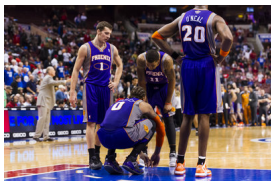


## Phoenix Suns vs. Philadelphia 76ers Game Preview

Written by

Wednesday, 02 January 2013 13:09 -

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Exorcising demons is what a long season is all about and one of the most pronounced of the [Phoenix Suns](#)

(11-21) demons is a heartbreaking loss to the

[Philadelphia 76ers](#)

(15-17). That loss helped to spark the beginning of the team's downward spiral into a seven game losing streak. You remember that?

Throughout a long season like this one there are a lot of demons to exorcise.

Early on the [Grizzlies](#) stole one from the Suns and the [Jazz](#) dominated them, both on the road. A little change of scenery and the Suns were actually able to pull off the win simplifying the game plan against the opposing star. In the losses

[Zach Randolph](#)

(38 points 22 rebounds) and

[Al Jefferson](#)

(27 points 14 rebounds) controlled the game, but in the return wins they combined for a meager 32 points and 21 rebounds. The relevance in that is when the 76ers stole their win on the east coast it was because of an absolutely dominant performance from their star --

[Jrue Holiday](#)

Holiday took control on the perimeter, rather than the previous two in the paint, but was just as effective with his 33 points and 13 assists.

That has been part of the theme this season with opposing team's point guards. From a defensive standpoint the team upgraded (at least athletically) at the point guard position with [Goran Dragic](#)

, but he has struggled to control opposing point guards. On the season he is +2 in points, +9 in assists, +12 in steals, and -12 in turnovers. It has been a dead heat all season for Dragic, but the elite lead guards have been outplaying him consistently.

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Ten games this year Dragic has outplayed his counterpart in terms of production and the team is 4-6 overall in those games. When he is not playing at a high level and winning the point guard battle the team has struggled. In games where he is simply playing to a draw the team is 5-5 and in games where he is being outplayed the team is 2-8 so far. Another barometer of the team and how they are playing this season. When Dragic stirs the drink, it goes down smooth.

### **The General Measurements**

Suns at home: 9-7

76ers on the road: 6-10

Suns rebounding per game: 39.8 (17th)

76ers rebounding per game: 41.7 (12th)

### **Road Woes**

The team is 2-14 on the road this season, the third most dubious mark in the league behind Washington and Sacramento, both 1-13 right now. Defensively the Suns have been awful on the road giving up 106.6 PPG (-10.22 margin) as opposed to at home where they give up 96.25 PPG (+2.13 margin).

### **Rematches**

After losing to a team this season the Suns have had a chance at redemption five times going 2-3 so far knocking off both Utah and Memphis as mentioned earlier. This game tonight against Philadelphia can get them to even in rematches after a loss.

### **Key Match-Up**

Goran Dragic v. Jrue Holiday

Holiday systematically took the team apart in their last outing, carving up the Suns for 63 points

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total between scoring and distributing. Dragic needs that type of performance -- not statistically, but in a sense of a game where he owns the match-up against an equal at his position.