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A disastrous second quarter from the Lakers led to a defeat at the hands of the Celtics on Thursday, 87-78.Leading 26-21 after the first quarter, the Lakers went the first seven minutes of the second frame without scoring and managed just nine points in the period.Bronny James ended with 18 points and five dimes. Christian Koloko had a productive game with 12 points, five rebounds and six blocks. Cole Swider scored 12 points and DJ Steward pitched in with 14 points and five assists.Dalton Knecht continued to disappoint, finishing with eight points on 3-12 shooting overall and 1-6 shooting from deep. Darious Bazley, unfortunately, left the game late in the second quarter with a knee injury that forced him to be taken off the court in a wheelchair. He ended with eight points, four rebounds and two blocks. It was the Koloko show early as he did a bit of everything, scoring four straight points and blocking a shot on the other end. Bronny dished two impressive dimes to Christian, both resulting in emphatic dunks. Cole began heating up and scored five points. Darious provided his usual great energy and spark off the bench with four points, three of which came on a three-point play. He was then fouled again, completing another three-point play. The Lakers had several great defensive stops to keep themselves ahead by a nice cushion. At the end of the first, LA was up by five. Christian Koloko is off to a great start. He has six points and is a perfect 3-3 from the field. Edwin Garcia (@eCreates88) July 18, 2025Both teams started the second quarter with missed shots until Boston's Kendall Brown drained a 3-pointer. A combination of turnovers and missed shots led to a slow start. A triple from Max Shulga put the Celics ahead. Nearing the midway point, the Lakers had yet to score a bucket. Boston went on a 16-0 scoring run, adding to their momentum. They had extended their lead to 11, but Los Angeles answered back with DJ Scoring five straight to finally get them on the board. Cole joined in with a midrange jumper. DJ added two more points with a layup to help LA cut the deficit to five at halftime. The third quarter opened with Bronny connecting with Christian again for a dunk. Bronny then scored his first two points of the game. The Lakers had tied the game with a nice start to this quarter, but Boston responded to regain the lead. Kenneth Lofton Jr. exploded for seven points as the quarter began to wind down. He was helping the Celtics maintain a big lead. After a scoreless first half, Bronny scored 10 points, all in this quarter. He converted on two three-point plays as well.Boston was up by 10 at the end of the period. The Celtics still had much of the momentum in the final frame, but the Lakers were trying hard to pull off a comeback. Bronny got crafty with the ball for a layup. He also drained his first 3-pointer of the night. Christian swatted his fifth block of the night, continuing a very dominant defense performance from him. However, the Lakers never truly threatened with a comeback and lost going away on the night.Key Takeaways:Christians improvement in each game has been a welcome sign. Hes looking good defensively and scoring well. Confidence is high!Its very disappointing that Dalton hasnt had the kind of Summer League we all expected. Catch the final Summer League game on Friday against the Denver Nuggets at 7:00 PM PT. You can follow Karin on Twitter at @KarinAbcarians. Denver Nuggets vs. Los Angeles Lakers: Game Highlights: Updated [hour][minute][AMPM] [timezone], [month][Full] [day], [year] BOSTON (AP) Jayson Tatum had 40 points, 12 rebounds, and eight assists, and the Boston Celtics held off a late rally to beat the Los Angeles Lakers 111-91 on Saturday night. With LeBron James in the locker room with a strained groin, the Lakers cut a 20-point fourth-quarter deficit to single digits. But Tatum and Jaylen Brown scored Bostons final 12 points to preserve the win. Brown added 31 points as the Celtics earned their fourth straight victory. James finished with 22 points, 14 rebounds and nine assists before exiting midway through the fourth quarter as the Lakers had their eight-game Los Angeles win streak.Luka Doncic had 34 points and eight rebounds in his first game in Boston since he and the Dallas Mavericks lost Game 5 of the NBA Finals as Boston clinched its 18th championship.Takeaways:Lakers: Things fell apart in a third quarter in which they showed very little connectivity on offense. Its clearly something thats still missing at times with the addition of Doncic.Celtics: True Holiday return after missing four straight games with mallet finger in his right pinkie. But center Kristaps Porzingis sat for the fifth consecutive game with an illness. Key momentThe TD Garden crowd was brought to its feet with 3:50 left in the first quarter when Brown stripped Doncic, led a fast break and found a streaking Al Horford for a two-handed slam. Horfords momentum caused him to swing forward, and he inadvertently kneed a trailing Doncic in the head as he swung back. No foul was called on the play, though Doncic was clearly irritated by the collision.Key statThe Celtics held the Lakers to 21% shooting from the field (5 of 23) in the third quarter, with Los Angeles also