

Suns defense indefensible, effort lacking... bludgeoned by Clippers 126-101

Written by
Thursday, 04 April 2013 00:13 -



Recap:

The Clippers started off the game on a 15-0 run. That's not a typo. Interestingly enough, the Suns followed suit with a 10-0 run of their own. The Suns failed to score in the first 4:14 of the game. Then LA failed to score in the next 3:29. At the end of this bizarre exchange the Clippers led 15-10. Chris Paul picked up his second personal foul with 3:51 left in the quarter and went to the bench with LA leading 19-10, but the Suns were unable to capitalize in terms of closing the gap. Score: Clippers 29, Suns 19.

After going to Jermaine O'Neal at the end of the first quarter, the Suns went back to the well to start the second. A ferocious put back dunk early in the period gave O'Neal a game high 10 points. A unit of O'Neal, Jared Dudley, Michael Beasley, Wesley Johnson and Kendall Marshall hung tight with the Clippers, even closing the margin to three at 38-35, emboldened by a sparkling performance from JO. Beasley kept the Suns close with six points late in the quarter, and a defensive sequence that made Griffin look particularly foolish, but the Clippers were able to maintain a tenuous grip on their lead going into halftime. Score: Clippers 57, Suns 50.

O'Neal finished with 14 points (leading all scorers) and six rebounds in the half. Goran Dragic was miserably ineffective, finishing with zero points (on 0-5 shooting), two turnovers, three personal fouls and only three assists as an inadequate counterbalance. After starting the game 1-13 from the field the Suns made 18 of their next 32 attempts. After starting the game, Markieff Morris played a team low seven minutes among the nine players that entered the game. DeAndre Jordan recorded a relatively rare first half double-double with 10 points and 11 rebounds. Paul fought off two early fouls to finish the half with 10 points, five assists and zero turnovers. Paul was partially responsible for engineering a first half with only two giveaways for the Clippers. LA doubled up the Suns in points in the paint (36-18) and tripled them up in fast break points (12-4).

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Dragic came out in the second half looking to atone for an underwhelming first half with six early points and a deft drive resulting in a dazzling two handed dunk, but his effort largely didn't translate to positive results. Goran's renewed vigor also appeared to elicit a resounding rebuttal from Paul, unfortunately, and Dragic was busy collecting his fourth foul while Paul was busy distributing his eighth assist. A 15-2 run by the Clippers (the Suns sure are adept at giving up soul crushing runs) pushed the lead to 17, the largest of the game, at 77-60. Yes, the Suns were only down 62-58 at one point in the quarter. The 15-2 run ballooned to a 29-8 run as the Suns became the victims of a highlight reel that resembled a crime scene. The Suns were savagely beaten in the quarter to the tune of 38-20. Score: Clippers 95, Suns 70.

A scrum early in the fourth quarter was the first time the Suns showed any life in the second half. Dragic got entangled with Ryan Hollins and had a difficult time extricating himself from a quasi-headlock. Beasley was ejected, along with Hollins, after coming to Goran's aid by entering the fray and participating in an ensuing shoving match with Hollins. Akin to most NBA "fights", it was mostly just bluster and bravado. This was the last semi-entertaining portion of the game as the Suns cozied up to another blowout loss like a lazy dog in front of a warm fire.

Final score: Clippers 126, Suns 101.

Player of the Game:

Chris Paul. 15 points, 12 assists, four steals and zero turnovers. He is the catalyst for this Clippers squad and tonight was a pretty blatant example of the difference between an elite point guard and a good point guard.

Comments of the Game:

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Remember when we used to be good enough to win the division?

Yeah.

Remember the good old days...

When we had Matt Barnes?

Ryan Hollins scored. That sentence makes me very sad.

DeAndre COULD average more than .4 assists a game

He just doesn't want to.

DRAGON SLAM!!!!!!!!!!!!

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WOOT

Remember the good ol days,

When this was a close game?

Clippers have made 14 of last 16 shots.

So... are we supposed to be improving our defense or what? The Clips could have done that with us still in the locker room.

Morris a stellar 1-8 tonight, Dragic chips in with a 3-10 game with 5 turnovers, Beasley a +4 but ejected, the other Morris scrub a permanent bench warmer, Wesley had a good game but a -28.

The Suns future.

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The Good:

Jermaine O'Neal had another one of his stout, stellar showings. His talents are being wasted on this team as he approaches the waning stage of his career. I'm sure Jermaine is ecstatic to be healthy again and playing productively, but I can't imagine his competitive nature has been satiated by the downward spiral this season has devolved into.

Michael Beasley did Goran a solid by standing up for his teammate. In a season full of questionable decisions I think he finally got one right.

The Bad:

The Suns did their best somnambulist impersonation to start the game and found themselves down by 15 points before they stirred from their slumber. The Suns keep it real with their consistent effort. #Play48

That was a bush league move by Ryan Hollins to instigate the commotion at the start of the fourth quarter. I don't understand his motivation, either, since the game was about as heated as an icebox.

The Ugly:

The third quarter. The Suns made a mockery of the competitive nature of the game by displaying their alarmingly frequent "all quit" mentality. The Suns have revealed a prolific

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proclivity to lay down and die since Hunter took over the head coaching position. Coincidence?

Final Thoughts:

This game was probably decided before Markieff Morris and DeAndre Jordan took center court for the opening tip. The Clippers are a good team. The Suns are not. Games where Suns fans can walk away feeling proud of their team have been few and far between as this season has pathetically trudged along. Tonight was not one of those rare occasions.

I was a little nonplussed as to why Kendall Marshall sat the entire second half while Goran Dragic was still on the court during garbage time (which comprised the entire fourth quarter). The guy (Goran) who couldn't even play last week due to "exhaustion" is now on the court in the closing minutes of a blowout loss... Maybe Hunter is trying to send another message. Just add this to a stack of inscrutable in game moves made by the Suns recently.

Also, thanks Utah.