

Cavs rolling behind James, Irving against Raptors

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

CLEVELAND — LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers are living up to the top spot in the Eastern Conference playoffs.

NBA PLAYOFFS
After drubbing the Toronto Raptors in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference finals on Tuesday night, the Cavaliers are looking downright unbeatable with a 9-0 record this postseason to show for it.

The Cavs are rolling, and James and Kyrie Irving are a big reason why.

James scored 24 points and Irving, the team's leading scorer this postseason, had 27 as the Cavs made just seven 3-pointers but shot 55.4 percent and scored 56 points in the paint.

"(Tuesday) they wanted us to be in the paint," James said. "We tried to take advantage of that. I keep telling you we're not a jump-shooting team. We're a balanced team. We're able to do whatever the game dictates, and we're able to adjust to that."

The Cavaliers are the first team to win their first nine postseason games since the 2012 San Antonio Spurs, who won their first 10 before losing four straight to the Oklahoma City Thunder.

"It's one game," Raptors

coach Dwane Casey said of the 115-84 loss Tuesday. "It's just one game."

James was pleased to go home with the win in Game 1. But he enters Game 2 of the best-of-seven series on Thursday hoping for clarity from officials who called 45 total fouls in the first game, 25 on the Raptors.

"Nowadays to get a flagrant foul, you've got to fall down and grab your head and roll on the ground. LeBron being so strong, guys bounce off him," Cavs coach Tyronn Lue said Wednesday. "He's not going to hit the ground as hard as other guys do. A lot of times it's still a flagrant foul. If someone else gets hit, they fall on the ground, grabbing their head, taking 30, 40 seconds to get up. That just automatically triggers the referees to go to the scorer's table and review it and come up with a flagrant foul. So I don't know."

Kyle Lowry, the Raptors' All-Star point guard, continued a wildly erratic postseason. He was 4-of-14 shooting and spent most of the second half on the bench with his head in a towel.

There is growing doubt 7-footer Jonas Valanciunas will be able to play this week. He's still hobbled by a sprained ankle and hasn't played since that injury in Game 3 of the previous se-



KEN BLAZE | USA TODAY SPORTS

Cleveland Cavaliers forward LeBron James (left) drives against Toronto Raptors forward DeMarre Carroll during the third quarter in Game 1 on Tuesday, of the Eastern Conference Finals of the NBA Playoffs at Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland. The Cavs won 115-84.

ries against the Miami Heat.

Lowry is vital to any chance the Raptors have to pull off the playoff upset. He had a career-high 43 against the Cavs in a February victory at Air Canada Centre. Neither Lowry nor Demar DeRozan attempted a free throw Tuesday. With Lowry on the bench, the Raptors got little from Cory Joseph, who struggled at both ends of the court.

"We've got to come out of

the gate with that mindset, being aggressive like we usually do," Lowry said. "I think we didn't try to do that until later on in the game."

DeMarre Carroll had a strong record defending James entering Tuesday's game but was manhandled in the paint in Game 1. James set a playoff-career best going 11 of 13 from the floor (84.6 percent).

James' first nine baskets came near the re-

stricted area and attempted only one shot — a 3 from the wing — outside of the paint. Cleveland went inside after averaging nearly 17 3-pointers per game through the first two playoff rounds. The Cavs led by as many as 35 in the fourth quarter. But James wanted to give the credit to Irving.

"He's grown," James said. "Every single day, every single week, month over

these past two years, becoming a leader, a staple of this team."

Casey thought the defensive rotations broke down once the Raptors denied the Cavs 3-point looks.

"We've got to continue to keep those (3-pointers) down, work to keep those down, and also at the same time make sure we understand and be disciplined as far as how we take away their roll guy," Casey said. "Because I thought that hurt us, especially in the second quarter."

The sweeps in each of the first two rounds meant the Cavs played just eight games in the last 33 days, while the Raptors were stretched to seven games in each of their first two series. All the time off has done little to disrupt Cleveland's rhythm. It might have sapped the Raptors of some of their bounce, but Thursday is the time to rediscover it, or the Raptors will be down 2-0 heading home in their first-ever Eastern Conference final appearance.

"I thought they were quicker than us tonight, and the reasons are not important. It's not an excuse," Casey said. "It's one game. But they were the quicker team, and we've got to make adjustments of how we want to combat that quickness."



BDN FILE

Former University of Maine basketball star Liz Wood shows her lighter side during an interview with the BDN in March. Wood is a nominee for the 2016 America East Woman of the Year Award.

