

PREVIEW: Phoenix Suns at Golden State Warriors

Written by

Wednesday, 20 February 2013 13:06 -



If the Phoenix Suns and Golden State Warriors were movie characters, The Suns would be Louis Winthorpe III and the Warriors would be Billy Ray Valentine [Joe Lacob and Robert Sarver would be Randolph and Mortimer Duke].

For years, the Suns [Louis] were the crème of the crop. They had superstar point guard who made the game exciting, and all-star power forward who was a double-double machine, a supporting cast that could shoot the lights out, and were a team that would run their opponents into the ground [except for playoff time].

The Warriors [Billy Ray], on the other hand, were a hodgepodge of individualistic players, many of who had questionable character and were certainly disjointed and among the dregs of the league.

Now I am not saying that the owners of both teams somehow conspired to have each team swap places, but it is clearly evident that the Warriors and Suns fortunes have completely switched, and we are suffering the misfortunes of Louis Winthorpe III.

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Oh, if only we could kidnap Mr. Beaks and steal that crop report. Anyhoo.

The Suns are coming off Tuesday night's disappointing win against the [Portland Trail Blazers](#). I use disappointing because they were aggressive, seemed to care and outplayed their opponent. Why is that disappointing? Because they seem to only play that way in every fifth game and they are only ruining their draft position.

Golden State is coming off another loss last night to the Utah Jazz, dropping their sixth in a row and moving them closer to the bubble in the playoff battle. Currently the six seed, the way the Warriors are playing, I cannot foresee them making much noise in the playoffs. Despite these doldrums, the Warriors have a lot to be happy about and are a franchise that is sitting in a relatively good spot, with a great point guard, a solid power forward, a very good center when healthy, and some young wing players that have great potential. Definitely the anti-Suns.

What: Phoenix Suns [18-36, 5th Lottery Standings] vs. Golden State Warriors [30-23, 6th WC]

When: Wednesday, February 20th, 2013, 8:30 PM local time

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Where: Oracle Arena, Oakland, CA

Watch/Listen: TV: FSAZ, Radio: 620 KTAR

Head-to-Head: GSW [2] – PHX [GOOSE-EGG]

The first meeting between these two teams was the first game of the season for both, and it showed. Sloppy play and a disinterested Stephen Curry [5 pts, 3 ast, 4 to, 2-14] allowed the Suns to stay in the game and keep it very close until a last second terrible heave by Bassy sealed the deal. When it is the first game of the season and Sebastian Telfair is the go-to for a last second shot to win, you know your season is going to be a long and difficult journey.

Our second matchup with the Warriors was much better. Well, at least for the Warriors, as they coasted to a 113-93 win. Curry decided to show up for that game and it made all the difference

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in the world [29 pts, 8 ast on 11-20 and 6-10 from 3]. Harrison Barnes chipped in 21 and 8, Klay Thompson had 17, 7 and 7 and David Lee had a double-double with 16 & 12. Meanwhile, Michael Beasley dropped 24 on the Warriors, which would have been a nice game had he not shot 23 times.

Injury Report:

GSW: Brandon Rush (Out)

Phoenix: Channing Frye (Out), Shannon Brown's Shot Selection [questionable], Michael Beasley's Hair [Tangled]

What To Watch For:

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LOTTERY BALLS:

The most significant thing to watch is the Suns lottery standing. Currently, the Suns sit with a precarious hold on the 5th slot, fighting off Sacramento. The Charlotte Bobcats hold a firm grip on the lead, followed by Washington, Orlando and Cleveland. The Suns need to focus and work hard in order to fend off any wins for the rest of February in order to de-improve [?] in the standings.

Sacramento, only a half-game behind the Suns, has four games remaining in the month with a possibility of picking up two wins. Unfortunately those wins would be against Orlando and the Pelicans, who are only one game in back of the Suns. Cleveland finishes the month of February with a chance to pick up three wins in their five games [against Pelicans, ORL and TOR]. Washington benefits from seeing TOR twice this month, as well as a winnable game against Detroit. Orlando plays six contests and might be able to squeeze out three wins against CLE, CHA and SAC. That CLE vs. ORL game is pivotal.

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The Suns February schedule is a cakewalk. They can easily lose all five games, as they face SAN twice, BOS and MIN after tonight's game. Hopefully they remain focused and take care of all five games. And by "taking care", I mean losing. But spirited losing, not tanking. I am not an advocate of tanking. I am an advocate of trying really hard and being competitive, but sucking enough to lose. OK, I guess I am for tanking.

Andrew Bogut

Bogut has been handled with care since his return from injury over the past month. Last night was a particularly uneventful one for Bogut, as he played 15 minutes and was 0-4. The Warriors have held him out of back-to-back games and he has been limited to 26 minutes when he has played. However, in those minutes he has been relatively productive, putting up 8.5 points and 8.5 rebounds. This guy is due a big game and the Suns are a good team to have one against. While most would expect me to comment on Curry or Lee, I am predicting a big game out of Bogut.

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Jarrett Jack

Jack is quietly putting together a career year [and a contract year at that]. Off the bench averaging about 29 minutes per game, Jack is putting up 13 points and 5.8 assists while shooting 47% from the field and 41% from three point land. Strangely, our best player isn't doing much better than that [and shooting far worse]. Last night, Jack had 19 pts and 9 assists on 6-11 from the field.

Curry has been getting all the love, but Jack has proven to be probably the best backup point guard in the league [and probably one of the better starting point guards in the league if he started]. Can you say underrated free agent???

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Carl Landry

This guy always seems to light us up. Expect no different.

KEY MATCHUP:

Goran Dragic vs. Marcin Gortat

Will Gortat finish a play? Will he bark at Dragic for not getting him the ball? Will Dragic get mad at Gortat for not calling out the picks? Will Dragic finally implode and try to destroy Gortat with a laser like pass to the head? Who knows, but watching these two play together is a joy. Not since Stephon Marbury and [fill in the blank] have I seen two teammates play so well together [with the exception of Kobe/Dwight – that tandem is #1 all-time].

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Prediction:

Pain