

Nuggets end skid by beating Mavericks 115-110

Written by Administrator
Thursday, 06 March 2014 12:45

DENVER (AP) — Even though the losses have piled up this season for the Denver Nuggets, they still have the Dallas Mavericks' number.

Wilson Chandler scored 21 points, Ty Lawson had 20, and the Nuggets snapped a six-game losing streak by beating the Mavericks 115-110 on Wednesday night.

Denver improved to 3-0 this season against the Mavericks with the teams meeting one more time on March 21 in Dallas.

"It's been a long time. It feels good, especially here, where we've let down our crowd so many times," Nuggets coach Brian Shaw said. "That's a team that's in the playoffs. We're 3-0 against them, and it just goes to show when we have healthy bodies and we play the way we're capable, we can play with anybody."

Kenneth Faried, Randy Foye and J.J. Hickson added 16 points apiece for the Nuggets. Hickson scored 12 of his points in the fourth quarter to help hold off the Mavericks.

"They ran into an angry team tonight," Mavericks coach Rick Carlisle said of his squad. "They ran into a team that was sick of getting beat up and they played with a lot of force."

"We were too casual to start the game. We got knocked on our heels. We were close to getting things back on track after the third quarter, but then they hit a couple of timely shots in the fourth and kept us at bay."

Dirk Nowitzki had 27 points to lead the Mavericks, who lost their third in a row. It's their first three-game losing streak of the season.

"I've been saying all along that if we don't play hard, we'll get torched by anybody," Nowitzki

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said. "We just didn't come out the right way. We didn't set the tone and they took advantage of it."

Brandan Wright added 18 points and Vince Carter 17 for Dallas.

A 3-pointer by Chandler gave the Nuggets a 77-60 lead midway through the third quarter. Dallas, though, scored 13 of the next 15 points, pulling to 79-73 heading into the fourth quarter. Nowitzki and Wright each had a pair of baskets in the stretch, with Dallas getting back in the game by outscoring Denver 22-11 overall in the third.

The Nuggets responded with a 16-2 burst opening the fourth quarter, pulling away to a 25-point lead with 7:40 left.

Chandler and Evan Fournier each hit 3-pointers in the flurry and Hickson had six points in the run, including a driving dunk at the end of a fast break for a 95-75 lead.

The Mavericks fought back within 112-105 on a 3-pointer by Jae Crowder with 39.5 seconds remaining, but the Nuggets made enough free throws down the stretch to fend off Dallas.

"It feels good to be back in a positive light, to get back on the winning track," Lawson said. "But we can't celebrate too much. We've got the L.A. Lakers on Friday and we just can't have any letdowns."

Lawson jammed his left heel taking a shot in the third quarter and walked off the floor gingerly to the bench. He returned to the game in the fourth quarter, though he said after the game the heel remained sore. Shaw said Lawson would be rested Thursday in hopes he'll be ready for the Lakers game on Friday.

With its second-highest scoring total in the first half this season, Denver took a 68-51 lead at the break.

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Lawson helped the Nuggets get off to a strong start, scoring 17 of his points in the first quarter, when Denver opened a 41-34 lead. After Monta Ellis' jumper pulled Dallas to 46-38 early in the second, Chandler shook loose for a breakaway dunk that started a 13-2 run that put the Nuggets in front 59-40. Chandler also had a 3-pointer in the stretch while Aaron Brooks finished two fast breaks with layups.

"We brought a lot of energy early, and we kind of took it from there," Lawson said.

NOTES: Denver's 41 points in the first quarter were the most the Nuggets have scored in the opening period this season. ... Dallas' Devin Harris had 11 assists, a season high. ... Chandler has scored at least 20 points nine times this season.