

## Recap: Phoenix Suns Stuck in Quagmire, Drop Third in a Row to New York Knicks, 98-96 in OT

Written by

Monday, 13 January 2014 23:23 -

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That game was ugly. The [Suns](#) offense was ugly. The [Knicks](#) defense was ugly. The pace was ugly (and brutally slow). The officiating was ugly. Everything on the court was ugly. Except Goran Dragic? in the first half and

[Leandro Barbosa](#)

in the second. Those guys were nails. Everyone else? Ugly.

16 of 56 - The shooting numbers of Suns not named [Goran Dragic](#) or Leandro Barbosa

5 of 28 - The shooting numbers of Suns named [Gerald Green](#) and [Channing Frye](#)

35.5% - The Suns' field goal percentage WITH the valiant efforts of Dragic? and Barbosa

0 of 7 - The Suns' field goal makes and attempts in overtime

55 - The total number of personal fouls called in 53 minutes of playing time

2 hours, 55 minutes - The length of time we all endured watching this ugliness.

All that ugliness and yet the Suns still only lost by 2 points. There's your Bright Side, Suns fans.

Despite the Suns playing 3 on 5 for most of the game, they were nearly good enough to steal one from the Knicks in Madison Square Garden. Your players of the game were Goran Dragic (28 points, 8 rebounds, 4 assists), Leandro Barbosa (21 points), and [P.J. Tucker](#) (6 points, 6 boards and admirable defense on

[Carmelo Anthony](#)

who got 28 points on 9-22 shooting). Read on for a breakdown of the recent unpleasantness.

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The first quarter started promisingly enough with the Suns looking sharp on offense, but a little content on defense. The Suns traded baskets with the Knicks to the tune of a 10-7 lead for the first few minutes of the quarter. Dragi? and Frye even hit back-to-back 3-pointers in what looked to be the start of a hot shooting night... and then the wheels fell off. The Suns failed to score a field goal for the next six minutes while the Knicks scored 15 points unanswered to take a 12 point lead. Goran Dragi? stopped the bleeding with a 3-pointer but the damage was done. Despite the Dragon's efforts (12 first quarter points) to match Carmelo Anthony (13 first quarter points) point for point, the Suns trailed 28-21 at the end of one. Compounding the Suns' first quarter problems, P.J. Tucker (2 fouls) and [Marcus Morris](#) (3 fouls), were not getting the benefit of any doubts trying to guard Carmelo.

The second quarter got off to a rocky start with [Markieff Morris](#) getting whistled for a travel and then drawing a technical foul while arguing the call. Two and a half chippy minutes later, Kieff drew his second technical foul for, how do I put this... menacingly brushing past

[J.R. Smith](#)

? On the one hand it was a silly move by Markieff with a T already in the bank, but Smith escalated things by essentially shoving Markieff's hand away from him. Whether intentional or not, the move worked and Markieff was tossed 3 minutes into the second quarter.

The Knicks extended the lead to 14 at the 8:48 mark of the second quarter when the Suns answered with a 7-0 run keyed by a Channing Frye(!) three and a Gerald Green(!) layup. But momentum swung back the Knicks way and it looked like they were getting ready to blow things open on a [Kenyon Martin](#) fast break dunk. But Martin argued the non-call on the dunk and received a technical foul for his troubles. (To be fair to K-Mart, I think it was the only sequence of the game in which a foul wasn't called, so there's that.) Again, the Suns responded with a 7-0 run to make it 40-36 on a sweet Dragi? turnaround with 5:12 remaining in the half.

Unfortunately, they wouldn't score again for the next 3 and half minutes and the Knicks' lead ballooned to 14 again before a Plumlee hook shot ended the run. Goran Dragi? scored his 18th, 19th, and 20th points on an ice-cold 3-pointer to end the half with the Suns trailing 52-43.

The Suns came out swinging in the third quarter and rattled off a 9-2 run to knot things up at 54 on a high-flying putback by Plumlee with 9:00 remaining in the quarter. But yet again, the Suns couldn't maintain any momentum and went scoreless for the next 5:16. Fortunately, they were going scoreless against the Knicks, who only managed to put up 9 points in that timeframe.

The Suns and Knicks were content to trade buckets for the remainder of the period and the Knicks led 75-68 at the end of three.

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My fourth quarter notes read as follows: Dat Blur. Leandro Barbosa came alive at just the right time for the Suns. For 3 quarters, the Suns' offense consisted of Goran Dragić and a handful of Plumlee and Tucker tip-ins. No one else could hit water falling out of a boat. Leandro scored the Suns' first 8 points of the quarter to keep the Suns' hopes alive. It was apparent that the Dragon was running low on fire, yet perhaps inspired by a rejuvenated Blur, he scored on back-to-back layups with 5:50 to go in the game to put the Suns up 84-83. The Suns managed to extend the lead to 5 on a Barbosa jumper, but then, as was their habit throughout the game, gave it all back and then some over the course of the final 4 minutes of the quarter. Yet when all hope appeared to be lost, Kenyon Martin fouled Barbosa to put him on the line with 1.2 seconds left in the game. The Blur was clutch and sent this miserable game to overtime.

I don't know what to tell you about overtime. The Suns missed everything? Sure. The Suns missed EVERYTHING. 3-pointers, bunnies in the lane, mid-range jumpers. They went 0 for 7 from the field and got their only 4 points from the line, where they Channing Frye still managed to miss 2 shots.

Honestly, it felt like the Knicks should have been up by 25 at times when they only managed to get up by 8. After getting dusted on the boards early, the Suns nearly evened the rebounding edge, finishing a mere 4 boards behind the Knicks while collecting an impressive 17 offensive rebounds. Those 17 offensive rebounds translated into the Suns getting 12 additional field goal attempts. And the Knicks still managed 2 more makes than the Suns despite that deficit.

If there is an actual bright side here, it's that despite shooting as if they were blindfolded, these Suns never quit. They were in it until the very last second. Goran Dragić is every bit as good as Suns fans have been saying he is, but without [Eric Bledsoe](#), someone else needs to step up on offense in a timely fashion. He was clearly out of gas in the second half.

[Miles Plumlee](#)

did yeoman's work down low finishing with 12 points, 11 rebounds, 2 blocks and 3 steals. This loss sadly rests squarely on the shoulders of Channing Frye and Gerald Green who were ice cold in the worst sense of the word. This was one that got away as the Knicks managed to control the pace, but let the Suns hang around enough to make it winnable.

On to the next one, Bright Siders. Here's hoping the Suns can take out their frustrations on the [Lakers](#)

Wednesday night in Phoenix.