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Southern DAILY

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Southern Daily News is published by Southern News Group Daily

Friday February 05 2021 | www.today-america.com | Southern News Group

JAMES HARDEN TRADE

Harden goes to Brooklyn Nets as 4-team blockbuster deal

By Freddie B. Willis, Jr.



Jan 25, 2021; Brooklyn, New York, USA; Brooklyn Nets guard James Harden (13) and head coach Steve Nash talk against the Miami Heat during the second half at Barclays Center. Mandatory Credit: Andy Marlin-USA TODAY Sports

Following Tuesday night's 117-100 loss to the Los Angeles Lakers, the second straight blowout defeat at the hands of the defending champions, former Houston Rockets guard James Harden said that this year's edition of the Houston Rockets after nine games isn't "good enough" to compete for a championship.

After making those comments, the Rockets accommodated Harden's request sending him to the Brooklyn Nets as part of a 4-team deal Wednesday afternoon. Rockets obtain Victor Oladipo, Dante Exum, Rodions Kurucs, 3 Brooklyn first-round picks in 2022, 2024, 2026), 1 Milwaukee first-round pick (2022, unprotected) along with four Brooklyn 1st round swaps (2021, 2023, 2025, 2027).

Brooklyn receives a 2024 second round selection to go along with Harden. Indiana gets Caris LeVert and a 2023 second-round pick from Cleveland and the Cavaliers receive Jarrett Allen and Taurean Prince from Brooklyn.

The trade was agreed to after the Rockets opted to keep Harden away from Wednesday's practice. Harden hired Jason Ranne and Chafie Fields from Wasserman, and they worked closely with the Rockets and all teams involved to secure the trade for him.

"We're not even close, honestly, to that team - obviously, the defending champions and all the other elite teams out there," Harden said Tuesday night. "I mean, you can tell the difference in these last two games. We are just not good enough. The chemistry, talent-wise, just

everything. And it was clear these last two games."

In his eight-plus seasons with Houston, Harden made the All-Star team each year and was first-team All-NBA six times, including the 2018 where he won the league's MVP.

His 36.1 points per game that season was a franchise record and nearly came close to that mark last season averaging 34.3 points per game in leading the league in scoring for the third straight year in the 2018-19 season are a franchise record.

Harden came close to that record again last season, averaging 34.3 points and leading the league in scoring for the third straight year.

The Rockets made the playoffs in all eight of Harden's seasons, which is the longest active post-season streak in the NBA.

The 31-year-old Harden was off to a poor start this season, scoring 20 points or fewer in four straight games for the first time since his Oklahoma City days. The writing was on the wall that Harden would be on his way out when he turned down a contract extension from the Rockets in the offseason that would have been worth \$103 million over two years.

Prior to the trade happening, Rockets center DeMarcus Cousins



Jan 20, 2021; Cleveland, Ohio, USA; A general view of the shoes of Brooklyn Nets guard James Harden (13) in the second quarter in a game against the Cleveland Cavaliers at Rocket Mortgage Field-House. Mandatory Credit: David Richard-USA TODAY Sports

ins blasted Harden for being "disrespectful" with his antics this season and also called it "completely unfair" to his teammates.

Cousins made his voice known during a virtual availability prior to the trade. "Obviously, it's disrespectful, but everybody has a right to their opinion," Cousins said. "We feel a certain type of way about some of his actions."

"This is the nasty part of the business that kind of gets swept under the rug. You deal with some of these things. When guys are in positions of being franchise players or whatever the case may be, it is usually sometimes a nasty breakup," Cousins said. Houston never advanced past the Western Conference Finals when he was there, and it was fair to wonder if it would ever win the title with him as its best player. He is owed \$85.7 million over the next two seasons, and he has a \$47.4 million player option for the 2022-23 season.

In trading Harden to Brooklyn, Houston has control over the Nets' next seven drafts (along with that Bucks pick) are plenty appealing. Rockets General Manager Raphael Stone deserves a lot of credit in getting back such a haul for Harden.

