

Phoenix Suns vs. Indiana Pacers Game Preview: Short Memory

Written by

Friday, 28 December 2012 13:00 -



Tonight, the 11-18 [Phoenix Suns](#) will take on the 16-12 [Indiana Pacers](#) in their first of a three-game road trip. The Suns are coming off a heart-breaking loss at home against the [New York Knicks](#)

(minus

[Carmelo Anthony](#)

,

[Raymond Felton](#)

, and

[Amare Stoudemire](#)

), thanks to a last-second catch-and-shoot from

[J.R. Smith](#)

who somehow made the heavily contested, falling-to-the-side jumper to end a valiant come-back effort from Phoenix.

To make matters worse, the Suns will likely be without starting point guard Goran Dragic who suffered a bruised wrist, forearm, and hip after crashing to the floor on a fast break attempt against the Knicks. However, the Pacers are also dealing with the loss of one of their best players as well; [Danny Granger](#) is still sidelined from a [knee injury](#) that has had him dressing in suits for the last month and a half.

The good news for the Suns is that they seem to have found their identity as a team who never gives up and takes pride in their newly discovered defense. Not only that, but they seem to have found a good fit for their starting line-up finally, with a nice mix of athleticism, scoring ability, and veteran savvy in their starting five. But can the Suns find a way to get a much needed win on the road without their starting point guard?

When: Tonight, 5pm MST/7pm EST

Where: Bankers Life Fieldhouse, Indianapolis, IN

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Watch: Fox Sports Arizona (locally), NBA League Pass

The History:

- This will be the 75th meeting between the two teams with the Suns holding a 43-32 advantage.
- The Suns have won four-straight games against the [Pacers](#) .
- Phoenix is 6-7 at the Bankers Life Fieldhouse, winning six of their last seven meetings.

- LAST MEETING: In Indiana March 23, 2012, Suns won 113-111

Probable Starters:

Sebastian Telfair vs. Lance Stephenson

Shannon Brown vs. George Hill

Jared Dudley vs. Paul George

Luis Scola vs. David West

Marcin Gortat vs. Roy Hibbert

UPDATE: Goran officially out

Guard @ [goran_dragic](#) is officially out for tonight's game at Indiana and is listed as

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questionable for Saturday's game at Minnesota.

— Phoenix Suns (@Suns) [December 28, 2012](#)

By The Numbers:

FG	3PT	FT	Rebounds	M
G	M	M	A	Pct
Goran Dragic 28		31.9	5.0	11.2
Shannon Brown 29		27.7	4.9	11.7
Jared Dudley 29		29.0	4.3	8.6
Luis Scola 29		25.8	5.0	10.7
Marcin Gortat 29		31.2	4.9	9.2
Michael Beasley 28		24.4	4.1	10.9
Markieff Morris 29		21.8	3.5	8.3
Jermaine O`Neal 22		16.8	2.9	5.5
Sebastian Telfair 28		18.4	2.1	5.6
P.J. Tucker 27		17.4	1.9	3.7
Wesley Johnson 12		5.8	0.9	2.8
Luke Zeller 9		3.7	0.7	1.8
Kendall Marshall 7		5.4	0.4	1.6
Diante Garrett 6		5.0	0.3	0.8

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FG		3PT		FT		Rebounds		
G		M		M		A		Pct
David West	28		33.9		7.3		14.6	
Paul George	28		35.9		6.1		14.2	
George Hill	28		35.5		5.2		12.7	
Roy Hibbert	28		28.6		4.2		10.4	
Gerald Green	27		22.0		2.7		7.1	
Lance Stephenson	26		26.1		3.0		6.1	
Tyler Hansbrough	28		16.3		1.7		4.1	
Ian Mahinmi	28		16.0		1.7		4.0	
Sam Young	26		16.6		1.5		4.0	
D.J. Augustin	23		12.7		1.0		3.7	
Jeff Pendergraph	7		4.0		0.9		1.7	
Ben Hansbrough	10		8.4		0.4		1.4	
Miles Plumlee	6		3.5		0.3		1.5	
Orlando Johnson	3		2.7		0.0		0.3	

Keys to a Suns Victory:

Short Memory:

The Suns can't get hung up on what happened against the Knicks on Wednesday night, they need to put that game behind them and start over fresh and ready to compete against a pretty good and underrated Pacers team. The Suns need to come out strong and ready to play for 48 minutes...They can't afford to let themselves fall behind early against a good team in hostile territory.

Point Guards:

If the Suns are indeed without Dragic tonight, which head coach [Alvin Gentry](#) [hinted at yesterday](#), then

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the Suns will need some stellar play from Sebastian Telfair to lead the starting unit. Not only that, but the Suns will need Kendall Marshall to step up and lead the second unit in what will likely be the first substantial minutes of his NBA career.

Superstar?

Jared Dudley had the game of his life against the Knicks on Wednesday night, scoring a career-high 36 points in the loss. Although the Suns don't have a superstar on the team by any stretch of the imagination, they will need someone to step up tonight and once again provide that kind of scoring, whether it be Dudley again or someone else.

Hibbert vs. Gortat:

Marcin Gortat has been on an upswing of sorts after a few weeks of very mediocre play. The Polish Machine has once again re-emerged as a legitimate threat down low on both sides of the court, and the Suns will need his best tonight against the 7'1" Roy Hibbert. In their last meeting (which the Suns won), Gortat got the best of this match-up with a 23 point, 8 rebound performance, compared to Hibbert's 19 points and 7 rebounds. If Gortat can manage to control the glass and outscore Hibbert down low, the Suns should be in great shape.

The Bottom Line:

Although the Suns have lost the last three games, they have never lost their competitive edge and can be a very dangerous team to play against. The Suns aren't a very talented team, but they certainly have a great deal of heart and fight in them, and could still win this game even without Dragic at the helm.

However, in order to do so they will need a total team effort on both ends of the floor. Plus, they will need someone to step up tonight and provide that additional spark for the team. The Suns must also limit their mental lapses and mistakes and capitalize on those of the Pacers. Tonight will be a true test of this team's character and resolve while playing without Dragic, and it certainly won't be easy...but I wouldn't count them out just yet.

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