

Nowitzki's 27 points lead Mavs over Lakers 107-95

Written by Administrator
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LOS ANGELES (AP) — On the night Dirk Nowitzki overtook Dominique Wilkins on the career scoring list, Brandan Wright was a human highlight film all by himself.

Wright made all 10 of his shots to finish with a season-high 23 points off the bench, and the Dallas Mavericks strengthened their hold on a playoff berth with a 107-95 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Friday.

"That's what he does for us," Nowitzki said. "He makes some great stuff happen for us. Tonight he didn't miss a shot. He was phenomenal."

Wright, who has come off the bench in all 53 of his games this season, began the day averaging 9.0 points and a team-best 67.5 percent from the field (199 for 295).

"I can't remember the last time I had a game where I didn't miss a shot, so it's a good feeling — plus, we got the win," said the six-year veteran swingman.

Nowitzki's 27 points increased his career total to 26,778, putting him in 11th place and within 32 of Oscar Robertson.

"Unbelievable. It's been a crazy ride for 16 years, and it's been surreal," Nowitzki said. "I used to be a big fan of Dominique, watched all of his dunk contests and the many ways he could score. Sometimes he would miss his shot and be the first one there to dunk over two people. He was so much fun to watch."

The Mavericks, back at Staples Center one night after beating the Clippers, played their first road game against the Lakers since beating them 99-91 on opening night of last season. They have won all three meetings with the Lakers — the first time they swept the season series since this rivalry began in 1980-81.

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"I said it last night — that a win against the Clippers meant nothing if we lost today. And that's how we came out," Nowitzki said.

Jodie Meeks had 25 points for the Lakers, who have dropped 13 of their last 17 and are 25-51 — their most losses since finishing a franchise-worst 30-52 in 1974-75.

"It was an up-and-down game," Wright said. "Coming off a physical, tough game last night and then playing a team tonight with a lot of young guys and skill guys who were fresh and had nothing to lose, it was a recipe for a loss. But we took note of what they did to Phoenix the other night."

Lakers center Pau Gasol was sidelined for the sixth time in seven games because of a severe case of vertigo. Xavier Henry is done for the season because of residual pain from an injured right knee and a torn ligament in his left wrist that has limited him to 43 games, and he will undergo surgery in the near future.

Coach Mike D'Antoni, who hasn't had a full deck to work with for most of this injury-jinxed season, sent out a starting lineup consisting of Meeks and four others who had started a combined total of 23 NBA games entering this season: Jordan Hill (20), Kendall Marshall (three), Kent Bazemore (none) and rookie Ryan Kelly.

"They're playing inspired basketball," Bazemore said of Dallas. "If anyone needs to win right now, it's them. It was definitely a total team effort from them, and Dirk Nowitzki kept us at arm's length all night, hitting big shots, and Brandan Wright was very good for them."

The Lakers led 54-52 at halftime against another team on the playoff bubble that took them a bit too lightly at the start.

Dallas concluded a contentious 10-game stretch in which four games were settled in overtime and four others were decided by margins of six points or fewer. Three of the overtime games resulted in losses to Minnesota, Brooklyn and Golden State.

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The Mavericks opened the fourth quarter with a 9-0 run, which Wright capped with a short jumper that extended their lead to 91-78 with 10 minutes to play. The Lakers got no closer than 10 the rest of the way.

NOTES: Dallas F Shawn Marion recorded his 1,725th career steal, breaking a tie with Magic Johnson for 17th place, when he intercepted a pass by Wesley Johnson with 3:02 left in the first quarter. ... Umpires Joe West, Marty Foster and Alan Porter, who are in town to work the Dodgers-Giants series, attended the game. ... The Lakers haven't been under .500 this deep into a season since 1993-94, when they were 21-35 after 56 games and finished 33-49. That was the first of only two times that they didn't make the playoffs during the 34 seasons that the franchise was owned by the late Jerry Buss. ... Steve Nash had seven assists in 18 minutes and increased his career total to 10,330, four shy of Mark Jackson for third place. ... Vince Carter, who was 0 for 8 from 3-point range, needs one more 3-pointer to become the seventh player in NBA history to make at least 1,800. ... The Lakers face the Clippers for the final time this season on Sunday, after losing six of their last seven meetings with their Staples Center co-tenants. The only win was on opening night. Since then, the Clippers have humiliated them by margins of 36 and 48 points. ... The Mavericks have to win four of their final five regular-season games to record their 14th 50-win season in club history and 12th in 14 years.