

Gerald Green propels Suns to 109-93 victory over stunned Trail Blazers

Written by
Friday, 04 April 2014 23:50 -



We should have known this was coming. After all, it is Green Week in the NBA. It was Green Night in Portland. Gerald rained in 32 as he put on a show for the stunned Blazers crowd and gave the Suns a crucial road victory.

By the time they took the court the Suns were all alone in ninth place. No tiebreakers, just flat out behind. Memphis had just taken care of the Denver Nuggets, winning 100-92, while Phoenix was staring in the face of a much more potent adversary.

The Moda Center Rose Garden was rocking early in the game. To their credit, Blazers fans are an obstreperous, engaged group. Goran Dragic attempted to quiet the crowd, but appeared to be forcing the issue instead of letting the game come to him and went 1-6 in the early going with a technical foul before earning himself some early rest.

An efficacious substitution resulted in Gerald Green inciting a push to help the Suns gain and maintain a lead in the latter part of the first quarter. Green and Eric Bledsoe each scored 10 in the period as they combined to shoot 7-8 from the field. Unfortunately, the rest of the Suns were a paltry 3-17.

After a quick spell, Goran came back in and gave the Suns a six point lead (40-34) by scoring six points in 25 seconds on a three pointer followed by a finish and free throw on a fast break. Through the early part of the second quarter Robin Lopez, the one that got away, was keeping the Blazers close by being a hustling, disruptive, rim protecting, free throw making force.

As the game unfurled in the second quarter it became apparent that the Suns had a little bit of an edge tonight. They were playing angry. I'll refrain from using the word chippy here because it's way too hockeyish.

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The Suns controlled the tone of the game for most of the second quarter and led 51-45 before going limp by failing to score in the final 4:12 of the half. They went 0-11 from the field and missed two free throws during the stretch. Portland seized the opportunity and turned a six point deficit into a three point halftime lead (54-51).

The beginning of the third quarter was not kind to the Suns. Digging a hole against a quality opponent in a hostile environment is never desirable... and suddenly the Suns found themselves down double digits. Instead of shrinking while they were going through a rough patch Phoenix redoubled their effort. At times it looked like there were two or three of Miles Plumlee on the court as he was having one of his best rebounding games of the season. Miles was dwarfed by Lopez's sheer size, but was doing his best to offset the big man's impact.

LaMarcus Aldridge started to get it going a little bit after a four point first half and poured in 12 in the third quarter, but the Suns chipped away at the lead and kept themselves within striking distance.

At the beginning of the fourth quarter Phoenix regained the lead (81-80) on an emphatic (SportsCenter Top 10) dunk by Gerald Green after intentionally passing the ball to himself off the backboard. Green was officially in heat check mode. A few minutes later he hit a three to give Phoenix a 95-85 lead and the Portland faithful were absolutely staggered.

A 26-7 run can have that kind of an effect on a crowd.

The Blazers had been taken completely out of their comfort zone. All Phoenix did down the stretch was win every 50/50 ball, grab every big rebound and make every big shot. Bledsoe was pouring it on, too, going for 12 of his 30 points in closing mode. The Suns regifted the fourth quarter ass whipping the Clippers had laid on them two nights earlier. The final tally of the carnage in the fourth was 30-13 as the Suns walked to a 109-93 victory in a big time game.

I'm going to slip this one into my mental filing cabinet of things I'm going to look back on when I think of what a great season this was.

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***Our crackerjack group of stat guys tell me that this is the first time the Suns have had two players score 30 in the same game since the last time it happened (whenever that was).*