Same old Suns get down big, fight back a little, and come up short in the fourth quarter. Phoenix dropped their second game of the Texas trip in a loss to the Dallas Mavericks.

What have we learned so far about the Lindsey Hunter Suns ? Not much. The rotations have been tighter with nine guys seeing action. The youth movement some were expecting hasn't materialized . The team is playing hard, but they (mostly) did that before. They are better defensively according to the stats but small sample size.

Oh, and Michael Beasley has had two decent games after being freed from Gentry's dog house where he somehow managed to piss off the old coach with some undisclosed off-court antics.

Q&A: Phoenix Coach Alvin Gentry on the Suns' Struggles and Michael Beasley - The Triangle Blog - Grantland

It can mean almost anything when coaches point to "off-court" problems. Can you elaborate at all?

I can’t elaborate on it. I think Michael has a good idea, and most of us have a good idea of some areas he has to work on. But we keep that in-house.

Many of us had hope that Beasley would gel with Gentry and the young and immature talent would blossom into some kind of consistent basketball player. That obviously didn't happen and there's little doubt that Michael was one of the few players happy to see the coaching change.

Three games, however, isn't much and if Hunter intends to live up to his accountability mantra,

it seems like the clock is ticking before we see Beasley benched due to poor defensive effort. That has to be the mostly likely outcome at this point.

But you just never know what might click with a guy like Beasley. If Lindsey can manage to turn the Beas into a productive and CONSISTENT player, then forget about giving him a long-term contract, the Suns should just put him directly into the Ring of Honor.

Mavericks

Shawn Marion (the only Suns player who's jersey I own) will appear in his 1,000th game on Sunday. Fittingly, the milestone comes against the team where he logged 660 of those games. Trix will be only the 107th player in NBA history to achieve this mark. Well done, Shawn.

The Mavericks are seven games under .500 but have won five of their last seven and might just be rounding into form. According to our friends at Mavs Moneyball, they are in that classic part of the season leading up to the trade deadline next month. If they can continue to play well, they might be buyers at the deadline or at least stand pat and make a run. If not, they might dump some players in return for "future assets".

You certainly get a sense that their season is at a tipping point.

Dirk is back at the helm after missing the first two month's of the season. In his 16 games back from knee surgery, he's shooting just 40.9 percent and has yet to score more than 20 points in a game.

The biggest offensive threat for the Mavs remains O.J. Mayo (18 ppg, .456 FG%).

The Mavericks rank 19th with an Off Rtg of 104 and 22nd with 106.9 Def Rtg. The Suns are 23rd and 25th respectively.

Game tips at 5:30pm in Phoenix and is on Fox Sports Arizona.

Bonus: Goran Dragic getting some praise:

Phoenix Suns’ Goran Dragic building confidence in leadership role
"I feel like his confidence is at another level," (Spurs coach) Budenholzer said of Dragic since becoming a starter midseason in Houston last year. "He really looks like he believes in himself and has control of the team. We feel like he's the key. He's surprisingly athletic in his length and his explosion. He uses some on the defense end also. He's grown and matured over the years."

Mavs:

	FG	3PT	FT	Rebounds	M
	G	M	M	A	Pct
O.J. Mayo	41	35.8	6.4	14.0	
Dirk Nowitzki	14	29.1	5.1	12.4	
Darren Collison	40	31.3	4.6	9.6	
Chris Kaman	39	24.3	5.6	11.1	
Vince Carter	41	24.8	4.2	10.1	
Shawn Marion	34	29.8	4.4	9.2	
Elton Brand	37	21.8	3.2	6.6	
Brandan Wright	26	15.9	3.3	5.2	
Jae Crowder	37	17.5	2.0	5.2	
Dominique Jones	24	12.8	1.4	4.1	
Dahntay Jones	41	13.6	1.0	3.0	
Bernard James	21	10.9	1.3	2.7	
Mike James	6	10.5	1.2	3.8	
Rodrigue Beaubois	30	11.7	1.1	3.5	
Jared Cunningham	8	3.1	0.8	1.8	