

## Phoenix Suns rise over Minnesota Timberwolves behind Green's heroics

Written by

Thursday, 09 January 2014 02:52 -

---



SUNS WIN!!!!

### Summing it Up

Wow. This one is tough to capture in just a few words. I'll just say a lot of Suns had huge performances and Phoenix won on a big time shot by [Gerald Green](#) . Now on to the full recap.

### Telling the Story

The game got off to a rough start for the Suns, while Kevin Martin was red-hot for Minnesota. The [Timberwolves](#) went on a 9-0 run on a perfect 4-4 start, with seven of those points being scored by Martin. However, [Miles Plumlee](#) finally got on the board and they dominated the rest of the quarter, outscoring the Wolves 27-14 and holding them to just 3-23 shooting after that 4-4 start.

[Channing Frye](#) was the high scorer for the Suns in the period with 10, but the two stars were recently re-signed [Leandro Barbosa](#) and the now mostly healthy Alex Len. Barbosa, who came straight from the Brazilian league showed he was still the Blur Suns fans remember from the Seven Seconds or Less days, recording an assist, a rebound and a bucket on his first two possessions. Barbosa certainly wasn't shy, getting off five shots in less than five minutes of play during the quarter, and although he only made one pretty much all his shots were good looks around the rim. He finished with three points on 1-6 shooting, three rebounds and three assists. As for Len, he checked in and pulled down three rebounds (all on the offensive end) and put one of them back up in in late in the quarter. He struggled later in the game, but was great in the first quarter and finished with two points and five rebounds.

The Suns continued to play well in the second quarter, hanging tight on the boards and knocking down 3-pointers (something they didn't do at all against Chicago the night before). Kevin Martin continued to score points, but the Wolves as a team just didn't play as well as the Suns. The Suns took a 53-47 lead into halftime despite shooting just 38 percent from the field.

## Phoenix Suns rise over Minnesota Timberwolves behind Green's heroics

Written by

Thursday, 09 January 2014 02:52 -

---

Dragic was steady in both quarters, finishing the half with 12 points and six assists, while Frye tacked on five more points to finish the half with 15. [Marcus Morris](#) came off the bench and got some buckets when the team was a bit stagnant, recording seven points on 3-4 shooting and four rebounds. The Timberwolves' fearsome front line of

[Kevin Love](#)

and

[Nikola Pekovic](#)

combined for just eight points on 3-20 shooting in the first half and Minnesota as a whole shot 33 percent.

The momentum shifted in the third quarter, however, as the Timberwolves picked up their execution and the Suns... didn't. The Suns missed shots, and the Timberwolves made them pay by getting [Corey Brewer](#) out on the break. He had nine points in the period after going scoreless in the first half. Kevin Love hit a few shots as well, going 2-5 from the field (an improvement from what he was doing before) and scoring seven points. By the halfway point, Minnesota had tied it up at 61-61. Later, tied at 69-69, Minnesota closed the quarter on an 8-3 run and led 77-72 after three.

The two teams went back and forth in the fourth, with the Timberwolves maintaining a one to two possession lead until Nikola Pekovic took over. Miles Plumlee had kept him in check for most of the game, but Pekovic decided he had had enough of that and went to work in the post. He had nine points in the fourth, opened up Corey Brewer for a pair of threes by drawing double-teams and fouled out Plumlee with 2:44 left.

At that point, the Timberwolves were up 102-95 after Pekovic sunk both free throws. Dragic sunk a pair for the Suns, Brewer split a pair, Tucker made two himself and the lead shrunk to four. Love put up a hook that bounced hard off the rim, Dragic tracked down the rebound, pushed it down court and used a Dragon-step to score. Lead down to two. The Suns trapped the Minnesota bigs on the perimeter and forced a turnover, which [Markieff Morris](#) took all the way down court to draw a foul. Keef went to the line with a chance to tie the game with 41.4 seconds left. He hit the first... but missed the second. One-point game. The Timberwolves tried to run a pick-and-roll out of a Horns set, but

[Ricky Rubio](#)

took it too hard, got trapped behind the basket and his pass was picked off by Keef.

The Suns had 16.4 seconds left, and Jeff Hornacek put the ball in his best players hands. [Goran Dragic](#)

looked to attack but got himself in trouble, getting caught in the air with no room to shoot, but

## Phoenix Suns rise over Minnesota Timberwolves behind Green's heroics

Written by

Thursday, 09 January 2014 02:52 -

---

was able to find Markieff Morris before his feet hit the floor. Gerald Green ran to take the ball from Keef, rose up (about 40 inches) and drilled a crazy leaning jumper with 3.9 left on the clock.

The Timberwolves came back with a chance to win it, but [Kevin Martin's](#) runner over [P.J. Tucker](#) got stuck on the rim and fell short. Game over.

Suns win.

### Top Performers

- **Goran Dragic:** One day after playing 34 minutes against a physical [Chicago Bulls](#) team, Goran Dragic played 41 tonight and finished with 26 points, nine assists and six rebounds.

Once again, without

[Eric Bledsoe](#)

, Dragic had to shoulder nearly all of the playmaking duties, and that burden was not too heavy for him in this one as he stepped up when the team needed him most with 12 fourth quarter points. Dragic was praised repeatedly as an All-Star by ESPN's broadcast crew (even though they couldn't get his name right). Perhaps now people will start to take notice of how great he has been this year.

- **Channing Frye:** Dragic took over in the fourth, but Channing Frye was the one carrying the team through the first three quarters. He finished with 22 points on 8-17 shooting and 5-10 from deep. Oh, he also drew the primary assignment on Kevin Love and did a phenomenal job, holding the NBA's second leading scorer to 15 points on 4-20 shooting. Bravo, Mr. Frye. Bravo.