However, the cupboard is now stocked for Houston with Brooklyn's current nucleus -- Harden, Kevin Durant, and Kyrie Irving -- will not keep those picks in the late 20s for long. Fliers on Exum, Kurucs and, finally, Victor Oladipo, are gravy.

Oladipo is off to a hot start to a contract year and figures to fit snugly alongside to an invigorated John Wall and emboldened Christian Wood. The Rockets can be decent now and the cupboard is loaded for the future, especially if they eventually look to flip P.J. Tucker. With Allen's deal expiring (and Wood locked in long term), swapping him for even a late first makes sense.

With the trade of Harden moving on, the Rockets are not title contenders at least this season, but they are setup well for the future. Draft picks, potential cap space and with the expiring contract of Victor Oladipo, the Rockets are setup to where

they can rebuild from the ground up. The group of John Wall, Christian Wood, Eric Gordon, P.J. Tucker, Exum and DeMarcus Cousins is intriguing and escaping the Harden drama should be a major relief inside the locker room.



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Last year the world did go through a distinct changing of the times, but all in all, everyone now hopes that the once in 100 years pandemic, economic decline, political turmoil and social unrest all of us have suffered will finally be behind us.

2021 is the year of the ox and it will be a Metal Ox year. The recent zodiac years of ox signs are 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, 2021 and 2033. An ox year occurs every 12 years.

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U.S. Response To Coronavirus Variants Emphasizes Masks And Vaccines... Not Lockdowns



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

WASHINGTON — As the United States faces the potential for catastrophic coronavirus spikes fueled by highly infectious variants, public health authorities remain wary of imposing stricter measures adopted by other nations. Instead, they continue to embrace a stick-to-the-basics strategy of promoting mask-wearing, avoiding crowds and getting vaccinated quickly.

The restrained approach differs from strict preemptive measures taking place in Europe, including lockdowns, classroom closures and requirements to wear medical-grade masks. It also illustrates the realities of the pandemic response in the United States, where there is little appetite for more limitations to curb viral spread.

“The public doesn’t tolerate lockdowns very well anymore,” said Marcus Plescia, chief medical officer with the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. “You may have states that are aggressive sooner, but on the whole, a lot of them are not going to take those kinds of steps until it’s clear they have to.”

The vaccination drive marks the best path to ending the pandemic, despite complications posed by new variants. Masks and social distancing, even if they sound mundane after a year of relentless repetition, remain the best weapons to control the

spread of the virus. And the bluntest instruments cannot be wielded lightly. Public health authorities, some of whom are lifting restrictions rather than imposing new ones, have a difficult challenge communicating the dangers of variants.



All viruses change as they replicate, but virologists most fear the mutations that make it easier for viruses to spread, to evade vaccine protection and to cause deadlier disease. Variants first identified in the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil are suspected to be more transmissible and are driving spikes overwhelming hospitals. But the United States has a much harder time detecting similar problems because the country conducts little genetic sequencing that would reveal proliferating variants. Experts say the federal tally of nearly 500 variant cases across 32 states —

including the variants first found in the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil — is a sliver of the real picture.

The federal government and individual states have taken steps to expand genetic monitoring, but authorities are flying blind in the meantime. States cannot point to specific data to justify aggressive measures to contain the spread of dangerous mutations. And by the time they can, it may be too late.

The country now sits at a precarious moment. A winter surge driven by holiday gatherings and by colder weather driving people indoors appears to be falling from its peak, with hospitalizations returning to November levels and caseloads lowering in the vast majority of states. Vaccine distribution is escalating, stopping millions of potential new infections. But new variants of the virus can erase that progress. States have been announcing the arrival of new variants without much drama, emphasizing the lack of data suggesting vaccine resistance and reiterating their existing calls for masks and social distance from others. An Alabama announcement, for example, advised residents “to continue practicing the usual mitigation standards” while the Vermont Health Department said the variants make “following the prevention guidance more critical.”



“Everything we have been preaching from the public health pulpit for the last year here is still going to be effective against variants,” said Philip Chan, a consultant medical director with the Rhode Island Department of Health, which has not detected new variants. “We haven’t sheltered in place again, and part of that is people are losing their jobs and livelihoods, and we can’t lock down forever.” States have instead relaxed public health measures. California lifted stay-home orders and curfews last week after high hospitalization rates dipped, while New York is on track to

resume indoor dining by mid-February.

