

Nuggets pull off late win over Pistons



USA TODAY SPORTS

REUTERS – Reggie Jackson had 21 points and six assists as the visiting Denver Nuggets overcame the ejection of center Nikola Jokic to beat Detroit 107-103 on Monday, handing the Pistons their 12th straight loss.

Denver coach Michael Malone was ejected with 1:21 remaining in the first quarter for arguing with the officials. Jokic was tossed with 1:22 left in the first half after picking up his second technical. Jokic finished the game with nine points, five rebounds and five assists.

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope supplied 20 points for the Nuggets, who snapped a four-game road losing streak. Christian Braun contributed 15 points and six rebounds, and Michael Porter Jr. tossed in 14 points and grabbed 11 rebounds. Aaron Gordon added 11 points, nine rebounds and seven assists. Cade Cunningham led the Pistons with 27 points and nine assists. Marvin Bagley III had 18 points and eight rebounds, Jaden Ivey added 17 points and Isaiah Stewart chipped in 11 points and 11 rebounds. The Nuggets had a 56-55 halftime lead. All 10 of their players who saw action scored, as they shot 53.7 percent from the field. Detroit was led by Ivey, who had 13 points. Denver clung to the lead until Ivey made a layup to give Detroit a 66-65 edge. The Nuggets answered with 3-pointers from Braun and Porter.

A 7-0 Pistons spurt, capped by a Cunningham 3-pointer, allowed the Pistons to regain the lead. Jackson scored with 24 seconds left in the third quarter to give Denver an 81-79 lead entering the fourth.

Stanley Umude scored eight consecutive Pistons points to give Detroit an 87-84 edge. Porter's 3-pointer with 6:57 left put Denver back on top, 92-91.

Free throws by Stewart gave Detroit a 95-94 lead with 5:02 to go. After Jackson tied it at 97-all with a three-point play, neither side had more than a two-point advantage until Gordon's three-point play with 1:25 left.

That made it 106-103. Both sides had empty possessions until Denver sealed the contest on a Jackson free throw with 11 seconds remaining.

Relieved Italy pledge to 'repeat something fantastic' at Euro 2024

AFP – A relieved Italy midfielder Davide Frattesi said the European champions will try and "repeat something fantastic" in Germany next year after Monday's 0-0 draw with Ukraine in Leverkusen secured qualification for Euro 2024.

The result means Italy, who failed to qualify for both the 2018 and 2022 World Cups either side of their Euro 2020 triumph, avoid another embarrassing tournament miss.

The two nations finish level on 14 points behind England in Group C, but Italy have the better head-to-head record having won 2-1 in Milan in September. "We knew if we were unable to break the deadlock in the first hour, it would become really tough. Ukraine then made it a more physical match," Frattesi told RAI Sport.

"We were under pressure, but overall it was a good performance. What mattered was that we qualified... "We suffered, but it was important to get through. Now we'll try to repeat something fantastic."

The final score belied the true nature of the match, with Italy's high-octane attack and Ukraine's counter-attacking threat creating several chances for both teams. Ukraine had a late penalty appeal turned down, despite Italy midfielder Bryan Cristante looking to have made contact with Mykhailo Mudryk's foot in injury time. "From my point of view that was a penalty, but again I was not there and it's only about my emotions," Ukraine coach Serhiy Rebrov told a post-match press conference.



Italian players celebrate qualifying for the Euro 2024 after a goalless draw against Ukraine in Leverkusen, Germany, on November 20, 2024. LEUQUEL/N KER/AFP

Italy travelled to Leverkusen knowing they would progress by avoiding defeat, while Ukraine knew only a win would suffice. New Italy coach Luciano Spalletti has only been in charge for three months after Roberto Mancini surprisingly left for the Saudi Arabia national team job. "We had to keep attacking – but Ukraine proved they are a very good team who gave us a lot of problems," Spalletti, who led Napoli to

their first Serie A title since 1990 last season, said. Italy will go into either pot three or four for the tournament draw, which will take place on December 2 in Hamburg. Spalletti added his team would "have a moment to pat ourselves on the back" before turning their focus to the finals in Germany, the site of their 2006 World Cup triumph. "Now, the level will step up. Now, the fun begins."

