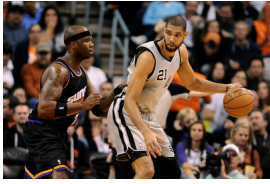


Full Coverage: Phoenix Suns Bested By The San Antonio Spurs

Written by
Monday, 25 February 2013 11:03 -



Full game coverage of the most recent loss by the Suns to the San Antonio Spurs including the preview, review, videos, and an exclusive story on Shannon Brown.

What was once the hottest ticket in town has become more of a laughter over the past three years. Throughout the 2000's the [Phoenix Suns](#) (18-38) and the [San Antonio Spurs](#) (44-13) had some classic battles for playoff positioning and in the Western Conference Playoffs searching for a title.

The steady drop in the standings over the past three seasons has been one sided as the Suns have not made the Playoffs in three years while the Spurs have won 155 games and counting as serious contenders.

When did the rivalry end?

Other than this year the Suns had [Steve Nash](#) as the architect and assistants in [Grant Hill](#) , [Channing Frye](#) , and [Amare Stoudemire](#) to help. Since then they have all left on their own accord going to contending teams (insert [Lakers](#) joke here) deciding to not go down with the sinking ship.

The way these two franchises are run seem to be polar opposites. That is not a knock on the Suns front office, but rather a knock on the consistency that the team has not had over the past five years which has been the reason for the downfall.

In the past five seasons alone the Suns have had three different head coaches, three different

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acting general managers, and a roster turnover from title contenders to lottery odds watchers.

In that same span the Spurs have had one coach, one general manager, the same core roster, and remarkable consistency as a franchise. A model to study and learn from if there ever was one. The results over the past three seasons tell the story.

(Recent) History Lesson

This season the teams have met once and it was a close game until (TP) eviscerated the Suns (11 points 4 assists) in the fourth quarter. He finished with 31 points and 7 assists for the game, but the show he put on late was a display of one of many stark differences between the two teams this season.

Head-to-Head (past four seasons including Playoffs)

Suns: 105.3 PPG (7 wins)

Spurs: 106.1 PPG (9 wins)

That is a little deceiving as the Spurs have dominated the Suns over the past three seasons going 8-1 against them, but were 1-6 during the 2009-2010 season. That was the season where the Suns got redemption against their then rivals with a playoffs sweep and a trip to the Western Conference Finals.

Head-to-Head (career)

Duncan vs. Suns: 22.5 PPG 12.5 RPG 3.2 APG 2.5 BPG 55.3 FG% (84 games)

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Gortat vs. Spurs: 13.0 PPG 9.8 RPG 1.3 BPG 50.5 FG% (10 games)

If you want to call Duncan old here are his numbers in the last four seasons (14 games) 20.6 PPG 11.0 RPG 2.5 APG 2.1 RPG and 61.5 FG%. He is not aging half bad. Over that span he was 33, 34, 35, and now 35 years old.

The younger, more athletic center has been schooled for the most part by the veteran as Gortat has played well in three games career against the Spurs and floundered in the other seven. He is 28 years old today.

Starting Line-Ups

PG - [Goran Dragic](#) v. Nando de Colo (or [Patty Mills](#))

SG - [Jared Dudley](#) v. [Danny Green](#)

SF - [P.J. Tucker](#) v. [Kawhi Leonard](#)

PF - [Luis Scola](#) v. [Tim Duncan](#)

C - [Marcin Gortat](#) v. [Tiago Splitter](#)

Potential Suns Inactives: [Hamed Haddadi](#) & [Diante Garrett](#)

Potential Spurs Inactives: [Tony Parker](#) (Right Tricep) & [Gary Neal](#) (Left Calf)

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Key Match-Up

Suns Bench vs. Spurs Bench

At one point in the season the Suns had the second best bench units in the NBA scoring nearly 40 points per game, only bested by the [Los Angeles Clippers](#) . Since then it has been a rapid decline with inconsistent minutes for each player resulting in erratic results nightly.

On the other hand the Spurs have been very consistent all season scoring 38.5 PPG as a unit taking the pressure off of the starters. Each unit balances one another out for the best team in the league.

The play of [Manu Ginobili](#) is the primary reason why they get that production off of the bench, but they have a plethora of depth with shooters, finishers, play-makers, and guys who know their role in the system. The Suns have depth as well, but nobody knows their role and when the bench comes in it becomes a free-for-all.

Interesting Stat: 13

The Spurs have scored 100+ against the Suns in 13 straight games. That is unlikely to change as they average 104.4 PPG and have netted 100+ in 38 out of 57 so far this season. Even without Parker for three games this season the Spurs still managed to get over 100 in each game averaging 105 PPG going 2-1 without their star.

Meaningless Stat: 23 Points

Those 23 fourth quarter points by Dragic against the Spurs are a distant memory, but they are also the career outlier his him against them. In the other 69 quarters for the Suns and the [Houston Rockets](#) he has scored a total of 110 points. That is 1.6 points per quarter.

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