On the NBA's first ever "Satisfaction Guaranteed" Night, where the Suns will refund the ticket price to anyone who was not satisfied, the Phoenix Suns fell to an equally-in-transition Dallas Maverick team looking for an identity.

The Phoenix Suns will give you your money back if you don't enjoy this game tonight. All you need to do is fill out something online and ask. That's it. Boom. Free NBA game, if that's what you're angling for.

Me, I'd rather enjoy a fun game and go home happy. So yeah, let's do this Suns! Gimme a fun game!

As I looked through the stats to preview Suns vs. Mavericks , I was shocked by the similarities between these teams. Dallas' big advantage is that they do have a star, but he's been sidelined all season. Without Dirk Nowitzki, the Mavericks and Suns are pretty much evenly matched.

Given evenly matched teams, the advantage goes to the home team. And lucky for Suns fans, for the first time in almost two weeks they *are* the home team.

Be happy the Suns are at home

Below average teams are terrible on the road. The Phoenix Suns are 5-3 at home, but only 2-9 on the road. Of the Suns five home wins, four of them were come-from-behind variety.

Dallas is 6-3 at home, but only 2-7 on the road. They just lost by 19 last night to the Clippers , a game that was never in doubt after the first quarter.

Don't get whiplash!

Both teams play really fast, likely a product of their lack of overall talent. Dallas is 4th in the league in pace at 94.2, while the Suns are 8th. Expect that ball to move quickly up and down the court.

Hope the Suns to score 100+ points

Both teams are good when they score 100 points - Dallas is 6-1 while the Suns are 5-3. But neither team wants the other to score 100 points, but their opponents almost always do it anyway - Dallas is 3-9 in those situations, while the Suns are 4-9.

But don't expect a pretty game

Neither team is very good at offense, but the Suns are slightly better. Dallas is 18th in offensive rating, while the Suns are 14th.

However, not surprisingly, the Mavericks are a little better on the defensive end - ranking 19th overall in defensive rating, while the Suns are a lowly 29th there.

Dallas can defend, but they can't pull down the rebound.

Especially from the starters

The three Suns who have been starters all season long - Michael Beasley , Marcin Gortat and Goran Dragic - have the team's worst +/- on the season (-7 and -5 and -3 per game, respectively). By far. The question is whether all three guys are really that bad, or whether one guy is bringing the others down. Buy contrast, the team's second unit is a net positive.

Just when you think that's bad, the Mavericks are led in net +/- by none other than Derek Fisher , who has only played a grand total of two games after getting signed last week off the street. The rest of the Mavericks +/- resembles the Suns' - their starters being the worst on the team, with Collison, Mayo and Marion at the bottom of their list.

Adventures in rebounding

When a shot clangs off the rim, adventure begins. Neither team is good at rebounding, but the Suns are much better than the Mavericks.

When the Suns miss: The Phoenix Suns are 15th in the NBA in offensive rebound % (the percent of the time that the Suns pull down their own misses, as compared to the rest of the league), while the Mavericks are a lowly 28th in defensive rebound %.

When Dallas misses: The Phoenix Suns are not bad on the defensive glass, ranking 20th in the NBA in defensive rebound %, while the Mavericks are once again woeful at 29th in offensive rebound %.

Did I mention these teams are not world-beaters?

The Phoenix Suns have not beaten a team that is **currently** over .500. Dallas has only done it once (Knicks - 114-111). If you look at it in terms of playing teams that were above .500 **at the time they played,** the Suns are 3-8 in that situation and Dallas is 4-6.

But let's not waste any more time on that stat, since neither team is over .500 in this game.

Battle of top offseason signings

Dallas' top offseason signing was O.J. Mayo , while Phoenix's was Goran Dragic. Mayo scores more, while Dragic passes more. Dragic has more "win shares" on the season (2.0 vs. 1.7), both leading their respective teams.

Both are down a bit after hot starts. Dragic is only averaging 15 and 6 lately, while Mayo's 3-point shooting has cooled off from a blistering start.

Battle of incumbent shooting guards to compliment the top offseason

signing

Will Vince Carter go off on us, thanks to Scott Howard's fan club? Carter is the Mavericks best offensive weapon after O.J. Mayo, to the tune of 13.1 PPG (20 points/36 min) and 42% on three-pointers.

On the Suns side, Shannon Brown is doing okay this year but was more stat-filling and impactful off the bench.

We don't need no stinkin' third (or even second) option!

Neither teams boasts a great third option, even if you consider Carter/Brown as valid second options. Neither team has a second or third leading scorer getting more than 13 points per game.

Battle of the new point guards

Darren Collison was acquired to take over for Jason Kidd , but has not played well - only 11 and 6 in 31 minutes. For this reason, reason Derek Fisher was signed off the street last week.

"We need help at point guard," coach Rick Carlisle said in The Dallas Morning News after the team's loss in Chicago last week. "We feel [Fisher] can help us. It's not a cure-all to all of our team challenges, but his expertise and experience will help."

This, of course, was largely due to the suspect play of offseason pickup Darren Collison, who was benched last week after playing inconsistently on offense and poorly on defense throughout November. Replacing him with younger, less experienced players on the roster like Dominique Jones
or
Rodrigue Beaubois
clearly wasn't the answer -- and it only took two straight losses for Dallas to come to that conclusion.

Battle of the Amnesty Claims

Elton Brand basically out of the rotation in favor of Troy "statue" Murphy, while fellow amnesty claim Luis Scola lost his to an inconsistent second-year player. Both began the season in the starting lineup, and now both come off the bench - an unfamiliar role. Brand has an injury history, so he's used to missing time. But he'd nearly always been a starter, just like Scola.

Battle of the Earth-Bound, Bald-Pated Centers

At center, you've got two similarly profiled guys - Chris Kaman vs. Marvin Marcin Gortat. Even their hair is the same this season. They both bring similarities on the court as well. They can rebound, block a few shots and act big around the basket. And they both produce about the same numbers, when it's all said and done.

Battle of the Underwhelming Small Forward Who Fits Best At Undersized Power Forward

Former Sun Shawn Marion faces off against uninspiring Michael Beasley. Marion is now 3,000 years old and showing it, while Michael Beasley only moves like he's that old. Both are their team's worst +/- player on the season.

Unlike other matchups, Suns fans probably wouldn't mind if this one goes Dallas' way.

And it's all about Satisfaction, right?

Hit these other links on the game, too

Mavericks vs Suns coverage

Mavs Moneyball

See the Future: Dallas at Phoenix, Game 19 - Mavs Moneyball

Right now, at this very moment, Dallas is horrible. Truly horrible. And they aren't going to magically improve over night. I don't really see how they improve at all. We're a quarter of the way through the season and they've not corrected any of the problems they've displayed over the past few weeks.