

SPORTS

Lebron facing unfair criticisms



LEBRON JAMES

James was best player of entire play-offs

SPORTS SCOPE

By FRED STURRUP



“Out of the fray of a four-game sweep and perhaps the most excruciating play-off run in NBA history, stood the 33-year-old Lebron James a.k.a. the King of this era of basketball, having just demonstrated to the world his awesome physical talents and basketball mind on the court.”

Lebron James and his Cleveland Cavaliers' teammates crashed out of the recent National Basketball Association (NBA) championship round in four games.

The Golden State Warriors simply overwhelmed the Cavaliers from the overtime segment of the first game to the over-matched final quarters of the fourth contest.

Out of the fray of a four-game sweep and perhaps the most excruciating play-off run in NBA history, stood the 33-year-old Lebron James a.k.a. the King of this era of basketball, having just demonstrated to the world his awesome physical talents and basketball mind on the court.

Yet, the pundits have lambasted him.

It was really astonishing to me how quickly the critics came out ready to target Lebron.

They accused him of packing it in.

Even ex-NBA players, who ought to know better, attacked him, saying that he did not give enough energy in the final game.

Well, for goodness sake, did they forget the two incredibly tough series Lebron and his mates had to deal with, first against, the Indiana Pacers, a young squad itching to firmly establish themselves in the NBA? They took the Cavs to seven tough games. Then, against the Toronto Raptors, came that hard-fought first game that went to overtime

and concluded in a slim 113-112 victory.

Of course, that game took all of the fight out of the Raptors and the Cavs closed out in the next three games.

However, the Boston Celtics in the Eastern Conference championship series, proved to be another young squad chomping at the bit to do in the annual championship team, the 'Cleveland Cavaliers and King Lebron. It was another grueling encounter.

All along, Lebron was logging more minutes than anybody else and performing on an All-World level.

So, on his back, Lebron took his guys all the way to the NBA championship series, against the team they faced the three previous times, having won once and lost twice.

The world waited for the first game. It was worth the wait. Just as the Cavs had stolen the first game from the Raptors in Toronto, they came very close to stealing one from the Golden State Warriors on their home court.

George Hill missed a free throw that would have

given Cleveland the edge with just 4.7 seconds left. J. R. Smith climbed for the rebound of the missed free throw and instead of going right back up he dribbled out precious time and an overtime period was necessary.

The Warriors, given a second chance at home, delivered in a mighty way. The momentum for Kevin Durant, Steph Curry, Klay Thompson, Draymond Green, Andre Iguodola, Shaun Livingston, David West, JaVale McGee, Nick Young and company continued through to a sweep.

We'll never know what might have happened had the Cavaliers held on for that first game win in regulation time.

Lebron's huge 51-points game in that overtime loss has been forgotten.

They attacked Lebron mercilessly, after the horn sounded to end game four. The Warriors celebrated their third championship win in four years.

Why dump on Lebron though?

The man was the best player of the entire play-off with a 34.0 points average; 9.1 rebounds; 9.0 assists, 1.4 in the steals department; and 1.0 in

blocks. Throughout, he put in 41.9 minutes on average per game, more than any other and shot the ball at a .538 percentage from the field.

The man is a mere human.

He was worn down. Others, carrying his load and accomplishing so much would have caved in much sooner. It is most unfair to be critical of Lebron for what happened in that final game against the Warriors, without putting into the mix all of the factors.

Lebron will move on however and I predict that historians in years to come will judge him much more fairly.

By then, he might probably be the greatest scorer in NBA history. He finished this past regular season with 31,038 points in seventh place. Barring any lengthy absence from games in the upcoming season, he will pass Dirk Novitzki (31,187); Wilt Chamberlain (31,419); and Michael Jordan (32,292).

He will, given injury-free status, move beyond Kobe Bryant (33,643) the season after and then bear own on Karl Malone (36,928) and the leader Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (38,387). If Lebron plays four more seasons, considering he is just 33, there is a strong likelihood Lebron will be tops in points.

