

## Suns Score: Suns' streak snapped in Portland, 96-93

Written by  
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Both the [Suns](#) and Blazers brought season-best four-game winning streaks along with them to Portland. [J.J. Hickson](#) was riding a six-game double-double streak for the Blazers, while [Jared Dudley](#) had scored 20 or more in three straight games. After the game in Portland, only one team would see their streaks continue. Unfortunately for us here on the Bright Side, that team wasn't the Suns.

### Game Story

The Suns got off to a sloppy start in the first quarter, and were playing some pretty bad basketball. Yet a 6-2 run to close out the quarter once the Blazers went to their bench gave the Suns a 25-23 lead at the buzzer.

The Suns took control in the second quarter, with an all bench line-up (including the much maligned [Michael Beasley](#)) going on a 16-5 run against a weak Blazer bench. At halftime the Suns led 53-44 and things were looking good.

However, the game turned in the third quarter. The Blazers got it going on offense and the Suns couldn't find an answer. [LaMarcus Aldridge](#), who the Suns had held to just eight points on seven shots in the first half, scored nine in the third quarter alone. The Blazers also got hot from deep, hitting four 3-pointers in the period. The Suns had no answer defensively and couldn't keep up offensively. The final damage was a 31-22 Portland period, erasing the deficit and tying the game at 75.

The two teams traded blows in the fourth quarter, and the game was tied at 82-82 with 7:04 remaining. From that point, Portland's rookie point guard [Damian Lillard](#) took over, scoring nine points in the final five minutes. The Blazers took a 64-87 lead with 3:24 left, and things weren't looking good for our Suns. But they managed to fight back and draw within one possession twice in the final minute-and-a-half. The first came on a Gortat pick-and-roll finish to cut it to 94-91 with 1:25 remaining. The Blazers struck back with a step-back jumper by Lillard, but the Suns countered with a layup by Jared Dudley to make it 96-93 with 38.9 seconds remaining. After a missed shot by Lillard, the Suns had a chance to tie the game up, getting the ball back with just under 15 seconds on the clock. The Suns pushed the ball in transition and

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### [Goran Dragic](#)

found himself open on the perimeter. However, Dragic never looked at the rim and instead passed the ball across the court. The Suns were forced to pass the ball around with no one able to break free before Dragic finally had to force up a tough shot with a second remaining that wasn't even close.

### Guards

Goran Dragic got off to a great start in the first half with 10 points and three assists. He was aggressive and looking to attack, and knocked down a couple 3-pointers as well. But he disappeared in the second half, recording just two assists and missing every shot he took. And of course, there was that last possession...

Meanwhile, his Portland counterpart really got himself going in the second half and carried his team to the victory in the fourth.

Dragic finished with 10 points on 4-13 shooting and five assists, while Lillard scored 25 points on 7-13 shooting and dished seven assists.

I warned in [my preview](#) that we couldn't count on [Shannon Brown](#) to continue his hot shooting, and I'm sorry to say that I was dead on with that one. Brown finished with 15 points on 7-17 shooting, and also turned the ball over four times.

For the Blazers, [Wesley Matthews](#) only played 9:49 and did not score. Matthews recently returned from an injury, and he tweaked it again tonight and pulled himself out.

### Forwards

[Luis Scola](#) had a terrible game for the Suns, as he was unable to get it going on offense and was torched defensively and was crushed on the boards. He finished with just six points and four rebounds, and played less than 20 minutes.

J.J. Hickson, on the other hand, put up a huge line with 19 points and 15 rebounds. The Suns

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couldn't keep him off the boards all game, and he made them pay.

Jared Dudley moved the ball extremely well, racking up 10 assists with only one turnover. However, he missed out on the double-double by scoring only eight points and bricking all four of his 3-point attempts.

Dudley also did a good job of holding [Nicolas Batum](#) in check scoring-wise, as the Portland forward only had 13 points on 12 shots, including 2-9 from 3-point range. Batum also dished out eight assists, but balanced that out with seven turnovers. He closed out his stat line with nine rebounds and two steals. Overall, a strange game from Batum.

### Centers

[Marcin Gortat](#) had a great night offensively for the Suns, as he scored 18 points on 9-12 shooting and hauled in nine rebounds. Gortat was great every time the Suns went to him, finishing in the pick-and-roll, in the post and on the offensive glass. However, he and his fellow frontcourt members really struggled to keep Hickson off the glass.

LaMarcus Aldridge, who was questionable for the game after missing Portland's last game with an ankle injury, finished with 17 points on 5-15 shooting and nine rebounds. Outside of a short stretch in the third quarter, the Suns held Aldridge mostly in check for the second straight game.

### Bench

I pointed to the bench as an area the Suns should have a big advantage in, and they made me look smart. Phoenix finished with a 36-22 edge in bench points and were led by the sprightly Jermaine O'Neal, who finished with 13 points and five rebounds. [Markieff Morris](#) also finished in double figures with 11, while Michael Beasley hit a 3-pointer and somehow led the Suns with a +15. [P.J.](#)

[Tucker](#)

and Bassy Telfair both had solid games as well.

Three of the Blazers' seven 3-point field goal came from the bench, and [Victor Claver](#) led their reserves with seven points, but overall the Blazer bench didn't have much of an effect. This game was won by the Portland starters.

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