

## Suns Score: Phoenix torches Memphis 96-90

Written by

Tuesday, 05 February 2013 22:40 -

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### Game Story

As we've seen more often than not in recent games, the [Suns](#) came out ready to play and got off to a great start. They went inside to

[Marcin Gortat](#)

early and often in the first quarter, and he made his first seven shots including a variety of moves from dunks to jumpers to hooks. He missed his next shot but went hit one more to close out the first half with 17 points on 8-10 shooting.

The Suns built up a lead in the first but Memphis made a run when Dragic and Gortat took a seat. However, the run against the bench couldn't be blamed on [Kendall Marshall](#), who recorded his career-high in points in the first half alone with eight on three long jumpers (two 3-pointers, one toe-on-the-tape 2-pointer).

[Zach Randolph](#), who has been in a major slump fro the [Grizzlies](#), got off to a good start as well, putting up 12 and seven in the first two quarters, while

[Jerryd Bayless](#)

was allowed to take a handful of open free-throw line jumpers to get himself going, and he finished the half with 14 points on 6-9 shooting.

Most of the statistical catagories were a wash in the first half and the Suns found themselves down just two at the break at 52-50.

The third quarter was an absolute mess, as the two teams couldn't throw it in the ocean. Phoenix and Memphis combined to make just 15 field goals in the period and the Suns lost the quarter 15-19. Phoenix trailed 71-65 heading into the fourth quarter and it looked like the same old story was going to play itself out. But [Goran Dragic](#), who only scored two points in the first three quarters after getting into foul trouble, refused to let that happen.

The sloppy play continued into the fourth quarter, but the Dragon bared his fangs and put the

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team on his back. Beginning at the 7:07 mark with the Suns down 77-76, Dragic proceeded to go off and was responsible for the next 17 of the final 19 points for the Suns. He kicked it off with back-to-back 3-point plays on drives to the basket, hit Marshall for his third 3-ball of the game and then pulled off another old-fashioned 3-point play. Then he found Jermaine O'Neal for a dunk, used some fancy footwork and great patience to get a bunny, got to the free-throw line for a pair and then hit a pull-up jumper after a sick crossover.

It truly was a masterful performance, and as I watched I couldn't help but have flashbacks to [this](#).

### Lots o' Thoughts After Dots

- I really can't say enough about Goran Dragic in the fourth quarter. He did virtually nothing at all and even got into foul trouble in the first three quarters, but somehow he got it going and was unstoppable in the fourth. Bravo Goran. Bravo indeed.

- Dragic and Gortat get all the headlines, but their back-ups also had big games for the Suns. Kendall Marshall had the best game of his short career with 11 points on 4-8 shooting and four assists with only two turnovers. And O'Neal, in his first game back after sitting out with an irregular heartbeat, finished with 14 points on 5-7 shooting, and also chipped in four rebounds and three assists for good measure.

- Speaking of Marshall and O'Neal, they joined Dragic, Gortat and [P.J. Tucker](#) on the court for the final six minutes of the game in a very odd line-up we had not seen play together before. Two point guards, two centers and whatever you want to call Tucker. Kudos to

[Lindsey Hunter](#)

for giving it a go. That might have been the best coaching move of his short career as the head coach in Phoenix.

- P.J. Tucker was in there at the end because he was the only wing to show up and make his mark on this one. [Jared Dudley](#) missed all five of his shot attempts and went

scoreless, [Michael Beasley](#) scored six points on seven shots and

[Shanno](#)

[n Brown](#)

scored five on four shots. Tucker finished with nine points on 4-7 shooting and tied for team high with seven rebounds in addition to his customary hustle plays.

- Jerryd Bayless was the only Grizzly the Suns weren't able to keep in check. They let him get too many open looks early which allowed him to heat up and start hitting some tougher ones late. In total, he finished with a game-high 29 points on 11-15 shooting. Too bad [Grant](#)

[Hill](#)

wasn't there to show that punk who's boss.

- Z-Bo finished with his standard 21-13 double-double, but I never felt like he was dominating inside like he has in the past against Phoenix.

- Gortat was great on offense, but he might have been even better on defense. He and O'Neal combined to shut down Marc Gasol. Gasol fouled out with 2:30 left in the game and took

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a seat with just six points on 2-8 shooting, three rebounds and four turnovers.

- Continuing with Gortat, one thing I don't get is how the Suns still tend to go away from Gortat in the second half, even when he is killing it in the first. Gortat took just one shot in the second half and split a pair of free throws to finish with 20 and seven rebounds after a nearly perfect 17-point first half.

- Kendall Marshall continues to progress and is starting to find his game. He rose up with no hesitation on his jumpers and was making plays for his teammates off the dribble with a couple beautiful feeds. People were ready to call Marshall a bust the second the season began, but since he was drafted I've been preaching patience. He's a project, and he's slowly starting to come around.

- The Suns held their own across the board statistically, out-shooting Memphis everywhere but at the free-throw line (PHX 18-22, MEM 15-17), winning the battle of the boards 40-34 and out-assisting the Grizz 19-15. They did turn the ball over 22 times, but the forced 17 turnovers by the Grizzlies as well.

- I'm really liking the fight I've seen from these guys under Hunter.

- Go Suns!