

Preview: Phoenix Suns (23-52) vs. Golden State Warriors (43-32)

Written by
Friday, 05 April 2013 14:15 -



Coming into this game the [Phoenix Suns](#) (23-52) are a team desperate to end their losing ways. The [Golden State Warriors](#) (43-22) come in entrenched in a playoff race and each appear to be obstacles for one another, respectively.

Losing tonight would put the Suns into unique company with Orlando (12, 10, and 8), Charlotte (18 and 10), Washington (12 and 8), Detroit (10 and 8), Cleveland (10), and New Orleans (11) as teams with 8+ game losing streaks. A loss to the divisional rival Warriors would match the longest losing streak in nine years for the franchise.

The Warriors present unique challenges for a Suns team that has allowed 100+ points in 11 of the last 13 games overall.

Gaining a defensive identity takes a lot more work, effort, and tweaking than the changing of a head coach and saying words in front of a camera. The Suns are learning that in real time as they have struggled to get stops consistently leading to the current streak they are mired in.

The Warriors have gotten things back on track after losing four in a row winning eight of their past eleven games as they are getting healthy for the playoffs.

(Recent) History Lesson

Suns 0-3

Aside from the classic that was the season opener, the Warriors have owned the Suns this year beating them all three times, and the last two games by 10+ each. In the two games in Golden

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State, Steph Curry connected on eight deep balls controlling the pace.

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

Suns: 107.4 PPG (8 wins)

Warriors: 103.7 PPG (6 wins)

This has been a fluid rivalry that has flowed one way and now is flowing back down stream on the Suns. Discounting the past two seasons the Suns were 7-1 against the Warriors and the past two seasons they are 1-5 against the younger, more skilled, and improved Warriors team.

Head-to-Head (career)

Curry vs. Suns: 14.1 PPG 5.1 APG 40.0 3PT% (14 games)

Dragic vs. Warriors: 11.1 PPG 4.5 APG 48.2 FG% (15 games)

Typically the Suns hold Curry in check, but this season he has had two of his three better performances against their divisional rivals. Also, typically, Dragic does not start against the Warriors, but when he has Dragic puts up very good numbers to the tune of 17.0 points per game and 8.2 assists per game.

Starting Line-Ups

PG - [Goran Dragic](#) vs. [Stephen Curry](#)

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SG - [Wesley Johnson](#) vs. [Klay Thompson](#)

SF - [P.J. Tucker](#) vs. [Harrison Barnes](#)

PF - [Markieff Morris](#) vs. [David Lee](#)

C - [Luis Scola](#) vs. [Andrew Bogut](#)

Potential Suns Inactives: [Marcin Gortat](#) (sprained right foot)

Potential Warriors Inactives: [Brandon Rush](#) (left knee surgery)

Key Match-Up

Wesley Johnson vs. Klay Thompson

This season the Warriors are 17-7 when the second year wing scores 20+ points. They are 7-1 when he scores 25+ points in a game this season showing the value of having him as a secondary scorer next to Curry.

Over the last 11 games Johnson has collected 14 steals while scoring 14.2 points per game becoming a dual threat on the court. It is not inspiring winning basketball, but his ability to make Thompson work on both ends of the court could be the difference in an eighth straight loss or a halt to the losing streak.

Interesting Stat: Top 10/Top 20

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The Warriors are one of only five teams (Miami, San Antonio, Oklahoma City, and LA Clippers) that are in the Top 10 in scoring and the Top 20 in defensive points against.

Meaningless Stat: Bottom 10

The Suns are one of three teams (Orlando and Charlotte) that are in the Bottom 10 in scoring and in the Bottom 10 in defensive points against. There is that.