

Back to the future game recap: 1993 Phoenix Suns drop Spurs in Game 5, 109-97

Written by

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Since the current iteration of the [Phoenix Suns](#) is on vacation during these playoffs, we at Bright Side thought it would be fun to relive the Suns' exciting 1993 playoff run with recaps of each game, starting with Game 5 of the Western Semis. Revisit yesteryear while we wait for the Suns to rise again.

After a thrilling come-from-behind first round series win over the [Los Angeles Lakers](#) ("and everyone's gonna say what a great series it was"), the Phoenix Suns faced an equally big opponent in the

[San Antonio Spurs](#)

. The Spurs had just beaten defending Western Champ Portland Trailblazers in round one, and saw the smaller Suns as their next step on a Finals run of their own.

David Robinson was a beast surrounded by role players that made them greater - and more frustrating - than the sum of their parts (where have I heard this one before). Avery Johnson. Sean Elliot. J.R. Reid. Antoine Carr. Dale Ellis. All good players, but all role players around a Hall of Fame center.

The smaller Suns had [led the league in scoring](#) , by a wide margin, and boasted a passable defense (9th in efficiency vs. 18th in points allowed) to win a club record 62 games before the playoffs started.

(again, where have I heard all this before?)

Charles Barkley was the Suns Hall of Famer in 1993, putting up 25.6 points, 12.2 rebounds, 5.1 assists and 1.6 steals per game, along with a block for a good measure. Charles had truly an historic season, one that has not been topped in the valley - either in terms of raw stats or raw impact - since. You could argue that Steve Nash made the same, if not bigger, impact (and certainly a more long-lasting one) but Nash never guided the Suns to the Finals and never in the way that Charles did.

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The Suns supporting cast was a who's who for Suns fans: PG Kevin Johnson (MIP, 3-time All-Star, 5-time All-NBA). SG/SF Dan Majerle (3-time All-Star, 2-time All-Defensive). F Tom Chambers (4-time All-Star, 2-time All-NBA). Danny Ainge (1-time All-Star). Ced Ceballos (1-time All-Star). Mark West. Oliver Miller. Richard Dumas. Tim Kempton. 4th-quarter Frank Johnson.

Man, that was an exciting team. The Suns painted the town orange that year. Chambers, Kempton and West still work for the Suns to this day. Ceballos was their in-game entertainer for years. Majerle was a TV guy, then coach. Barkley still lives in the valley. In many ways, the 1993 team is still part of the franchise fabric.

May 18, 1993: Suns beat Spurs 109-97, take 3-2 series lead

[Boxscore](#) - courtesy of basketball-reference.com

The Suns returned home for Game 5 after letting the series get tied up 2-2. "It's never very hard to play on the road," shooting guard Danny Ainge quipped. "It's just hard to win on the road."

Feasting on home cooking and a rocking home crowd, the Suns muddled through three tight quarters before Charles Barkley lit up the night with 19 fourth-quarter points, including 16 in a 6-minute stretch. Barkley put the Suns on his back and carried them home when they needed it the most.

Barkley finished the game with 36 points (on 16 shots and 15 free throws) and 12 rebounds. He got great support from Kevin Johnson (15 points, 12 assists, 6 rebounds) and Dan Majerle (17 points, 4 rebounds). As a team, the Suns shot 59.7% for the game, a huge improvement over shooting less than 42% in each of the losses in San Antonio.

The crowd was electric. The Suns attendance ranked 5th in the league that year, with every single game sold out and playoff tickets really hard to come by. My dad went to every game and will never forget that series.

Up next: another showdown in the Alamo for Game 6. Could Barkley and the Suns step up on

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