The University of Michigan was one of the first high-profile institutions to implement such measures in response to a variant, urging students to stay home last week after one of their classmates contracted the B.1.1.7 variant that British scientists believe can be as much as 70% more transmissible. There are now 14 known cases of the variant associated with the university, which also suspended athletics for 14 days.

Colleges and universities across the country are on high alert for the viral variants as they begin the spring term. Many have at least some students on campus but are operating with most or all of their classes delivered through digital platforms, adapting to an education crisis that is nearly a year old. Some campus leaders worry that lessons learned from the fall term are not enough to guide their decisions in a fast-moving public health emergency with new revelations emerging practically every day.



“Obviously any kind of mutation of this virus is very disturbing and problematic,” said Robert Robbins, president of the University of Arizona, which started its winter semester with almost all classes taught remotely. He said schools must “keep our eyes wide open and remain vigilant.” Elsewhere in the country, the discovery of variant-driven outbreaks may have come too late. Researchers at the Cedars-Sinai health system in Southern California announced last month that they found a growing share of samples linked to a new variant that was not discovered overseas, a potential driver of the skyrocketing caseload in California.

“It’s really a very important component of that public health measure to survey this so we are not flying blind,” said Jeffrey Golden, the vice dean of research and graduate education at Cedars-Sinai. “We didn’t recognize it until it already had its foothold, because it was novel and we weren’t looking for it. We were actually surprised.” In the absence of widespread genetic surveillance,

hospitals are bracing to be blindsided by variant-related surges.

The Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security distributed a memo last week urging hospital and government officials to prepare for oxygen shortages everywhere. The advice for shoring up oxygen delivery systems range from lowering the threshold for acceptable patient oxygen levels to improvising warm-water sprinkler systems to prevent vaporizers from freezing.



“Throughout the pandemic we have been behind the eight ball in planning and helping our health-care system,” said Janis Orlowski, chief health care officer for the Association of American Medical College, which represents teaching hospitals and distributed the memo to its members. “Hospitals do have to plan for the worst because we don’t have the information we need.” Other hospitals say the rise of the variants have added additional urgency to vaccination efforts because they see inoculations as a tool of keeping contagious variants at bay. “Vaccination now is a key bulwark against continuing to get more variants because the less virus circulating, the less chance for variant,” said Amy Compton-Phillips, president and chief clinical officer at Providence, a network of 50 hospitals in the West that is considering a double-mask requirement for employees because of the variants.

Plescia, of the health officials association, said the first wave of shots may come too late for variants taking hold now.

But injections today will pay dividends through the summer, he added, if new variants fail to take off because they had too few unvaccinated hosts to let them replicate and multiply. (Courtesy washingtonpost.com)



Schoolchildren swab and test themselves for COVID-19 to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in the classroom at South Boston Catholic Academy in Boston, Massachusetts. REUTERS/Allison Dinner



Mount Merapi volcano spews hot ash as seen from Kaliurang in Sleman, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Antara Foto/Hendra Nurdyansyah



Healthcare workers line up before receiving the first dose of the Sinovac's CoronaVac coronavirus vaccine in the Positivo event center at the Barigui Park in Curitiba, Brazil. REUTERS/Rodolfo Buhner



A demonstrator holds a placard during a protest against the verdict restricting abortion rights in Warsaw, Poland. REUTERS/Kacper Pempel



A coyote walks past graveside mourners at the biggest cemetery in North America as it struggles under a backlog of coronavirus-related burials, with the usual 5-7 day wait period after death now stretched to more than a month at Rose Hill Memorial...



