

## Final Score: Phoenix Suns elevate and detonate on Indiana Pacers, 124-100

Written by

Thursday, 23 January 2014 00:14 -

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The Pacers are the best team in the NBA. The Phoenix Suns are just days away from tanking their season after the loss of Eric Bledsoe. Of course, the Suns proceed to absolutely obliterate the Pacers on ESPN to improve to 24-17 on the season.

The game started on the right note, with the [Pacers](#) for some reason deciding to play at the [Suns](#) free-flowing pace. The Pacers kept up for a while, but then the Suns began to pull away and held a 13-point lead at halftime.

That 13-point lead became a 17-point lead at the end of three.

Then a 26-point lead six minutes later, at 99-73 with 6:06 left in the game.

Then Indiana coach [Frank Vogel](#) waved the white flag and pulled his starters for basically the first time in the second half. To be clear, it was the Pacers starting unit, not their backups, that got blasted in this game.

For the second straight game, the Suns annihilated a winning opponent's starting unit in the 4th quarter WITH THEIR SECOND UNIT. Suns starters didn't even have to return in either game.

- Gerald Green had 18 first half points, 23 for the game.
- Goran Dragic finished with 21 points and 4 assists in 22 minutes.
- Markieff Morris had 20 points off the bench.

### First half

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The Suns started hot from the tip, making their first four shots on exactly what they wanted. Two threes, a short runner from [Goran Dragic](#) and a oop from former Pacers Gerald Green to [Miles Plumlee](#) on the fast break.

The Pacers kept pace by making a number of midrange shots, or as head coach Frank Vogel puts it, low OERs. He dropped OER in the pregame press conference, which is short for Offensive Efficiency Rating. Who says coaches can't use advanced stats? Two of the best on the court right now.

The Pacers offense is not very imaginative. Post up (West), take a midrange shot, go for offensive rebound.

Within 6 minutes, the Pacers had a 19-17 lead. That's a 152-136 pace. Something tells me this won't continue.

And, it didn't. Shots started missing from both sides, turnovers increased and the Suns went on a 9-4 run to take a 3-point lead with 3 minutes left in the first. The pace of the game is still fast, fast, fast. Just as the Suns like it. When will Pacers go back to their winning formula? The Pacers were only within 3 points because of 4 offensive rebounds (to the Suns 0) creating second chances.

Still, the quarter ended with 59 points scored. Not at the Pacers preferred pace. [Roy Hibbert](#) played the entire first 12 minutes, as did Paul George (except for a few seconds). The Suns whole-quarter counterparts were [P.J. Tucker](#) and Miles Plumlee (minus a few seconds).

The most entertaining part of the last few minutes of the quarter was [Leandro Barbosa](#) going right at Roy Hibbert three times in two possessions. He scored once, got blocked (out of bounds) once and overshot the last one. LB and Hibbert shared a joke after each one. Barbosa played for the Pacers in 2012.

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End of one: 30-29 Suns.

The Suns opened the second period on a 12-2 run to open up an 11 point lead, but then got careless with the ball and couldn't get any more separation from the Indiana second unit.

The crowd turned quickly on [Luis Scola](#) , by the way. After a tepid cheer when he checked in, the crowd started to boo him after a few "Scola" plays. I can see why the fans booed him. As an opponent, he's very frustrating.

Gerald Green came out on fire in this game and kept it up in the second quarter: 18 points in the first 20 minutes of play, along with 4 rebounds, 2 assists and a steal.

When the Suns lead got to 13 with [Gerald Green's](#) 17th and 18th points on a fast break dunk, the Pacers started to lose their cool. [Lance Stephenson](#) committed an offensive foul, and then Roy Hibbert drew a tech.

[David West](#) returned from an early wrist injury after scoring 8 quick points in the first to settle his team down. They went to him in the post three straight times, with him missing once and drawing fouls on the next two and then missing again. Gerald Green, though, proceeded to jack up two even-lower-OERs-than-usual and the Pacers had a chance to right their ship.

But Hornacek called a timeout to bring the starters back (along with meep-meep for Green) and opened up the lead even further on several great plays by Dragic, Barbosa and Plumlee.

End of half: Suns lead 62-49.

Halftime stats/notes:

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- Gerald Green 18 and 5 (versus [Paul George's](#) 14 and 4)
- Miles Plumlee 7 and 5 (versus Hibbert's 6 and 4)
- Luis Scola with 3 points
- Suns shooting 55% to Pacers 48%. More aggressive than Pacers, taking the shots they want almost every time.

Which Pacer team will show in the second half? The one who thought they could hang with the Suns pace, but couldn't? Or the ones who can dictate pace with their plodding offense and stifling defense?

We shall see.

### Second half

And, the second half started like the first half ended. So much for that Pacer haymaker, or sleeping aid. Suns started the quarter on a 10-2 run to take a 21 point lead before the first timeout was called.

Go Suns!

The Suns lead got all the way to 24 halfway through the Q before Indiana made a few shots (gasp, attempts inside 15 feet!) and pulled to within 18 before Hornacek called his own timeout.

At this point, the Pacers decided to get more physical on offense and defense to try to slow down the Suns. David West and [George Hill](#) drew fouls - the MO of the end of the half as well - but the Suns stayed strong and kept making shots.

Joey Crawford tried to insert himself into the nationally televised game at this point, making foul calls kinda like Leslie Nielsen playing the baseball ump in that one movie (which was it?).

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George Hill became a one-man wrecking crew, drawing fouls on several possessions in a row and playing hounding defense on the other end. Goran Dragic committed his fourth foul in the process, threatening to get the Suns in trouble. Then Barbosa committed his third foul and the Suns were even more in trouble.

[Ish Smith](#) got to take a turn next on Hill. Somehow, Ish and Barbosa were able to keep the pace up and the Suns held on to a 17 point lead going into the 4th (96-79).

That's one punch the Suns survived already. Can they survive another?

Suns shooting 59% for game. 72% on threes. Against the league's BEST DEFENSE, Even if it's an off night for Pacers, isn't this something to behold?

### Fourth Quarter

The Pacers started the 4th with a couple of baskets to cut the lead to 13. Paul George and Roy Hibbert started the 4th, ostensibly to see if the Pacers could make it a game.

But the Suns second unit stayed strong and built the lead quickly back to 19. If Marcus Morris would have made a wide open three, or [Channing Frye](#) had made a putback slam, the roof would have come of the building.

As it was, [Markieff Morris](#) made a three a couple possessions later to make it a 22 point game, and the Pacers called a timeout with 8:23 left.

For the second straight game, the Suns might be able to finish the entire fourth quarter with the second unit beating the tar out of a winning team's starting five.

BOOM!

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Frank Vogel waved the white flag at 6:06 left in the game after the Suns blew out to a 26 point lead.

What was that Charles Barkley said when [Eric Bledsoe](#) went down? Oh yeah "They're done."  
By they, Charles meant the opposition?