

76ers outclass NBA playoff field

Offense can only carry a team so far, right?

If it's San Antonio in basketball that's right - offense can spur it on to victory, at least until someone with more firepower comes along.

In a playoff of the 1983 NBA post-season games, conducted by John McTernan and Clark Schulte of Belleville, IL, the Spurs did surprise some teams with their run-and-gun style of play, most notably the Los Angeles Lakers, runnerups in real-life, who fell in four straight games of the Western Conference finals.

San Antonio, in fact, disposed of first Phoenix, 4-1, and then L.A. before taking on the Philadelphia 76ers, real-life champs, in the finals. There the Spurs were out-offended by the 76ers, with Philly winning in four straight games to duplicate its success against L.A. in the real-life championship series.

The Spurs saw too much Julius [Dr. J] Erving in the final, as the Doctor was MVP after averaging 30.3 points versus San Antonio and 26.4 for all playoff games. He had a high-game of 43 points against New Jersey and scored 30 or more points in seven of 14 games.

Here's a game-by-game breakdown of the finals:

Game 1 - Philadelphia 103, San Antonio 97. - Andrew Toney and Erving each pumped in 31 points, with Dr. J collecting eight assists and seven rebounds, for the winners and Johnny Moore scoring 20 points and dishing out 14 assists for the Spurs.

Game 2 - Philadelphia 142, San Antonio 111 - 76ers shot a scorching 65 percent from the floor and had four players with 20 or more points, led by Toney who finished with 34. The Philadelphia bench also helped, outscoring San Antonio's regulars, 18-15, over the final six minutes of the opening period. George Gervin rang up 28 points for the losers.

Game 3 - Philadelphia 122, San Antonio 115 - Bobby Jones came off bench for 15 points and key bucket off offensive rebound to spark 76ers to commanding 3-0 lead. Six players, led by Erving's 25, scored 20 or more points for winners, while Gervin had 29 for Spurs.

Game 4 - Philadelphia 122, San Antonio 121 - A dunk by Dr. J, off a switch, on the final play ended the series. Philly had trailed by three points with 36 seconds left but came back to pull out victory as Mo Cheeks swished a jumper and Erving, after a 76er press forced a turnover, took advantage of a mismatch and went inside on Mike Dunleavy, rolling an "X."

Where was Moses Malone during the playoffs? He was very evident as, even though Erving was the MVP, Malone averaged 22 points and 18.9 rebounds. "He was the glue for the 76ers," enthused McTernan.

In the Western Conference playoffs, Seattle knocked off Portland and Phoenix did likewise to Denver, 2-0, in mini series games. Seattle got 29 points and 10 assists a game from Gus Williams, while Maurice Lucas sparked Phoenix by averaging 28.5 points and 13 rebounds. Dennis Johnson's shot at the buzzer gave Phoenix a 114-112 win for a sweep.

The semifinals found Los Angeles edging Seattle, 4-3, and San Antonio rolling over Phoenix, 4-1. L.A. won the last two games, 111-97 and 105-96, to capture the series with good defense. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar averaged 20.6 points, Magic Johnson 17.1 (plus 13.7 assists and 8.9 rebounds). Jack Sikma's 19 points and 12.7 rebound averages led Seattle.

Gervin averaged 32.6 points and Moore 17.8 assists in the rush past Phoenix.

SAN ANTONIO SWAMPS LAKERS

First real big surprise was San Antonio's wipeout of the Lakers, with only the second game close (115-113). Gervin again was San Antonio's triggerman, averaging 23.8 points, with Moore averaging 13.3 assists. Artis Gilmore dominated Jabbar, holding him to 12.3 points and only one offensive rebound in four games. San Antonio shot a torrid 61 percent in

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sweeping the Lakers, who got 23 points and 11.8 rebounds per game from Magic Johnson.

Over in the Eastern Conference the New Jersey Nets ousted the New York Knicks, 2-1, as Buck Williams poured in 26.7 points and averaged 14 rebounds, and Atlanta ambushed Boston, 2-1. Larry Bird's 29.7 points were not enough to save the Celtics against Atlanta, which got 20.3 points and 12 rebounds from Dan Roundfield.

Philadelphia pummeled New Jersey in the semifinals, 4-0, as Erving averaged 27 points and Malone 21.8 plus a whopping 20.1 rebounds. The other semifinal went to Milwaukee, 4-2, as the Bucks won the last three games to put Atlanta away. Sidney Moncrief averaged 27.5 points for the winners, Dominique Wilkins 19.5 for the losers.

In a hard-fought Eastern Conference championship series, Philadelphia held Milwaukee under 100 points in three straight victories and then won game six, 114-98, to end it. The 76ers won game two, 98-73. Dr. J led the winners with 23.3 points and Malone was right behind at 23.2 and just under 20 rebounds per game. Moncrief paced the battling Bucks with 25.8 points.

Scores of 1983 playoff replay:

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Mini series: Seattle d. Portland, 112-96 Phoenix d. Denver, 113-87
Seattle d. Portland, 109-106 Phoenix d. Denver, 114-112

Semifinals: Los Angeles d. Seattle, 95-82 San Antonio d. Phoenix,
Seattle d. Los Angeles, 116-100 103-89
Los Angeles d. Seattle, 132-112 S. Antonio d. Phoenix,
Seattle d. Los Angeles, 112-89 114-107
Seattle d. Los Angeles, 126-115 Phoenix d. S.A., 121-110
Los Angeles d. Seattle, 111-97 S.A. d. Phoenix, 121-103
Los Angeles d. Seattle, 105-96 S.A. d. Phoenix, 117-111

Championship: San Antonio d. Los Angeles, 127-119
San Antonio d. Los Angeles, 115-113
San Antonio d. Los Angeles, 117-103
San Antonio d. Los Angeles, 117-95

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Mini series: New Jersey d. NY Knicks, 104-100 Atlanta d. Bost., 117-111
NY Knicks d. New Jersey, 105-101 Boston d. Atlan., 123-91
New Jersey d. NY Knicks, 96-79 Atlanta d. Bost., 101-82

Semifinals: Philadelphia d. N.Jersey, 117-88 Atlanta d. Milwau., 100-98
Philadelphia d. N.Jersey, 109-99 Milwaukee d. Atlan. 105-81
Philadelphia d. N.Jersey, 115-113 Atlanta d. Milwau., 105-89
Philadelphus d. N.Jersey, 108-95 Milwaukee d. Atlan., 110-88
Milwaukee d. Atlan., 127-95
Milwaukee d. Atlan., 108-86

Championship: Philadelphia d. Milwaukee, 99-94
Philadelphia d. Milwaukee, 98-73
Philadelphia d. Milwaukee, 101-99
Milwaukee d. Philadelphia, 110-108
Milwaukee d. Philadelphia, 119-111
Philadelphia d. Milwaukee, 114-98