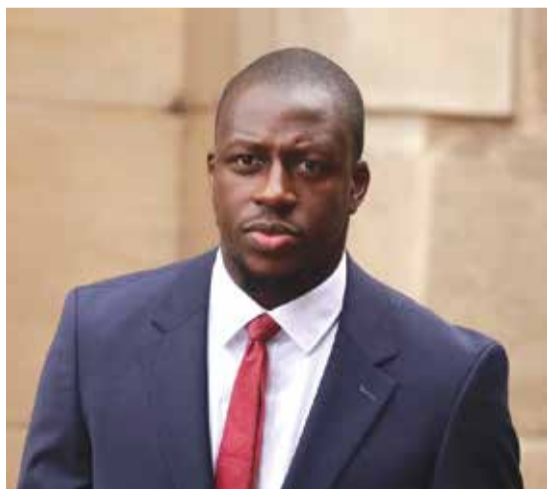
Midfielder Nicolò Zaniolo said his side's nervy qualification campaign, which included two losses to England and a draw with North Macedonia, would not dampen their hopes of defending the title. "We had the right motivation. Italy must go to the Euros not just to take part, but to compete as reigning champions."

Ukraine into play-offs Ukraine, forced to take the fixture to Germany due to

the ongoing conflict with Russia, can still qualify, but will need to navigate the play-offs in March 2024. Mudryk was lively down the left for Ukraine and crafted a number of half-chances early, with his side denied by poor finishing. Italy's dominance of possession started to tell after half an hour, Federico Chiesa sliding a smooth pass across the face of goal which eluded a desperate

Davide Frattesi. Italy continued to attack early in the second half but as the game wore on the increasingly nervous Italians sat back, allowing Ukraine more space up front. Mudryk was always a threat and appeared to have been brought down in the box after contact from Cristante, but the referee waved his team's desperate pleas for a spot-kick away.

Mendy to sue Man City over unpaid wages



PHIL NOBLE/REUTERS

BBC – Benjamin Mendy is taking former club Manchester City to an employment tribunal over millions of pounds he claims he is owed in unauthorised wage deductions. France full-back Mendy, 29, left City at the end of his contract this summer. He was cleared of a series of rape and attempted rape charges made

against him. It is alleged City stopped paying Mendy in September 2021 after he was initially charged and held in custody. In a statement, it was confirmed leading UK sports lawyer Nick De Marco is handling Mendy's case, which amounts to a "multi-million pound claim" and it is expected

the case will be heard in 2024.

Mendy joined Ligue 1 club Lorient at the start of this season and he has so far made three substitute appearances for the French side.

He joined City from Monaco in a £52m deal in 2017 and won Premier League titles in 2018, 2019 and 2021. His final appearance for the club came in the Premier League on 15 August 2021.

Mendy was remanded in custody for five months before being released on bail in January 2022, and then went to trial for the first time in August 2022. In January he was cleared of six counts of rape and one count of sexual assault.

He was then cleared of raping a woman and attempting to rape another in July at a retrial. City did not comment when approached by BBC Sport.

Khatibi sacked as Paykan head coach

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Paykan sacked head coach Rasoul Khatibi after a poor run of results in the Iranian top-flight campaign.

The decision comes less than five months after the former Iranian international striker took charge of the Tehran-based club. Paykan has managed only a single victory – a 1-0 away win against Esteghlal Khuzestan in mid-October – across 10 matches in the Iranian league this season, suffering four defeats, and is struggling in the bottom half of the table with eight points – two clear of the relegation zone.

Khatibi is the second coach in the Iranian league to be shown the exit door this season following Alireza Mansourian's dismissal from the Foolad Khuzestan job.

"Khatibi's efforts to introduce young talents to the Iranian Pro League are undeniable. We want to wish him

success for the rest of his professional and personal life," the club said in a statement on Tuesday, adding the new head coach will be announced soon.

Paykan has the youngest squad among the 16 teams in the Iranian league with an average age of 24.1 years, while it had to part ways with some key players in the summer transfer window – including goalkeeper Rashid Mazaheri, who joined Nassaji Mazandaran, as well as Iranian under-23 international center-back Saman Fallah, who left for Golgozar Sirjan.

The Persian Gulf Pro League will resume after the international break on Thursday, with Paykan playing away to Iralco on Friday.

AMIN BAHRAMI/IRNA

