28	.548	8
Boston	32	30	.516	10
Toronto	26	36	.419	16

  

Southeast Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Atlanta	34	28	.548	-
Miami	32	30	.516	2
Charlotte	30	31	.492	3-1/2
Washington	27	34	.443	6-1/2
Orlando	18	43	.295	15-1/2

  

Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Milwaukee	38	23	.623	-
Indiana	29	32	.475	9
Chicago	26	35	.426	12
Cleveland	21	40	.344	17
Detroit	19	43	.306	19-1/2

  

Western Conference				
Southwest Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Dallas	34	27	.557	-
Memphis	31	29	.517	2-1/2
San Antonio	31	29	.517	2-1/2
New Orleans	27	34	.443	7
Houston	15	47	.242	19-1/2

  

Northwest Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
x-Utah	44	17	.721	-
Denver	40	21	.656	4
Portland	33	28	.541	11
Oklahoma City	21	41	.339	23-1/2
Minnesota	19	44	.302	26

  

Pacific Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Phoenix	43	18	.705	-
LA Clippers	43	20	.683	1
LA Lakers	36	25	.590	7
Golden State	31	31	.500	12-1/2
Sacramento	25	36	.410	18

x denotes clinched playoff spot



Golden State Warriors forward Andrew Wiggins, (left), passes the ball next to Dallas Mavericks guard Luka Doncic during the first half of an NBA basketball game in San Francisco. (AP)