

Recap: Suns blast Rockets, 119-112, in final home game of season

Written by
Monday, 15 April 2013 23:42 -



The [Phoenix Suns](#) decided to go out on a high note for their fans. They played hard, they played fun and had the fans cheering more consistently than in most any game this season (besides the Laker wins maybe).

The Suns scored their most points since [Lindsey Hunter](#) took over, and second-most this whole season. A microcosm of their effort was a steal by Dragic and, on the next possession, a putback by Tucker.

The best part is that now Houston HAS to beat LA on Wednesday to definitely avoid OKC in round one. Thanks Houston!

After winning the game, the Suns players threw autographed basketballs and T-shirts into the crowd. Nice sendoff.

Way to leave a good taste on our pallets, Suns. Thank you.

Big nights:

- [Markieff Morris](#) had 20 points, 7 rebounds, 6 blocks and 5 steals
- [Goran Dragic](#) had 20 points, 14 assists, 5 rebounds and 2 steals
- [Luis Scola](#) had 26 points and 15 huge rebounds
- [Kendall Marshall](#) had 8 points, 4 assists, a block and a steal
- All five starters had at least 12 points in this game

The Suns started off the game with a bang, going up 35-23 very quickly in the first quarter. Luis Scola was balling, as was Goran Dragic. it was like a big weight was lifted and the Suns were playing focused, despite missing their top two centers once again. Scola made a plethora of midrange jumpers to frustrate [Rockets](#) C Asik, and Dragic was slicing and dicing through the lane and racking up assists.

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When Kevin McHale called timeout, it appeared he would right the Rockets focus but all he did was wake up [James Harden's](#) drive-and-draw game. The rest of the Rox still played like they were in quicksand.

By the end of the first, the Suns nursed a 39-28 lead. Once again, a good opening quarter - the latest trend from the Suns in the last couple of weeks. Dragic had 8 points and 9 assists, while Scola put up 14 and 5 against their former team. It was truly a two-man game. Scola proving himself one more time can improve his trade value over summer.

In the second quarter, the Rockets kept driving to the lane, drawing more fouls and getting them on demand. [Jeremy Lin](#) took Kendall Marshall to school on the court, and Marshall appeared to be in first grade.

[Carlos Delfino](#) always seems to play like an All-Star against the Suns, putting up 6 points, 3 rebounds and assist and a block in only 6 minutes of play as the Rockets outscored the Suns 24-11 to start the second quarter.

The good they were a-gone, just like the lead. Rockets up 52-50 with 6 mins left in half.

The Suns eventually righted the ship though, and took a lead back into halftime. Funnily enough, that coincided with Dragic coming back into the game.

Dragic finished the half with 12 points, 13 assists and 2 steals.

The Suns biggest problem in recent games has been the third quarter, giving up twice as many points as they've scored.

But tonight, the Suns came out to play the third like it was any other quarter. Even with Dragic going out a while (to stitch a cut), the Suns extended their lead to open the third, leading 80-71 with 5:38 remaining.

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McHale once again tried to wake up his troops. The Rockets made a couple of threes, but the Suns found a way to keep scoring by hitting the paint hard themselves, especially [P.J. Tucker](#) .

Again, Delfino a Suns killer this season, hit two more threes in the third when the Rockets needed some scoring. 4-5 on threes. Ouch. Rockets cut the lead from 12 to 7 in the final seconds of the third.

But hey, it wasn't a bloodbath in the third! Woo hoo! Phoenix outscored Houston 23-22 without Dragic most of the quarter.

"Rocky" came back into the building in the 4th with a huge bandage over his eye. He made a quick three and had a nice assist right away to help the Suns push the lead back to 10.

Dragic and Scola were really carrying the load all night, trying to finish off the season right on their new home court against their old home court.

When the Rockets cut the lead to three, Markieff Morris (who already had 16 points, 6 rebounds, 5 blocks and 5 assists) came back into the game. Morris quickly scored inside on a putback of his own miss, and then another block soon after.

When Kendall Marshall scored on a nifty drive against defensive dynamo Patrick Beverly, McHale once again called timeout with an 8-point deficit. These Suns were not just going to fade away on this night.

Notes:

- Per Julie Fie of the Suns PR dept, many of the players have already had their exit interviews, and will just be picking up their personal stuff on Thursday after the last game.
- Lon Babby will not make any end-of-season address with media immediately after the season, preferring to wait until everything is "sorted out". Could that be a house-cleaning on

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tap? Probably not, but it's fun to wonder.

- Goran Dragic said pregame that he thinks there has to be change on the roster to improve on their 24 wins next season. Not even an attempt at "guys will come back focused and better next year"

- When asked what the Suns need, Dragic said another playmaker who can pass the ball, set up the offense along with him on floor. Much like Houston with Harden and Lin.

- He also said the offense and defense need more shoring up. Basically, anything you can point out, the Suns need to improve on.

- Toughest season of Dragic's career, by far.

Lottery pickins

- Utah won, setting up a chance to tie the [Lakers](#) ' win total on Wednesday if Lakers lose and Utah wins

- Denver won, giving them the #3 seed for certain over the [Grizzlies](#) , leaving the Grizz locked into the #5 seed when they face off against those

[Jazz](#)

. Might Grizz rest players in meaningless game?

- Rockets losing tonight means they HAVE to beat Lakers to avoid OKC in first round.

- Worst-case scenario for Lakers.