

Thursday, February 7, 2008

Lakers lose by a pinkie; Earl Watson and Steve Nash triple-doubles

The Lakers blew a late lead to Atlanta last night, and then Kobe Bryant lost the ball because of his dislocated pinkie, which allowed the Hawks to take home the win. Kobe shot terribly for the second game in a row, probably not unrelated to his finger injury (although he did have ten assists and his late turnover was his only one for the game, so maybe it's not all his finger), but this time Pau Gasol wasn't the answer: 5/14 shooting, seven boards, and permitted Al Horford to dominate with twenty rebounds. Lamar Odom had a nice game with 19 points on 8/12 shooting and 11 rebounds, but the Lakers aren't a team that wins by having their leading scorer net 19.

L.A. remains sixth in the West, one loss behind San Antonio and two losses behind the triumvirate at the top (Phoenix, Dallas, New Orleans). My prediction for the remainder of Phoenix's regular season: they won't finish at the top spot -- they'll struggle to integrate Shaq and they'll miss Shawn Marion's defense. They'll adjust and still be dangerous in the playoffs, but it'll cost them at least a game or two in the regular season, and with the West as tight as it is (5.5 games separate #1 from #10), that'll bump them down to third, or maybe even fifth or sixth.

Elsewhere in the league, Corey Maggette had 33 and 8 with five steals and the Clips still couldn't beat the KG-less Celtics. Miami lost its first post-Shaq game (to Detroit) despite 30 points and 12 dimes from D-Wade. Former Laker Kareem Rush netted 24 points in 28 minutes to down the Knicks. Kyle Korver makes me very very afraid of Utah: he had 27 points off the bench in an OT win over Denver, helping overcome Carlos Boozer's 3/15 shooting night. Phoenix took two overtimes and still couldn't New Orleans, led by Chris Paul's rickety line of 42 points, five rebounds, nine assists, and eight steals. Eight different players in the game scored twenty points or more, four on each side, and Steve Nash had a Kobe-style triple double: 32 points, 12 assists, and ten turnovers. Earl Watson logged a more traditional triple double for Seattle, 23-10-10. (Who on earth let Earl Watson grab ten rebounds?)

On the Heavyweight front, San Antonio defended its title in Washington behind Tim Duncan's 23 points. Damon Stoudamire again started and played 22 minutes for the Spurs. Twenty-two minutes in a row in his first two games is a funny coincidence.

2007-08 Current beltholder: San Antonio Spurs

Next title match: Friday, 2/8, at New York. Sigh.

2007-08 Title Bout Records:

Boston91
San Antonio62 Cleveland52 Milwaukee52
Houston32 Phoenix32
Utah32
L.A. Clippers11 Philadelphia11 Miami23
Washington23 Charlotte12 Chicago12 Memphis14 Sacramento14 Dallas01
Detroit01
Indiana01
Orlando01 Portland01 Seattle01
Atlanta02
L.A. Lakers03

UPDATE: It was pointed out to me that the Suns did not actually win. I am dumbfounded as to how I messed that one up. The post has changed to reflect the realities of life.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in Basketball at 08:54