Recap:

The Suns were able to recover from a slow start, after New York jumped to a 13-7 lead, thanks to the efforts of Jared Dudley, who scored 13 points in the period on 5-7 shooting. The Knicks used a balanced attack, without the option of hero ball by Melo, to keep pace with the Suns after Phoenix regained the lead. Marcin Gortat and Tyson Chandler were both equally effective for their respective teams. The Suns finished the quarter leading 29-27.

The Suns shooting became more tepid to start the second quarter, making only one of their first seven shots, and the Knicks seized the lead with a pair of three pointers. The Knicks then widened the gap by making their first five shots from downtown in the period. It was a complete shock to everyone that the Suns were getting torched from deep. After pulling to within 40-39 on a Dudley dunk, his third of the year, New York went on a 14-4 run to extend their lead to 11 at 54-43. Suns fans got a scare when Goran Dragic was fouled from behind on a fast break and landed hard on his hip. J.R. Smith received a flagrant one for the foul, but it was due more to the spill than any dastardly intent. The Suns managed to manufacture zero points out of two free throws and the extra possession and New York went into halftime leading 54-44 after a 27-15 period.

Dudley led all scorers in the first half with 17 points on 6-10 shooting. The Suns colander defense gave up 50% shooting from the field (22-44) and 54.5% from three point range (6-11). The Suns were still overwhelmed by a Knicks team playing without the second leading scorer in the NBA and their starting point guard. In Felton's absence, Dragic, four points on 2-6 shooting and three assists, still lost the first half point guard matchup to the 39 year old Jason Kidd. Not only that, but the Knicks, 28th in the league in rebounding, were +7 on the Suns including a six to three edge on the offensive glass.

The Suns started the second half without Dragic, who suffered injuries to his wrist, elbow and hip from his violent fall before halftime. A Jared Dudley three midway through the quarter sparked a 20-4 run as Phoenix took the lead 74-72 before settling for a tie at 76 going into the fourth quarter. Dudley, Gortat, Brown and Beasley all scored multiple times during Phoenix's

frenzied comeback. Dudley finished the quarter with a game high 26.

The fourth quarter was a slugfest with both teams trading haymakers and the lead going back and forth. Dudley tried to carry the team to victory with 10 of the Suns 21 points in the period. After falling behind 95-90, the Suns rattled off seven consecutive points on a three by Sebastian Telfair, a jumper by Shannon Brown and two free throws by Dudley. Then J.R. Smith happened. A player who is noted for his ability to make difficult shots sunk a closely contested jumper to tie the game at 97. The Suns had the ball with the ability to play for the last shot, but Telfair royally screwed up and lost the ball out of bounds. That set up the final possession for the Knicks with one second remaining. Inbounds pass to J.R. Smith. Fading, twisting, fall away jumper. Ballgame. Suns lose (it sure felt more like a Suns loss than a Knicks win) 99-97. Ugh.

Player of the Game:

Jared Dudley. His career high 36 points (11-17 from the field and 5-8 from three) kept the Suns in the game. What a shame to waste such a brilliant effort in a loss.

Comments of the Game:

Can't wait till Rip Hamilton solves all our problems.

Dragic could easily beat anyone on the court with his dribble...why is he not doing that?

6:08 IN SECOND

We should have a bet each game on when Alvin Gentry's clothes deal gets mentioned.

Dragic and Beasley have really improved on their air ball passes.

Amar'e is probably laughing at how bad we are.

Wow. Everyone just focus on Dudz. He is playing so well right now. Making all the right decisions.

Amazing how good we are.

Keeping it tight against a team without their 6 best players.

(of J.R. Smith's buzzer beater) **the 1 out of 5 players you don't want to get the ball...**

The Good:

The Suns once again showed grit and resolve by crawling back into a game after getting behind. Disregard the fact that it was against a Knicks team that was without five players better than the Suns starters. Give credit where credit is due. For more on this check out the bad section.

After looking completely nonplused on the defensive end in the first half, the Suns turned up the intensity. The second half strategy of actually running out on shooters led to just 3-11 shooting from three for the Knicks. Even the closing shots were well defended. It seemed like the increased energy level in the second half was almost tangible. Which leads to the question... where was that in the first half?

Gortat managed well in his matchup against New York's premiere center, Tyson Chandler. Marcin had 13 points and nine rebounds in a solid effort.

Feeding the hot hand. The Suns recognized that Dudley was feeling it and kept running the offense through him to the tune of a career high 36. This was a great example of awareness by the Suns coaches and players to capitalize on Dudley's huge night.

J.R. Smith. Though his criticism is sometimes well deserved, he went for 27 points, six rebounds, five assists and five steals. He also managed to basically single-handedly win the game by making trick shots at the end.

The Bad:

The Suns trailed by 14 (68-54) before making their push to get back in the game. The Suns have made a pattern of crawling back from huge deficits at home, but there have also been quite a few games, especially on the road, where they died in the hole they dug. This is a very disturbing pattern for the team which seems like a defining characteristic at this point in the season. It ended up spelling their doom tonight, as they caught up but couldn't seal the deal. It's just too hard to come back from those types of deficits in the NBA.

Goran Dragic continued his recent stretch of uninspired play with 4 points on 2-6 shooting and 3 assists before missing the second half due to injuries from a scary fall. The Suns played much better in the second half with Goran off the court.

It's amazing to me that our 26 and 27 year old point guards couldn't do a better job of wearing down the 39 year old Jason Kidd. Kidd's big night of 23 points, eight assists and six rebounds is not only a testament to his greatness, but a glaring example of porous defense at the point.

Morris and Scola were both invisible. Maybe the Suns are better off going small?

The Ugly:

Dragic's fall. Hopefully he will be ok. Best Wishes, Goran.

Finding a way to lose the damn game down the stretch. Sitting here typing this I'm still completely discomfited how the Suns managed to screw up in such spectacular fashion in the closing seconds. In what is a microcosm of the entire season, the Suns failed to execute down the stretch while another team rose to the occasion. The Knicks (arguably) 6th best player is a better closer than anyone on our (much more talented) team.

Final Thoughts:

This sucks.