

Warriors whip Mavs 108-85 for 5th straight win

Written by Administrator

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OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — The Golden State Warriors have created space behind them in the crowded Western Conference standings and are showing no signs of slowing down their surge up the standings.

Jordan Crawford scored 19 points, Andrew Bogut had 15 points and 10 rebounds and the Warriors routed the Dallas Mavericks 108-85 on Tuesday night for their fifth straight win.

Golden State (41-24) is sixth in the West, three games ahead of Dallas (38-27) and Memphis (37-26). The Warriors also are four games behind the Clippers (45-20) in the Pacific Division, with the final meeting between the teams this season looming large in Los Angeles on Wednesday night.

"It's a big-time win for us," Warriors coach Mark Jackson said. "If you lose this game, then all of the sudden there's three teams again within striking distance. I think this gave us some breathing room, especially with the fact that we have a big game (Wednesday) night against a red-hot Clippers team."

Former Warriors fan favorite Monta Ellis scored 15 points, and Dirk Nowitzki had 12 points and six rebounds in a disappointing display by Dallas. The Warriors outshot the Mavericks 51.2 percent to 36.6 percent and outrebounded Dallas 46-40 en route to building a 24-point lead early in the fourth quarter.

Dallas and Golden State both have 17 games remaining.

"I don't think we are in a situation to think about seeding," said Mavericks guard Jose Calderon, who had 13 points and five assists. "I think right now we're in a situation where we've got to win every game."

The Warriors, who finished 47-35 last year to earn the conference's sixth playoff seed, are aiming higher this time.

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The Warriors are 10-2 since the All-Star break and a season-high 17 games over .500. After winning 10 consecutive games earlier this season, Golden State is gaining steam again.

In the latest matchup pivotal for playoff positioning, the Warriors shook off a slow start by clamping down on defense and pushing the pace.

The Warriors ended the first quarter on a 21-6 run capped by Crawford's long jumper as time expired to take a 29-22 lead. But the backup guard was just beginning his sizzling stretch — and so were the Warriors.

Crawford scored 12 points alone in the second quarter, finishing with the most points he's scored since coming to Golden State in a trade from Boston in January. The Warriors' reserves outscored Dallas' bench 59 to 37.

"It's fun," Crawford said. "To be on a streak like this heading into the playoffs and to move up the standings, it brings the competitive spirit out in everybody."

The starters showed up with big plays, too.

During one sequence, Andre Iguodala blocked Shawn Marion's layup, then ran the length of the court to dunk Stephen Curry's missed 3-pointer, sending most in the announced sellout crowd of 19,596 roaring to their feet. Bogut also finished an alley-hoop with one hand over Ellis, the player he was traded for from Milwaukee in March 2012.

The Mavericks still managed to end the half with some momentum. Nowitzki made two free throws before Vince Carter stole Iguodala's inbounds pass and hit a 3-pointer before the buzzer sounded to slice Golden State's lead to 55-44 at the break.

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Nowitzki later moved into a tie with John Havlicek for 12th place on the NBA's career scoring list. Both have 26,395 points.

The Warriors' defense dominated Dallas for most of the third and fourth quarters, though, smothering Nowitzki and closing out fast on shooters. The Warriors went ahead 81-57 with 11:29 remaining and never let the Mavericks move much closer.

Golden State improved to 2-1 against Dallas this season, with each team winning on its home floor. They meet for the final time this season on April 1 in Dallas.

"As far as the seeding," Mavericks coach Rick Carlisle said, "that's a distraction from the task at hand, which is making sure we're as ready as we can be."

NOTES: Curry, who is dealing with a strained right quadriceps that's limiting his playing time, had 10 points and four assists in 22 minutes. ... Mavericks backup guard Devin Harris left in the second quarter with a sore right Achilles tendon and did not return. Harris said he doesn't think the injury is serious but isn't sure if he'll play Wednesday night at Utah. ... Mavericks F Jae Crowder, who strained his abdominal muscle in a win over Indiana on Sunday, is not expected to rejoin the team until at least Sunday at Oklahoma City.