committing six turnovers. Up nextThe Lakers visit Brooklyn on Monday. The Celtics host the Jazz on Monday. AP NBA: The greatest rivalry in NBA history gets renewed on Saturday when the Los Angeles Lakers (40-21) visit the defending NBA champion Boston Celtics (45-18).The Lakers are on an eight-game winning streak and have registered wins in 20 of their last 24 games. They sit in second place in the Western Conference, and a growing number of people feel the team has some sort of shot at getting to the NBA Finals in a few months. Therefore, Saturday's game between these two teams could be a preview of this June's championship series.A full recap, including grades for each Lakers player, can be found here. LA, with 11 points, James, meanwhile, has 10 points, eight rebounds and seven assists, while Tatum has scored 7 points. So far, the Lakers seem to be living up to the hype. Both teams are at 33 at the end of the first quarter, and both are shooting well. The Lakers have made 56.5% of their field-goal attempts, while the Celtics are at 54. Jayson Tatum leads every player in scoring with 13 points on 5-8 shooting. For Los Angeles, LeBron James has five assists in 11-3 run that has allowed the Celtics to tie the game at 23-23 with 5:30 to go in the first quarter. They have gotten hot offensively, and they're hot right now in scoring by Jaylen Brown, who has eight points. Dorian Finney-Smith is the Lakers' current high scorer with eight points of his own. The Purple and Gold scored the first seven points of this game and led 14-6 with 7:13 left in the first quarter. The Celtics have come out cold and have missed a couple of easy chippies, while LA, is 6-of-10 from the field. For the Celtics, Kristaps Porzius won't play due to an illness. For L.A., Jaxson Hayes will sit out due to a knee contusion. As a result, Jarred Vanderbilt will be starting at the 5 spot.TV Channel: ABCStart time: 5:30 p.m. Pacific timeWatch Lakers vs Celtics live on Fubo (free trial)Lakers: Luka Doni (right knee contusion) and LeBron James (left foot injury management) are probable. Jaxson Hayes (right knee contusion) is questionable. Rui Hachimura (left patellar tendinopathy) and Maxi Kleber (right foot surgery recovery) are out.Celtics: Sam Hauser (right ankle sprain), Jrue Holiday (right hand mallet finger) and Kristaps Porziis (non-COVID illness) are questionable. The Los Angeles Lakers decided to hunt mismatches just as much, if not more, than the Boston Celtics. Instead of letting the Celtics dictate the defensive matchups, the Lakers wanted to make a statement, showing they could attack whoever they wanted, even Derrick White. It was surprising to see White being targeted, but theres no shame in struggling against LeBron James. His post-up moves are nearly impossible to stop when you're limited by size. Later in the game, though, LeBron had far less success trying to attack Al Horford, the Old Reliable, as Jaylen Brown calls him. On the other side, the Celtics stuck to their usual approach: find the weak link and attack until it breaks. However, the Lakers did a great job of switching to keep Austin Reaves and Luka Doncic away from the action whenever possible. Later in the game, though, the Celtics found ways to exploit Reaves and Doni by putting them in positions where they weren't valuable, rather than just attacking them outright. But before we get into the details, lets take a look at how Boston defended the Lakers' offensive game plan.#2 - Leaving them openIn his pregame press conference, Joe Mazzulla told CelticsBlog he believed the Lakers were a better shooting team than last years Mavericks. Yet, he still decided to leave most of them open beyond the three-point line. Was it all a mind game?Before the game, Joe Mazzulla told us that he thinks the Lakers have better shooters than the Mavs last year... but ended up leaving most of the Lakers open beyond the line.The Lakers did actually took more threes than the Celtics.Mind game from Joe Mazzulla?@celticsblog @azmatlanba (@azmatlanba) March 9, 2025As mentioned in the tweet, the Lakers ended up attempting more threes than the Celticspretty off-brand. Boston put a big emphasis on protecting the paint, holding the Lakers to just 23% rim frequency, well below their 32% season average.To lock down the paint so effectively, the Celtics had to make aggressive choices, often leaving Lakers shooters openeven an above-average one like Dorian Finney-Smith. The fact that Boston was comfortable with these open looks makes me think Mazzullas pregame take wasnt entirely true or maybe he just thinks both teams are bad shooting teams, with the Lakers being slightly less bad?#3 - Strong side is where Luka isIn basketball, the strong side refers to the flank where the ball is. Theres ongoing debate in modern basketball about whether help defense should come from the strong side. The Celtics didnt leave the Lakers a choiceihey forced the strong-side help to be Luka Doni. If the strong-side defender isnt mobile or long enough, it becomes impossible for him to stunt at the driving lane and recover to the corner. The Celtics capitalized on this by driving on Donis side instead of forcing him to be on the ball. On back-to-back possessions, this led to two open corner threesome of the most efficient shots in modern basketball.