

Friday, May 9, 2008

Stream of consciousness thoughts on Lakers-Jazz Game 3

I hope the Jazz fans are really excited about this win, because it took ridiculous games from their three stars, terrible shooting and ball-handling by the Lakers, two early fouls on Derek Fisher, and a real adjustment in the first half by the officials, from calling everything in the first two games to calling nothing (before returning to the call-everything mode in the second half). All of this to win by five, and even then only because a horrible play on the final jump ball where Luke Walton just threw the ball away after getting exactly the tip L.A. wanted from Pau Gasol.

The Lakers deserved to lose this game, and the Jazz earned their win, for all of the above reasons. But you know what? When you only lose by five, despite doing everything wrong while the other team does everything right, you're the better team. The only question is whether the Lakers can regroup on Sunday, stop fumbling the ball away every other possession, and stop missing layups when you're not bailed out by the officials.

Really just a frustrating, frustrating game. Did Okur or Boozer miss a single contested jump shot? (Obviously they did, but it sure didn't feel like it. Every time you looked up, they were hitting a 20-footer with Lamar Odom's hand in their face.)

So what's the prescription for Sunday? Kobe: don't go 0-6 from three. Sasha Vujacic and Jordan Farmar: don't combine for 0-9 shooting. Referees: Pau Gasol works all game inside against a team that fouls more than anyone in the league; he seriously didn't shoot a single free throw in this game? Really? Pau: turnovers! Lamar: turnovers! Phil: don't be scared of Derek Fisher's two fouls; Jordan Farmar is a good player, but he's overmatched in this series because that position needs to guard Deron Williams, and Farmar can't do that. Fisher started with two fouls, and then, at the end of the game, you know how many fouls he had? Still two. It's not like Fisher stopped Williams, but he certainly did better on him than Farmar did. So in short, Phil, Fisher can play with fouls. If the offense is churning out the points, then you can sit Fisher, because the Jazz can't run with the Lakers. But if the offense is sputtering like it was in the first half tonight, Fisher has to be in the game.

One final note: the Lakers only lost one quarter tonight. The problem is they lost that quarter, the second, by nine, while they only won the second half by four, and tied the first quarter. They got seriously outplayed over those 12 minutes, and could only play more or less even with the Jazz for the other 36. That's on the bench mob, since they were playing that quarter, and Phil played the starters (more or less) the rest of the way, once he figured out that his reserves couldn't play the game tonight.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in L.A. Lakers at 23:49