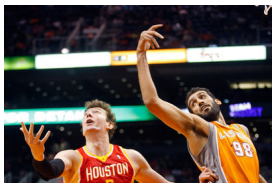

This season the Houston Rockets became that strange bedfellow that you needed to be successful, because that would in-turn make you more successful. For a time, the Rockets were the team that could thwart the Los Angeles Lakers from making the playoffs, but the circumstances have since changed and a win over the Rockets is another notch in the belt of wins that the team should not have had in hindsight.

Coming into tonight the Phoenix Suns have done a pretty remarkable job shooting themselves in the foot winning games they could (should) lose to better help the big picture come together.

The second quarter started a new style of Suns basketball, with a new group on the court. Kendall Marshall, Jared Dudley, P.J. Tucker, and Michael Beasley sparked a 16-0 run in the quarter to erase a six point deficit and put together a respectable 10 point lead. The run went all the way to an 18-1 overall spurt and that was the wake-up call that James Harden needed.

From that point on Harden took it upon himself to score or assist on 26 of his teams next 41 points as the margin was cut to one point heading into the fourth quarter.

The bench was the spark as they scored eight points in the first quarter giving the starters a modest breather, but led by Dudley the reserves lit up the Rockets for 33 points in the middle quarters. Dudley was a starter for 50 games this season and he seems to be responding well to the move to the bench scoring 22 points off the pine. He was able to counteract the scoring of Harden for that period of time reminding the team and the fans how good he can be.

It was the erratic play that the Suns forced that allowed them to go on their run. They were getting their hands on loose balls and forcing turnovers.

Most of the turnovers were a combination of luck and sloppy ball-handling by the Rockets, but credit is given where credit is due and the Suns deserve a lot of it for being in the right place at the right time. On one play in particular Harden threw a perfect pass to Markieff Morris , the problem being that the Rockets no longer have a Morris on their roster. I can see Harden turning to head coach Kevin McHale and saying, "Coach I thought it was Marcus." Well, that is a little better now, but again there are no Morris' on the Rockets.

What got the Rockets back into the game as they were seemingly asleep on the court was a run in the second quarter by Harden. He nailed a contested three to end the run and followed that up a strong drive and finish and then an and-1 giving Tucker his fourth foul just before the half.

In the waning moments of the game the Suns went to a two-point guard line-up with Goran Dragic
and Marshall running the offense. This allowed them to mask Marshall on Jeremy Lin
and give Dragic some minutes off the ball to create turnovers.

The closing line-up of Dragic, Marshall, Dudley, Marcus, and Hamed Haddadi who had a career-high 10 rebounds in a career-high 27 minutes holding up strong rebounding the ball and playing solid defense. They scored just enough to etch out a 107-105 win over the reeling Rockets.