Dentist Ilker Sentuerk and his assistant wear specialized FFP3 hoods as they treat a patient in their dental clinic, in Oberhausen, Germany. REUTERS/Leon Kuegeler



A picture of President Joe Biden greeting Pope Francis joins family photos. REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst



The U.S. Capitol Building can be seen from behind fencing with barbed wire in Washington. REUTERS/Leah Millis

**Online Scams Surge As Slow Vaccine
Rollout Breeds Frustrations**

**Can You Buy A COVID-19
Shot Online For \$150?**

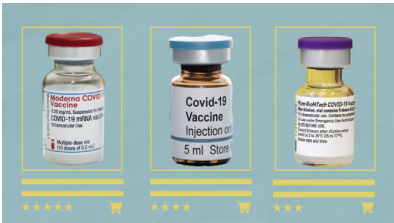


A small shopping basket filled with vials labeled “COVID-19 - Coronavirus Vaccine” and medical syringes are placed on a U.S. flag in this illustration. Online scams of fake vaccines have surged. (Illustration/Reuters/D. Ruvic/File Photo)

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

COVID-19 vaccine scams are on the rise, according to European and U.S. government officials who are warning the public of fraudsters out for money and personal data. A Reuters search online, in dark web forums and on messaging app Telegram found seven different offers for alleged COVID-19 vaccines. Scams include emails promising entry to supposedly secret lists for early vaccine access and robocallers impersonating government agencies. Message boards on the so-called dark web have added COVID-19 vaccines to more traditional illicit goods for sale. The U.S. FBI and Interpol, among others, have warned of emerging pandemic-related fraud schemes, saying false cures and vaccines advertised on fake websites could pose cyber threats and a significant risk to peoples’ health, or even lives. Website domains containing the word vac-

cine in combination with COVID-19 or coronavirus more than doubled since October to roughly 2,500 in November, when the first legitimate vaccines were nearing regulatory approval, according to cybersecurity firm Recorded Future, which is tracking COVID-19 fraud online.



The real deal or vaccine fakes?
“So far a lot of these domains just appear to be opportunistic registrations, but some are going to be used for phishing attempts to have people click on (malicious) links,” said Lindsay Kaye, director of operational outcomes at Re-

corded Future. Kaye said her team, which also scours the dark web, so far has not come across any legitimate vaccine diverted from healthcare facilities or national stockpiles. The scams are preying on concerns about the far slower-than-promised rollout of vaccines to protect against the virus that has claimed more than 1.8 million lives worldwide so far. Most people will likely have to wait well into the spring, or even summer, to get their shot. In the United States, only about 4.5 million people had received their first shot as of Monday, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported. That is a fraction of the 20 million who were supposed to have been vaccinated by the end of 2020, according to earlier government forecasts. **VACCINES, GUNS AND MONEY** On dark web forum Agartha, fake COVID-19 vaccines were offered next to cocaine, opioid medication, “super high quality fake money,” hand guns and gift cards. Posts showed stock photos of vaccines and offered vials for \$500 and \$1,000, or the equivalent in Bitcoin. On another dark web site, a seller claiming to be from the “Wuhan Institute of Science” offered COVID-19 vaccines in exchange for a donation, and asked buyers to provide their medical history. On Telegram, several channels claimed to offer COVID-19 vaccines, accompanied by stock images. One user offered supposed Moderna Inc vaccines for \$180, and claimed the vaccine from Pfizer Inc and BioNTech SE could be had for \$150 and AstraZeneca’s for \$110 per vial.



Asked how the vaccines would be

shipped, the account creator said they were transported in “regulated temperature packs” and ice packs within a few days, or overnight for an additional charge. Actual COVID-19 vaccines, particularly the Pfizer/BioNTech offering, must be temperature controlled to remain effective, with drugmakers equipping shipments with temperature trackers to ensure the cold chain. Vaccine shipments and distribution are also tightly controlled by officials and will be administered at no cost. The United States has so far authorized two COVID-19 vaccines for emergency use - the ones from Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna. The European Union to date has authorized the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and is expected to clear the Moderna vaccine this week. The UK has already authorized those two and just added the vaccine developed by Oxford University with AstraZeneca. Asked about vaccine scams, Pfizer said it had taken meticulous steps to reduce the risk of counterfeiting and tracked trends very carefully. “Patients should never try to secure a vaccine online - no legitimate vaccine is sold online - and only get vaccinated at certified vaccination centers or by certified healthcare providers,” a Pfizer spokesman said in a statement. Moderna referred a request for comment to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which did not respond. AstraZeneca did not respond to a request for comment. The HHS, FBI and U.S. Department of Justice have urged the public to report any COVID-19 vaccine scams, including people asking for out-of-pocket payments for the vaccine and online vaccine advertisements. (Courtesy reuters.com) **Related**
U.S. To Start Distributing Coronavirus Vaccines Directly To Pharmacies The Biden administration said Tuesday it will start distributing limited supplies of vaccines directly to retail pharmacies beginning Feb. 11, in effort to make it faster and easier for people to get inoculated. These doses are separate from

