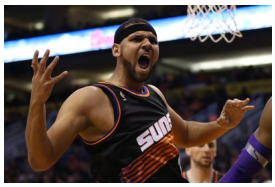

Phoenix Suns @ Los Angeles Lakers

- Game Time: 7:30 PST, 8:30 MST, 9:30 CST, 10:30 EST
- Where: Staples Center (duh, I just said it's @ LA; where else would they play?)
- TV: FOX Sports Arizona

Depending on your perspective, this game is really a win-win. If the Suns lose, they are rewarded with yet another ping pong ball to aid in their quest for the No. 1 draft pick (the Suns are currently last in the Western Conference and have the 5th worst record in the NBA). If the Suns win, they will still be last in the West, yet the Lakers will be one loss closer to missing the playoffs (they are currently 3.5 games behind Houston for the No. 8 seed) and therefore one loss closer to handing the Suns their draft pick. So when you really think about it, even if we lose we can't really lose.

All that being said, we're facing the Lakers. If you don't want the Suns to pound them into the hardwood then there is something wrong with you. So, GO SUNS! SMASH THEIR FACES IN! (Except for Steve Nash's , that is; he goes into god mode when you do that to him)

Recent History

The Suns and Lakers are heading in opposite directions at the moment. The Lakers are 7-3 in their last 10 games, while the Suns are just 3-7. However, one of those three Laker losses came at the hands of our Suns (and on national TV no less, that was pretty sweet, huh?). Also, in even more recent history, both teams are coming off of a loss to one of the best teams in the NBA in their last game. Unfortunately, the Lakers looked pretty good and loss a tough battle with the Miami Heat after LeBron James and Dwyane Wade did what they do in the second half, while the Suns are coming off an embarrassingly bad beatdown at the hands of the Oklahoma City Thunder
(which came just two days after another beatdown at the hands of the Oklahoma City Thunder).

There is no doubt that the Lakers are playing better than the Suns right now. However, let's throw all that out the window. I guarantee you that the Suns will come out with more fire and put up a fight.

Injury Report

This is one area of the games that the Suns have the edge. The Suns have a clean bill of health and everybody (other than 14th man Diante Garrett unfortunately) will be suiting up. Meanwhile, the Lakers will be without one of their big four as Pau Gasol is out for several weeks with a foot injury. Earl Clark has played well, but even so he's no Pau Gasol. The Lakers' other star big man, Dwight Howard, continues to struggle through a shoulder injury (one aggravated the last time these two teams faced off).

****Update: Earl Clark's MRI was negative, his foot is just sore, and he will play.**

What To Watch For

- Dragic+Marshall: Lindsey Hunter has talked recently about the two-point guard line-up that he debuted in the Suns win at Memphis, and he said he likes it because it allows Dragic to be more aggressive; Hunter called Dragic a "natural scorer"
- Ron Artest: Artest has been terrible lately for the Lakers, but he always seems to become a knockdown 3-point shooter against the Suns; here's to hoping we see the real Artest and not the All-Star Artest that usually shows up to Suns games
- Tucker on Kobe: Tucker refuses to back down from anyone and never shies away from a tough defensive assignment; he should make things tough on Kobe and that battle could be fun to watch
- Steve Nash: Screen-setter and spot-up shooter extraordinaire
- Michael Beasley : Beasley had a huge game with 27 points in the win against LA, but he kind of sucked against OKC; which Beasley will we see?

Come join us in the gamethread, and make sure to bring you best Lakers hate.