Wood

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Her awards include the America East Elite 18 Award, America East Female Scholar-Athlete of the Year, 2015 Dean Smith Award and a CoSIDA Academic All-American.

Wood has served as president of the UMaine Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and the America East Conference representative on the Division I Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.

UMaine signee named MVP

Naira Caceres Martell capped her pre-collegiate career recently by being named the Most Valuable Player at the Spanish Championship after leading her team to a gold medal at the U18 national games.

The 6-foot guard averaged 18.5 points, 15.2 rebounds, 4.3 assists and 2.5 steals during the tournament and was named the event's top rebounder.

Caceres, who hails from Las Palmas De Gran Canaria, played for Club Baloncesto Islas Canarias. The Blue Star Europe five-star recruit averaged 14 points and 12 rebounds for her club team and was named the second best student-athlete in Spain in 2015.

UMPI softball players honored

Nine University of Maine-Presque Isle softball players have received honors from the United States Collegiate Athletic Association and the Association of

Division III Independents.

Sara Packard of St. Albans and Katie Patenaude of Presque Isle each was chosen for the USCAA All-America first team and the All-Independent first team.

Packard, a sophomore pitcher, had a 19-14 record with a 3.02 earned run average and 178 strikeouts. Patenaude, a senior first baseman, batted .364 with a team-leading 11 doubles and 28 RBIs along with two home runs.

Freshman second baseman Hannah Williams was an All-Independent second-team choice and a USCAA honorable mention All-American. She batted .373 with 36 runs scored, six doubles, 20 RBIs and nine stolen bases.

Other All-Independent first-team selections were freshman third baseman Dalynn Jacobs (.304, 5 doubles, 18 RBIs, 8 stolen bases) and sophomore outfielder Nicole Marucci of Naples (.353, 4 doubles, 7 steals).

All-Independent second-team picks were senior outfielder Amanda Allen of Limestone and freshman outfielder Jordi Legassie of Presque Isle.

Dinah Bilodeau of Knox, Jessica Campbell of Lisbon, Marucci and Packard also were chosen for the USCAA All-Academic Team, which recognizes students with a 3.5 GPA or higher.

Second-year head coach Sara Shaw was named AD31 Co-Coach of the Year after guiding the Owls to an association-best 25-15 record.

being one. I compare her to Kristy Bernatchez," McLaughlin said, referring to the former Messalonskee star who plays for the University of North Carolina.

She also noted Lowell had an exceptional maturity level, even as a freshman.

"She's so much fun to watch. She's so long, lanky and athletic, and she never gets tired," McLaughlin said.

Lowell's attending BU is contingent upon her acceptance into the school and meeting NCAA eligibility requirements.

Faulk to be inducted into Pats hall of fame

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Running back Kevin Faulk, a three-time Super Bowl champion, has been named as the 25th entrant into the New England Patriots Hall of Fame.

Faulk was elected into the Patriots Hall of Fame through a fan vote, the team announced Wednesday.

Faulk joins Troy Brown (2012) and Tedy Bruschi (2013) as the third player to enter the hall as a career Patriot with three Super Bowl rings. He also is the fifth player to be selected by the fans in their first year of eligibility, joining Drew Bledsoe (2011), Brown, Bruschi and Ty Law (2014).

"Kevin Faulk helped deliver three Super Bowl championships and redefined the way an entire generation of Patriots fans celebrated football in New England," Patriots owner, chairman and CEO Robert Kraft said in a statement. "Despite entering the NFL as the second-leading rusher in SEC history, he arrived in New England without ego or pretense. He was a selfless and tireless contributor to the team, accepting every challenge and excelling in many roles throughout his 13-year career. His work ethic, enthusiasm for the game and clutch performances, especially on third down, earned him the respect of his coaches, teammates and fans alike."

"For all his contributions and memorable moments on the field, some of my fondest memories were of Kevin's contributions off the field. He earned our Ron Burton Community Service award

in 2009 and often involved his family in his volunteer work, teaching his children the values of giving back."

Faulk's induction ceremony will be held on Aug. 1 on the NRG Plaza outside the Patriots Hall of Fame. In addition, Faulk will be honored with a halftime ceremony at the Patriots' 2016 home opener against the Miami Dolphins on Sept. 18.

Faulk concluded his 13-year career with the Patriots as one of the most productive players in team history. He filled various roles after joining the Patriots in 1999 as a second-round pick out of Louisiana State. He is the Patriots' all-time leader in all-purpose yards (12,349) and kickoff return yards (4,098). He is also the Patriots' all-time leading return specialist, totaling 5,041 combined return yards (4,098 kick return yards and 943 punt return yards). He ranks fifth in team history in rushing yards (3,607), fifth in receptions (431), 12th in receiving yards (3,701) and eighth in punt return yards (943).

