

## Abandon Ship! Why Didn't Gentry Go Down With His Vessel?

Written by

Friday, 18 January 2013 12:52 -

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At 7:24 during the third quarter of the game against the Milwaukee Bucks, the Phoenix Suns clawed their way out of a thirteen point deficit to take a ten point lead. Their inspired play angered me because they were ruining our plans to move up the draft order.

Never fear, these are our Suns!

From that point on, the Suns managed to do what they have consistently done this season – quit.

They quit guarding Monta Ellis. They quit attacking the rim aggressively while allowing Larry Sanders to gobble up swats. They quit helping on defense. They quit on each other. Little by little, the lead they had so valiantly fought for was chipped away by a team that seemed to want it more.

As I was watching this disgrace of an effort, I couldn't help think about what the fallout might be. In fact, I distinctly remember typing a post in our game thread that stated "this game is going to be the nail in Gentry's coffin. I guarantee he is fired tomorrow."

But prior to pressing "post", I thought about my comment and decided to delete it. It was not that I changed my mind, but that I felt my comment would be mistaken for some sort of call to action, and I did not want people to get the wrong idea. I did not want Gentry fired.

Yet it was clear to me that this game was one of those games. This game was one in which it

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was obvious the team is completely disjointed and are all acting on their own agendas. This game was the final example that nothing Gentry has or can do will make a difference. Their performance in the third and fourth quarter was a slap in Gentry's face, and while I do not know yet whether Gentry was fired, or if he stepped away, my guess would be that he had had enough.

Heck, we all have.

The Suns are sure to hold a press conference to provide a smattering of details that may or may not be true. Words like "time to go in a different direction" and "mutual decision" are sure to be uttered.

Yet the real truth has been played out in front of us over and over again for all to see. This team fits together like a fat guy in a little coat [RIP Chris Farley]. The word synergy gets thrown around quite a bit, yet that word does not exist with the Suns locker room. It also seems to me that these individuals really do not like each other all that much, at least in the basketball sense. When you have a group of individuals on their own agenda, it is nearly impossible to find a way to be cohesive. Every missed pass, shot or defensive rotation boils up an avalanche of anger and blame. At that point, there is no hope but to make a change, and thus why I believed that Gentry would be the one under the bus.

Yet is this Alvin Gentry's doing? Should he shoulder the blame for the failures of a team that

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many mistakenly considered "talented"? Did Gentry not make enough adjustments to try to turn things around?

I am of the belief that Alvin Gentry is, within the fraternity of all NBA coaches, a decent coach. I don't think he is Greg Popovich, but I also don't think he is Magic Johnson. The fact of the matter is, Gentry's contract was up, and IF, IF he was fired, that says everything you need to know about this team's front office and owner. Firing Gentry now makes little sense. It is simply change for sake of change, another move by this franchise that lacks clear strategy. But we don't know all of the facts, so we cannot make the assumption that Gentry was fired.

If Gentry decided to step down now because he realized that he has lost this team for good, then I can respect that decision. As someone who has had teams that were lost causes, I understand Gentry's pain. You beg, plead, coddle, scream, beg some more and yet nothing you do makes a difference. At some point you realize that your personnel simply are not capable of getting their act together and no coach on the planet is going to be able to change that. I might question why he does not simply ride this season out, but he would have his reasons and I don't begrudge him for that.

I guess we will find out more once the press conference is held. Until then, all we can do is speculate on what happened, and start the rumors about who replaces him. And to the man who does, I feel for you. Oh sure, for a brief period of time there will be an uptick in effort and enthusiasm that typically follows a change in coaching. But that never lasts and those teams always fall back to their norm in time. This team will be no different and I feel for any coach coming in mid-season trying to take over this mess.

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