those allocated to states. Jeff Zients, Biden’s coronavirus coordinator, cautioned that supply constraints will limit the early availability of shots in drugstores. He said the administration wanted to target supplies to pharmacies serving “socially vulnerable communities.” Here are some significant developments: • Biotech company Moderna says it is proposing to fill vials with additional doses of coronavirus vaccine — up to 15 doses vs. the current 10 doses — in an effort to address manufacturing bottlenecks and allow for more production. • A Russian coronavirus vaccine, Sputnik V, was 92 percent effective at preventing symptomatic illness in a large clinical trial, robust protection that puts it in line with top vaccines developed in the United States and Europe, according to results published in a peer-reviewed journal Tuesday.



- Race and ethnicity data were missing for nearly half of all coronavirus vaccine recipients during the first month shots were available, further stymieing efforts to ensure an equitable response to the pandemic, federal researchers reported Monday.
- Responding to coronavirus variants, the United States is emphasizing masks and vaccines instead of lockdowns, in a contrast with Europe.
- Anthony S. Fauci, the nation’s leading infectious-disease expert, was hesitant Tuesday to say when life in the United States will return to pre-pandemic norms, citing coronavirus mutations and vaccine hesitancy. (Courtesy reuters.com)

真正好的婚姻是结婚后，过得像没结婚一样



在这个大多数人都能丰衣足食的时代，越来越多的人在乎的是自己的精神和情感世界，可却随着时代的进步，两个人想一辈子相爱下去，却变得越来越难。老人常说的，婚姻是人生大事，可在如今很多人看来，却不值一提。我们越是注重自己的内心世界，就越会发现从前那种“车马慢，一生只爱一个人的相守”只是从前。现代社会，信息便捷，诱惑太多，一不小心就可能遭到背叛，而婚姻里的幸福，似乎成了很多人可望而不可及的东西。可纵然婚姻充斥着风险，那些活得清醒的人，爱情到来时，还是免不了会头脑发热要结婚，而且结婚的那一刻，

双方都是带着无比真诚的心发誓要相伴到老的。说到底，爱情一直有它的魔力，婚姻也自有它存在的价值，不然也不会有那么多的痴男怨女在爱恨情仇中无法自拔，屡试不爽。其实，并非婚姻不好，而是很多人忘记了婚姻的初衷。事实上，幸福的婚姻比比皆是，能经营好婚姻的人也有很多很多，是因为他们幸运吗？不是的，而是刚好找到了“重复爱情”的办法。身边一朋友，结婚十多年，还跟伴侣秀恩爱腻歪，丝毫没有七年之痒的乏味。问及他为什么对爱人始终如一，他说道：“得不到的总是更加珍贵。”

我们都纳闷，都结婚这么多年了，孩子都有了，怎么还说得不是这样的话？朋友又笑笑解释说：“我一直都当这婚没有结，这样的话，爱她的心就不会放松。”回想他经营婚姻的态度，还真就如恋爱时那样全力以赴。会在下班之后约老婆放松，会在节假日里给老婆惊喜，会在父母面前极力表现，会在吵闹中相互嫌弃，又找借口认错和好，会在对方异性接触频繁时吃醋表明立场。两人在婚姻里谈了十多年的恋爱，依然乐此不疲。他们对待彼此，很独立却又很依赖。

