

Thursday, April 24, 2008

Lakers win impressively

It's possible that the Nuggets are the best #8 seed in history, and the Lakers made them look silly tonight. (It's also possible that the Mavericks are the best #7 ever, and the Hornets made them look silly last night.) I don't think the Lakers will sweep, but I do think they'll take one of the two games in Denver and then close the series out in Game 5 at home behind a meltdown by one of the three at-times-overly-emotional Nuggets scoring guards (Iverson, Carmelo, JR Smith). L.A. just looked too good tonight. They have too much size, too much shooting ability, too much penetration ability, and they're a marquee team that, this being the NBA, gets the borderline calls when they play at home. Things just don't look good for Denver.

Looking ahead, at the risk of a jinx, I have to say that L.A.'s road doesn't look easy. I'm afraid of every team L.A. might have to play, except for Phoenix (and it's looking very unlikely that they'll have to play them). They'll get Utah in the second round -- with so many weapons, and an unstoppableness on their home court, they're fearsome. If they get past Utah, they'll have to deal with either the Hornets, who, after watching their dismantling of a Dallas team that doesn't have a quick guard to put on Chris Paul (check the Lakers roster -- they're not exactly brimming with quickness at the guard spot) really frighten me, or the Spurs. San Antonio's players don't really intimidate me that much, because L.A. has a variety of big bodies to throw at Duncan, and at least some semblance of a defensive presence against Manu Ginobili. (Don't ask me about Tony Parker.) The real reason I'm afraid of San Antonio is because, outside of Utah, they have the only coach in the league who can actually go toe-to-toe with Phil Jackson. Byron Scott, George Karl, AVERY JOHNSON? Flip Saunders? Doc Rivers?

That said, even if the Lakers get to the Finals, they're still faced with Detroit or Boston. (Wait, what? LeBron? Ha! Haha! Please, the man can't get up for a game unless DeShawn Stevenson is insulting him. He has less fun on the court than Kevin Garnett. He hates his teammates more than Kobe. Don't talk to me about LeBron James.) Either of those teams is, I think, perfectly capable of sweeping L.A. (which I think isn't something you could say even about any of the Western teams).

Yes, this is the best basketball season I've ever seen. Nice of you to ask.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in L.A. Lakers at 02:11