

Final Score: Phoenix Suns 102, Portland Trailblazers 98 behind 18 assists from Goran Dragic

Written by

Tuesday, 19 February 2013 23:45 -



The lowly [Phoenix Suns](#) started the night on a 12-0 run and never looked back, until Portland tapped them on the shoulder late. But Portland's comeback was a little too late, and the Suns finished out a big road win in Portland.

The Suns charged out of the gate, kept scoring and finished with 36 big points after one quarter. Considering the last home game I attended, where the Suns had only 34 points after THREE whole quarters, this game was very refreshing. Myers Leonard was abused again by Suns centers [Marcin Gortat](#) (6,2) and Jermaine O'Neal (3,2) and [Goran Dragic](#) showed how many assists he could rack up with a shooting team by getting 10 in the quarter to go along with 5 points.

The Suns did not stop there, scoring another 27 in the second quarter to finish with 63 at the half. Not only did the Suns score at will, they played strong defense, holding Portland to 47 points. The Suns had 7 second-quarter turnovers, but made up for it by outrebounding Portland 14-7 in the frame.

While [Shannon Brown](#) nursed a turned ankle and sore back, [Wesley Johnson](#) had a great second quarter with 12 points and 5 rebounds. he soared all over the court in this quarter, making Suns fans wonder where this aggressive guy was all season? Johnson played the last 14 minutes of the half, taking not only Brown's minutes but also Tucker's second quarter minutes as well.

In the third, Portland started hot and outscored the Suns 16-8 in the first six minutes on 6-8 shooting while the Suns shot 3-7 with two turnovers. The Suns righted the ship though, and soon Dragic had a career high in assists by the three-minute mark of the third quarter.

By the end of the third, your Slovenian Dragon had 16 assists, a career high with a quarter left to play. Can he get 20? Dragic also scored the ball, getting 14 points on 5-12 shooting. [Damian Lillard](#)

Final Score: Phoenix Suns 102, Portland Trailblazers 98 behind 18 assists from Goran Dragic

Written by

Tuesday, 19 February 2013 23:45 -

kept the Blazers within striking distance with 19 points and 4 assists, but those numbers paled in comparison to Dragic.

[J.J. Hickson](#)

powered his way to 21 points and 13 rebounds after three quarters as well (9 and 7 in the third alone), helping the Blazers grab four offensive rebounds to keep the game closer than it could have been.

The Suns entered the 4th quarter with an 84-73 lead.

The bench unit kept the lead behind Jermaine O'Neal, who put together a heck of a game with 9 points and 13 rebounds. The Suns took a 90-74 lead early in the fourth before Portland began chipping heavily away, going on an 18-6 run even while the Suns brought back in their starters.

Shades of the earlier season loss in Portland were coming to light, where Portland overcame a deficit to beat the Suns by 3 when the Suns were trying to right their ship in December. That loss to Portland sparked 11 losses in 12 games, mostly on the road.

Portland roared back in the fourth while the Suns' once-fluid offense stopped up with Dragic getting trapped and forced to release the ball. [Michael Beasley](#) had one of his "off" games, shooting 3 for 9 with 3 fouls and a turnover. He was a ball-stopper, taking shots or committing fouls seemingly every time he touched it.

The Suns were able to pull out the win on the strength of some strong defense and a couple of crafty drives to the hoops by Gortat and Scola, despite big shots made by Portland. Just not enough of them.

The Phoenix Suns outrebounded Portland 51-36 - a feat unto itself.

The Suns shot 50% on the night, compared to Portland's 42%.

Final Score: Phoenix Suns 102, Portland Trailblazers 98 behind 18 assists from Goran Dragic

Written by

Tuesday, 19 February 2013 23:45 -

But Portland made 26-32 on free throws to keep it close, and the Suns had to ride Dragic's 14 points and 18 assists to the victory. O'Neal chipped in 9 points and 13 assists, and Wesley-freakin-Johnson had a HUGE 14 points and 8 rebounds.

SUNS WIN!

The Suns broke a 7-game losing streak in Portland while the Blazers extended their season-long losing streak to 6 games.

TRADE RUMOR NOTES

- Jermaine O'Neal is "wanted" by the New York Knicks. No word on what comes back to the Suns.
- Sebastian Telfair is "wanted" by a few teams. Like O'Neal, no word on return value.
- Both will likely be either included in a bigger deal or get a second-round pick by themselves