Yes, admittedly Lebron is 3-6 in the NBA play-off finals, at this point. He's played in nine of them through. Who knows? Before it's all over, he might get back to the NBA Championship series a few more times.

Even at the present though, he has proven himself over and over again.

In my view, the criticisms have been unfair.

The NBA King lives on!

• To respond to this column, kindly contact Fred Sturup at sturup1504@gmail.com or on WhatsApp at 727-6363.

Real Madrid, Borussia Dortmund remain dominant in standings

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Another week in the Grand Bahama Champions Soccer League (GBCSL) meant another week of intense action on the soccer pitch. For Borussia Dortmund Women's team (Sanitation Services), they aimed to shake off last week's tough loss to second place Chelsea women's team (PharmaChem) and Real Madrid Men's team (FOCOL) aspired to keep their loss column unblemished.

This past Sunday, June 10 at the YMCA Soccer Pitch, the now 9-2-0 (win/draw/loss) Real Madrid men's team remained sharp as they've been all season. Despite giving up one point by scoring in their own goal, Real Madrid dominated their way to a 3-1 victory over Borussia Dortmund's mens team.

The trio of Keith MacGregor, Kianno Miller and Jay Philippe led the Real Madrid attack with one goal apiece.

It has been a trying season for coach Donnie Knowles and the mens team but growing pains are all a part of the sport. The team remained fourth in the standings with a record of 0-1-10 for the year.

Nonetheless, Borussia Dortmund women's team bounced back from their first loss of the season. This past Saturday, June 9. They powered their way through Real Madrid women's team for their

tenth win of the season, (10-0-1) with a 9-0 shutout victory.

Borussia Dortmund continued to pile on the goals and got healthy production out of striker Gabrielle Simms. Sims led the assault with five goals on the day, while Meaghan Smith found the back of the net three times. Abigail Victor chipped in with one goal.

As for Chelsea, their momentum from last week's win carried over in this past Sunday's contest when they took on Barcelona Women's team (Subway). The now 6-2-3 Chelsea team rolled to a 4-0 victory over third place Barcelona (2-2-7).

The trio of McKell Yallop, Phoebe Wilson and Shannon Albury put in one goal each, and got one from Barcelona who inadvertently scored in their own goal.

This past Saturday, the Chelsea men's team (Municipal Motors) needed to just two goals to conquer Barcelona men's team (Polymers). Attwoud Gibson would had the boot of the game and scored both goals for Chelsea.

Chelsea's men currently hold a 6-2-4 record, good enough for second place in the standings. Meanwhile, Barcelona now holds onto a 4-2-5 record and sit in third place.

Here is a look at the goals for/against leaders in the men and women's divisions:

- Men**
Real Madrid
For - 36 Against - 9
- Chelsea**

- For - 27 Against - 17
Barcelona
For - 18 Against - 14
Borussia Dortmund
For - 7 Against - 42

- Women**
Borussia Dortmund
For - 57 Against - 8
Chelsea
For - 19 Against - 16

- Barcelona**
For - 13 Against - 28

- Real Madrid**
For - 6 Against - 42
Grand Bahama Champions Soccer League Points Leaders
Men
Real Madrid - 29
Chelsea - 19
Barcelona - 14
Borussia Dortmund - 1

- Women**
Borussia Dortmund - 30
Chelsea - 20
Barcelona - 8
Real Madrid - 5

- Schedule for this Saturday (June 16) - Sunday (June 17)**
Saturday
2:30 Ladies: Borussia Dortmund vs Barcelona
4:30 Men: Chelsea vs Borussia Dortmund

- Sunday**
2:30 Ladies: Chelsea vs Real Madrid
4:30 Men: Real Madrid vs Barcelona



REAL MADRID WINS AGAIN - The Real Madrid Men's Team (black) scored another victory this past week in the Grand Bahama Champions Soccer League (GBCSL) on Sunday when they defeated the Barcelona Men's Team (not pictured) 3-1. Kianno Miller, left, scored one of Real Madrid's three goals against Barcelona. (PHOTO: GBCSL)