- **Miles Plumlee:** Plumlee finished one rebound shy of a double-double with 11 points and nine rebounds. He may have got taken to school and fouled out in the fourth, but through the first three quarters Plumlee's defense on Pekovic was terrific. Pekovic finished with 17 points on 16 shots, but he was 3-12 heading into the fourth quarter. Now if only someone would teach him how to box out...

- **P.J Tucker:** Tucker only scored four points on 1-5 shooting, but he pulled down 10 rebounds and was a big reason the Suns were only -1 on the boards. He also stayed in front of Martin and avoided fouling him on that final possession.

- **Gerald Green:** Green didn't have a great game, scoring 14 points on just 5-12 shooting. However, he did hit the biggest shot of the game and for that he is a hero.

- **Marcus Morris:** Mook had a bad game against Chicago, but he bounced back against the Wolves and was the only player off either team's bench to reach double figures. He finished with 10 points on 4-6 shooting and five rebounds.

- **Markieff Morris:** Keef had an even worse game against Chicago, and wasn't all that great tonight. He had just eight points on 3-10 shooting and five rebounds. However, he was in on the two biggest plays of the game. He played great defense against Rubio on the penultimate Wolves possession and picked off the pass, then bailed out

## Phoenix Suns rise over Minnesota Timberwolves behind Green's heroics

Written by

Thursday, 09 January 2014 02:52 -

---

Dragic and found Green for the game-winning assist on the other end. Clutch.

- **Kevin Martin:** Martin led the Wolves and hit right at his average with 20 points, but he was scoreless in the fourth and wasn't able to convert on that last shot.

### Final Thoughts

- If you notice above, I included almost everybody on the roster in the standout performers section. That is because all of them had a big impact on this game in one way or another. This was a tremendous team win for the Suns.

- Well, almost everybody was mentioned. [Ish Smith](#) was -10 in his 12 minutes on the court. He did get one nice offensive rebound, but the Suns really just can't do anything when he is out there running the show.

- Everyone knows this, but the Suns REALLY miss Eric Bledsoe. Goran Dragic is the only current healthy player that can dribble the ball and not do something stupid with it. The Suns need a second playmaker or they're going to kill Dragic.

- Perhaps Leandro Barbosa can be that guy. Barbosa only made one shot, but I thought he looked much better than I expected. All his shots were around the rim, meaning he still has the speed to get to the rim. When Barbosa can get a little more comfortable with the system, maybe he can be that guy outside of Dragic and Bledsoe to make things happen off the bench. There are still nine days left on his contract. Hopefully by the end of it he'll sign something to keep him around a little bit longer.

- The officiating was bad tonight. There were plenty of missed calls all night long. Suns fans might complain (and with some reason) about the 30-18 disparity in fouls called. However, the way it was called benefited the Suns more so than the Timberwolves. The refs let them play inside and didn't give Love and Pekovic foul calls when the Suns were being pretty physical. Dragic didn't get calls on some of his drives either, but in the end the Suns got the win so I suggest not worrying about it.

- The Timberwolves are now 0-10 in games decided by four points or less this season. For whatever reason, they just haven't been able to execute down the stretch, and that is why they are on the outside looking in at the playoff picture. Pekovic was dominating on the block, but I don't think they went back to him on the block a single time after Plumlee fouled out.

- Overall, this was a huge win, perhaps the best of the season considering they just played in Chicago the night before.

- Shout-out to you Bright Siders for killing it in the game thread. Nearly 1300 comments. Great job.

- Now for some tweets:

Huge defense end!!! And huge shot from Gerald Green!!! Incredible W over the Minnesota 104-103! Feels so good to be back [#SunsNation](#)

— Leandro Barbosa (@TheBlur\_Barbosa) [January 9, 2014](#)

## Phoenix Suns rise over Minnesota Timberwolves behind Green's heroics

Written by

Thursday, 09 January 2014 02:52 -

---

Thanks Suns family for all those positive msgs here!!! I love y'all [#SunsNation](#) [#GreatEnergy](#)

— Leandro Barbosa (@TheBlur\_Barbosa) [January 9, 2014](#)

Big win tonight!!! I love how we fight till the end.. Not making shots isn't the be all tell all.. Do somethin else to effect the game

— PJ Tucker (@PJTUCKER17) [January 9, 2014](#)

It's not about scoring 20 every night, do something to help your team win, lots of things not on the stat sheet that can change a game

— PJ Tucker (@PJTUCKER17) [January 9, 2014](#)

It's not about scoring 20 every night, do something to help your team win, lots of things not on the stat sheet that can change a game

— PJ Tucker (@PJTUCKER17) [January 9, 2014](#)

Jeff Hornacek on what he told the [@Suns](#) heading into final defensive possession... "Guard them."

— [Phoenix Suns](#) (@Suns) [January 9, 2014](#)

## Phoenix Suns rise over Minnesota Timberwolves behind Green's heroics

Written by

Thursday, 09 January 2014 02:52 -

---

One off the best wins in my career tonight vs Timberwolves!! It was all team effort. Let's go [@Suns](#)  
[#IgniteTheFuture](#)

— Goran Dragic (@Goran\_Dragic) [January 9, 2014](#)

It was nice to have [@TheBlur\\_Barbosa](#) back with the [@Suns](#) !!! [#IgniteTheFuture](#)

— Goran Dragic (@Goran\_Dragic) [January 9, 2014](#)

" [@jozerdaclozer44](#) : [@Channing\\_Frye](#) had that Super Saiyan going after the final buzzer. Lol"- I'm surprised my hair did grow n go blonde

— Channing Frye (@Channing\_Frye) [January 9, 2014](#)