For his career, Faulk played in 161 regular-season games and averaged 4.2 yards on 864 rushing attempts with 16 touchdowns and caught 431 passes for 3,701 receiving yards and 15 touchdowns. Faulk is the Patriots' all-time leader in receptions by a running back and is one of just 30 running backs in NFL history to reach the 400-reception plateau.

During his 13 year career, Faulk helped the Patriots claim 11 winning seasons, including three Super Bowls titles and five AFC championships.

Red Sox

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which Young led off with a home run. Young, who was making his 12th start in left field, has at least one hit and an RBI in four straight games he has a plate appearance.

Kennedy was pulled after a season-high 116 pitches in 5 2/3 innings. He allowed two runs on six hits and a walk, while striking out nine. Left-hander Brian Flynn (1-0) struck out Bradley on five pitches to end the sixth and picked up his first major league victory.

Bradley singled in the ninth to extend his hitting streak to 23 games, the longest in the majors this season.

Wright (3-4) went the distance for the Red Sox, allowing three runs on five hits, while walking one and striking out six.

Wade Davis worked the ninth for his ninth save in 10 chances.

The Red Sox struck out 13

times, matching their season high for a nine-inning game.

NOTES: The Royals promoted RHP Alec Mills from Double-A Northwest Arkansas, where he led the Texas League with 44 strikeouts in 42 innings, as the 26th man for the day-night double-header. RHP Noe Ramirez

was added as the Red Sox 26th man. ... Royals RHP Chris Young, who is on the disabled list with a right forearm strain, threw 60 feet off flat ground. ... Red Sox RHP Carson Smith could be returning to the disabled list with lingering elbow soreness. ... Royals 3B Mike Moustakas went 2-for-4 with an RBI single and a

strikeout for Northwest Arkansas in a 2-1 loss to Arkansas in his first rehab game Wednesday. Moustakas, who is on the DL with a fractured left thumb, was the DH but will play third base Thursday. ... Royals LHP Mike Minor will make his first Triple-A Omaha rehab start Friday at Reno after two starts with the Naturals.



BDN FILE

Oceanside softball coach Russell Worcester hits a pregame ground ball alongside Mariners catcher Ari Curtis during warmups for the Eastern Maine Class B softball championship game in Brewer in 2013.

Softball

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He said this is one of his youngest teams and he has been surprised by their success.

To a point.

"If we did come together and play as well as we could, I thought we could be sitting where we are right now," said Worcester.

He has a formidable lineup thanks to time they spend on hitting.

"We spend a lot of time on teaching the fundamentals of hitting," said Worcester, who stresses quick, compact swings as opposed to big, looping swings.

"If you put the ball in play, some of the teams we play will make mistakes, especially teams with dominant pitchers who aren't used to fielding the ball," said Worcester, a native of Columbia Falls.

Another trademark of Worcester-coached teams is aggressive baserunning, which puts constant pres-

sure on opposing defenses.

"We steal a lot of bases and we're always looking to take the extra base," said Worcester. "You don't have to have blazing speed but you like to have smart baserunners and we have a lot of girls who do that very well."

In addition to the freshman starters, the Mariners start seniors Ari Curtis behind the plate, Brianna Duggan at first base and Kalyn Grover in left field, sophomore Casey Pine at shortstop and junior Alex is Mazurek in right field.

Grover and Curtis have been the offensive catalysts.

Sophomore Kristina Ferguson is the No. 2 pitcher.

"Chloe and Kristina both throw pretty well," said Worcester.

The Mariners have also been solid defensively, committing just five errors.

"I've been pretty happy with that. Defense keeps you in ballgames," said Worcester, who added that he has an extremely coachable group of players.

tion by getting in better shape.

"I lost a lot of weight, 30 pounds," said Niland. "Literally, the day I left last year, I knew what I wanted to be for this program and I knew I could do it. And a day didn't go by without me doing something to make sure I became the player I wanted to become."

"I'm a lot more confident and a lot more calm at the plate," she added.

Harvey worked with her father, Bill, and brother Joey on her swing.

"I've widened my stance and that has enabled me to keep my weight back," said Harvey. "That has helped me so much."

Lowell

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years in preparation for the college game.

"I'm definitely going to keep working on my shooting and my speed. You can always get better. And I want to keep developing my stick skills," Lowell said.

McLaughlin said there's no doubt in her mind that McLaughlin will be an impact freshman at BU.

"I can't imagine her not