#4 - Jayson Tatum pick-and-roll with Luke Korneat the end of the first quarter and into the second, the Celtics repeatedly ran a high pick-and-roll with Jayson Tatum and Luke Korneat. This has been one of their go-to actions when both are on the floor. Its interesting to see how the Lakers defended it against the Denver Nuggets, who were in town last night. The Lakers positioned their big just below the level of the screen, a soft-drop approach, while Tatum's defender went over the top to take away the pull-up. What Tatum did exceptionally well was control the tempo. In the play below, he trapped Goodwin on the back, preventing him from reaching without fouling. This gave Korne time to roll to the rim and set a Gortat screen to clear the basket. As a result, LeBron James had to help at the rim, leaving Jrue Holiday open for three. Tatum's chemistry with bench players continues to be a huge asset for the Celtics.#5 - Empty-side actions for White and HorfordBack in to start the second half, the Celtics spammed one of their classic actionsan empty-side pick-and-roll between Derrick White and Al Horford. The goal? Force a switch and create a post-up opportunity for Horford against Austin Reaves. Reaves fought hard to front Horford and deny the entry pass, but the Celtics found ways around it. Even when they couldnt get the ball inside, the action still served its purposekeeping Reaves near the rim. With weaker rim protection, Celtics drives became much easier. Boston often manipulates matchups to keep opposing guards near the rim, effectively neutralizing rim protection. They did this in the Finals by putting Jrue Holiday in the dunker spot, and they used the same tactic last night with White and Horford.#6 - Al Horford vs. LeBron James, duel of legendsAl Horford and LeBron James have played through two decades of NBA basketball, yet they continue to perform at the highest level in 2025. Horford started in place of the injured Kristaps Porziis, and as the game went on, LeBron tried to exploit the matchup. But the Celtics veteran was more than up to the challenge. Horford also scored on LeBron, but his biggest impact was on defense. What LeBron hoped would be a mismatch turned into a tougher battle than expected. He had much more success attacking Sam Hauser, though even Hauser managed to hold his ground on some possessions. It was a rare opportunity to see two legends go head-to-head. Unfortunately, LeBron had to sit out the end of the game, a reminder of how fragile these moments are as they near the end of their careers.#7 - Celtics give the Lakers a taste of their own medicineBack in the first half, the Lakers slowed down the Celtics offensively with a bold but effective strategy. Instead of switching and sending help to the mismatch, they let the defender hold his ground, refusing to give up open shots by overhelping. Last night, the Celtics flipped the script.Whether it was LeBron attacking Hauser or Doni trying to get past Horford, Boston switched and held their positions as much as possible. They also did an excellent job of staying disciplined, limiting the Lakers free-throw attempts compared to their usual volume.Once a switch was made onto LeBron or Doni, the Celtics remained glued to their man while also covering the paint. As mentioned earlier, the Lakers poor spacing made it difficult to punish this approach, allowing Derrick White to help at the rim when Horford contained LeBrons drives. Great defensive execution from Boston.#8 - Lakers run in the fourthDespite trailing by over 20 in the third, the Lakers made a push in the fourth and nearly completed the comeback. While the Celtics offense became stagnant, the Lakers increased their ball and player movement, throwing off Bostons defensive rhythm. A key factor was improved spacing. At one point, the Lakers had only shooters on the floor, stretching the Celtics defense in ways they hadnt all game. But this approach had a costdefense. LeBron isnt the rim protector he once was, and Dorian Finney-Smith couldnt cover for all the defensive gaps. Once the Celtics regained their offensive rhythm, the Lakers run came to an end.#9 - Clutch offenseBoston won, so there wont be much debate about their late-game offensebut it could have been different. The Celtics slowed things down to control the pace, but in doing so, they turned their elite offense into a make-or-miss game.Luckily, most of their contested jumpers either fell, led to free throws, or resulted in offensive rebounds. But the stagnation in clutch moments is something to keep an eye on.#10 - The TD Garden was ready to BEAT LA, and so were the CelticsI havent been to many games at TD Garden, but the energy last night felt different. The crowd, the staff, the players, even the coaches, knew this was special.Joe Mazzulla might have downplayed it as just another game, but looking at Tatum and Browns minutes, its clear this one meant something.Was this his way of telling them it wasnt just a regular game? Maybe.@GwashburnGlobe asked Joe Mazzulla about Jayson Tatum & Jaylen Browns high minutes, and he mentioned the Celtics-Lakers rivalry. Theres moments that you give those guys chances to be a part of that. Its my way of saying you better win. 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