生活琐事方面，不会强制要求伴侣付出，独立到能自己付出的时候绝对不会埋怨爱人。情感方面，却又是简单依赖，像恋人一样甜蜜，却有着婚姻里的理性，不会想要离开对方，是彼此认定的唯一，不轻视得到手的感情。婚姻走向失败，源于很多人“得到之后没有危机感”。在结婚后急忙让爱情尘埃落定，再也不经营。结婚是意味着爱情开花结果，但这并不代表得到之后就可以为所欲为。其实婚姻里的很多问题就是认定已经“结婚”了，所以才产生的。结婚后，人的心理是得到后无心经营，忽略爱人的感受，无视对方的需求，甚至不懂得珍惜，最后往往在情感需求方面一地鸡毛。结婚后除了没有危机感，不珍惜爱人之外，导致婚姻走向失败的，还有一项特别严重的问题是：理所应当的索取。这种心理也是情感方面的一部分，即：你和我已经结婚了，就应该怎样怎样，做不到就是不够爱或看错人。同事方芳去年结束了七年的爱情长跑，步入了婚姻的殿堂。有情人终成眷属的画面很美好，大家都以为，方芳谈了那么久的恋爱都没有分手，所以婚姻一定能幸福。可婚后，方芳总是鼓着脸上班，天天一副被打劫的样子。问及原因，方芳总是吐槽自家老公的不是，说的最多的就是老公没有朝她理想的完美老公人设改变。方芳对于这样的婚姻模式，是万万不能忍受的，她觉得在婚姻里只有两个人做出改变才能获得幸福。于是，她对老公软硬兼施，动之以情，晓之以理，势必要让老公改掉一些从前的习惯，变成她喜欢的样子。她希望老公能放弃游戏，希望老公把所有闲暇时光都留给她，希望老公所有的钱都只为她一人花……不仅如此，她还认为结了婚后，老公就要按照她的意愿发展，就要满足她所有的愿望，就要让她感受到独一无二的幸福，不然结婚干什么？家庭事项方面，方芳更是要求老公能成为居家好男人，不仅要厨艺精湛，还希望能家务全包。做不到这些话，方方便认为是老

公不爱自己，所以不肯付出。她老公心情好的时候，会顺着方芳的心情，心情不好时便逆着，结果导致了方芳郁郁寡欢。这段婚姻里，也是因为方芳认定了“我们已经结婚了”，所以过分依赖婚姻，导致了现在的不幸。夫妻关系是平等的，但很多事情，不是必然要付出的，何况想让一个独立的人变成自己理想的样子，几乎是天方夜谭。可以说，婚姻中的很多烦恼都是来自于自己的需求得不到满足。方芳能爱情长跑七年恩爱如初，说明她在恋爱的时候，没有过度索取，更不会对某些需求强加在对方身上，而是做独立的自己，用心经营自己。而结婚后，方芳自认为要经营好婚姻就必须要让对方做出改变，要求对方改变的同时增加了自己的期许，结果导致了迷失原本的自我，打乱了两人的生活节奏。在心理学上，有心理学家提出过一个观点是：婚姻是一个人的事情。为什么这样说？原因就是很多人在婚后忘记了做自己，过度依赖，过度期望，导致了种种不幸，结果还怨婚姻难长久。其实难长久的不是婚姻，而是自己的心。在婚姻里，很多人始终无法做到像恋爱时那样重视伴侣，也无法做到完全的精神独立。结婚，换个说法就变成了依赖，把自己的幸福依赖在伴侣身上，把生活的大小事情都依赖在伴侣身上。所以，真正好的婚姻，是学会“像没结过这婚一样生活”。“没有”结婚，犹如恋爱时那般，就能重视爱人，对爱人做到珍惜和付出且不求回报。“没有”结婚，就能自给自足，不对伴侣过分期待或改变，自然就不会有那么多的失望。并且，“没有”结婚，像两个人谈恋爱时那般心系对方，也会让两个人的感情始终保持着甜蜜与美好，哪怕有柴米油盐的烦恼，哪怕有经济上的压力，但因为相爱，因为彼此努力，所以无惧。婚姻的失败，说到底还是很多人，在得到后忘了初心。