

## Recap: Suns blast Blazers, 104-91, behind Dragic, Bledsoe and Plumlee

Written by

Wednesday, 30 October 2013 23:23 -

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Let me just say that this [Phoenix Suns](#) team is a LOT more interesting than last year. The near-capacity crowd was into it, oohing and ahhing many, many times and jumping out of their seats often. And those who didn't show up will regret that one day. (not that this game is the Suns high water mark, but... anyway, lemme move on).

In one game, the Suns produced more highlights than all of last season put together. Dunks. Spinning layups. Timely threes. Fast breaks.

Who are these guys?

Your Phoenix Suns, that's who!

The Phoenix Suns came out blazing with "Frequent Flyer" [Miles Plumlee](#) leading the way. They ran over the Blazers to the tune of 30-16 in the first quarter, but then came back down to earth by halftime before taking a big lead again in the third quarter.

Plumlee rocked the court: 16 points, 10 rebounds and 2 blocks in 19 first-half minutes. On the other end, [Robin Lopez](#) had only 2 points and 2 rebounds in 18 of his own minutes. The best thing is that Plumlee didn't rack up fouls, instead contesting shots even at the rim without fouling. On offense, Plumlee had a couple of dunks but really showed a nice ability to use his body, length and the glass on a variety of post-up moves, scoring over Lopez and Freeland at will. Plumlee made 7 of 9 first-half shots, with one of those misses rimming out after going halfway down.

[Goran Dragic](#) and [Eric Bledsoe](#) had a great combined first half with 23 points, 7 rebounds, 7 assists and a steal between them. Many of those points and assists were on great drives to the hoop to draw the defense.

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Portland came out playing harder after halftime and cut the lead to 1 using their superior length, but then the Suns ratcheted it up and went on a 12-0 run. The run started with Dragic and Frye hitting three-pointers and finished with scrappy play at the hoop.

Goodwin got the shooting guard minutes in the second half over [Gerald Green](#), maybe to up the defense on the perimeter? Then Goodwin gives up too much space to Lillard for another three. Oh well.

Still, the Suns were able to hold the lead they built on the 12-0 run by making shots and playing defense. They made three of seven threes in that third quarter after going 0-7 in the first half. Portland again tried to ramp up the physicality, even getting away with a lot of body, but the Suns still kept making shots.

[Marcus Morris](#) was getting killed all night by Aldridge, playing backup PF because brother Markieff was out. Frye wasn't in shape to play solid PF defense either.

But then Morris started hitting his shots, and got a steal on an Aldridge entry pass even. And the Suns built the lead up to 15 before Dorrell Wright drew a foul on a three and cut the Suns lead to 12 at the end of 3.

[Alex Len](#) relieved Miles Plumlee, and the Suns lead suddenly looked tenuous. But Len made a shot and then grabbed a rebound in traffic. And then he revealed the Lenbows, sweeping the decks of guys trying to poke ball from him, then put it on floor for a dribble before passing to Bledsoe. Nice sequence. The kid is skilled, if very raw.

Miles Plumlee, after the big first half (16, 10, 2) wasn't as effective in the second half. Guessing it was jello legs, at least in part.

Oh yeah, all this writing on everyone else but Eric Bledsoe quietly having the best night out there. 22 points, 7 rebounds and 5 assists in mid-fourth. And Goran Dragic had 18, 8 and 5 by that time as well.

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Still, the Suns nursed a 7 point lead with 5 minutes left.

The Suns continued to play scrappy on D and forced a turnover to build the lead back to 9 on fast break layup by Dragic that brought the crowd to their feet like I haven't seen in a long time. The Suns energy builds the crowd until they are ready to explode on a good play. This night, the Suns made those.

When the Blazers got the lead down to 5, Suns leading scorer Goran Dragic made two clutch jumpers to take the lead back to 9. [P.J. Tucker](#) followed with a fast break layup to seal the win.

Unfortunately, the Phoenix crowd forgot their manners after enjoying so much of the game that they started filing out at a minute-plus, rather than cheer the home team at the final buzzer.

First half notes (before I started doing the recap):

- Lopez won the tip.
- Bledsoe posted up Lillard, got Plumlee an open dunk
- Blazers two o-boards on second possession
- Blazers three for three on possessions
- Plumlee a nice running layup
- Suns losing almost every rebound opportunity
- Bledsoe is really good at setting up the big for a dunk at the basket. Gets fouled, makes shot or lays it up soft for the putback or catch-and-slam
- Marcus Morris first off bench at PF, in for Frye after 5 minutes
- Plumlee with two shots over Lopez, one on one. Lopez only has one overshoot
- Suns disrupting the Blazers offense, getting a couple steals on weak passes inside.
  
- Plumlee forces a wild shot by Lillard which he rebounds
- Dragic step-back score on Lopez
- Plumlee with two blocks already - six points (dunk, two postups), 3 rebounds and 2 blocks in 7 minutes of play. Man of the year!!
  
- Suddenly it's 25-12 before the Blazers know what hit them. Literally. BAM.

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- Make that 9 points, 5 rebounds, 2 blocks and tons of defending the rim for Plumlee. He's the new MAN on this team.
- Suns in half-court not nearly as effective as open court
- Plumlee finally gets a break after 11 minutes. Len immediately attacked, Lillard going to rim. Commits foul. But then next possession, Len forces a bad layup attempt
- Suns up 30-16 after 1
- Marcus is the backup 4, with Len the backup 5
- Morris not playing well. Missed two shots badly, not rotating on time, indecisive on offense
- Somehow Bledsoe called for offensive foul with defender trailing him on break. Wow.

#Manuishere?

- Blazers coming back in second quarter when Suns lose the luster and start taking/missing bad shots
- Suns bring back starters with Green in for Tucker. Not as effective. Lots of isos.
- And then Plumlee happens
- First, he scores on two straight possessions in post, then barely misses third (rims out), then draws foul on dump off from Dragic. Really gets the spacing, how to make himself available.
- Suns lead down to 6 with Portland being patient on offense, allowing Suns to miss shots
- Frye and Morris very ineffective on LMA
- At half, Plumlee with 16 and 10. Lopez with 2 and 2.
- Lillard getting his points of catch-and-shoot on weak side, or off picks. Then Lillard made 3 3s right before halftime to pull Blazers within 4. Man, that kid is a shooter. 18 points at halftime. Got lots of screens/picks to get free, Suns had bad rotation.
- Suns gave up 30 second-quarter points. 9 of those by Lillard in final minute or so.
- After 30-16 first quarter, Blazers won the second quarter 30-20.
- Suns PGs collectively have 23, 7 and 7 at halftime.

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