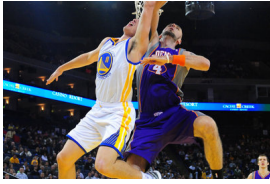


Phoenix Suns take on Golden State Warriors in Pacific Division Duel

Written by

Saturday, 02 February 2013 19:03 -



Important Numbers

Tip-off is set for 7:30 PST, 8:30 AZ time, 9:30 CST and 10:30 EST (again, sorry my international friends but you'll have to figure it out for yourselves). No national TV for this one so you'll have to find some way to watch it yourself.

Golden State is 29-17 and sitting in fifth place in the Western Conference standings, while the Suns are way down in 14th place at 16-31. However, the Suns are currently playing .500 ball under interim head coach Lindsey Hunter.

The Warriors are the top 3-point shooting team in the NBA at 39.3%, while the Suns are second to last in 3-point defense, allowing opponents to shoot 38.3%. This could get messy.

However, if you take out the two games against Dallas, the Suns are giving up just 94.5 points per game and 44.9% shooting since Hunter took over (tip o' the cap to Paul Coro's [Orange Slices](#) and Suns stat man Vince Kozar for this one).

Injury Update

Warriors point guard and All-Star snub Stephen Curry is questionable for tonight with an ankle injury. Curry sat out the Warriors' last game and with his history, I'd be surprised if Mark Jackson didn't let him take his time coming back. With the way Klay Thompson and Jarrett Jack are playing, they don't even need him to beat a lot of teams (including the Sun unfortunately).

For the Suns, Jermaine O'Neal is the only injury to report. I haven't seen any updates about his heart and he sat out last night's game, so I'm guessing he won't play again tonight. O'Neal's absence has opened up more minutes at the power forward spot for Michael Beasley.

Key Players

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Even without Curry, the Warriors feature one of the best inside-outside games in the league with David Lee on the interior and Klay Thompson outside. Lee is leading the NBA in double-doubles, and the match-up between he and Luis Scola will be one of the keys to the game.

Klay Thompson has been on fire recently and has stepped it up even more without Curry. Thompson is averaging 21.9 points per game in his last nine, and scored a total of 59 points in the last two with Curry sitting out. P.J. Tucker and/or Jared Dudley are going to have their hands full and are going to have to fight through plenty of screens.

Andrew Bogut is back for the Warriors, and although his minutes are being limited, he's still a defensive force for the Warriors in the 20 or so minutes he's on the court. Jarrett Jack is one of the best back-up point guards in the NBA, and even if Curry sits out Goran Dragic will have his hands full.

The last time these two teams played was way back on opening night, and the Suns fell in a close one, 87-85. The Suns are on the second game of a back-to-back after falling to Dallas last night, so they're going to have to play lights out to have any chance in this one. I don't like the Suns' chances in a close game late.