

Spurs take 1-0 series lead over Mavs

Written by Administrator
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SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The Spurs rode the wide shoulders of Tim Duncan to victory.

The Mavericks were not going to let San Antonio beat them with 3-pointers, and they did not want Tony Parker using the lane as his personal playground. So the veteran Duncan overcame a brief injury scare to score 27 points. The Spurs held Dallas to one field goal in the final seven minutes to rally for a 90-85 win Sunday in Game 1 of their first-round playoff series.

The Mavericks also went scoreless for 5½ minutes during that stretch, their lone field goal coming with less than a second remaining.

San Antonio won despite going 3 for 17 on 3-pointers and getting only 23 points from its normally potent bench.

"We got killed on 3s in the first four outings this year," Mavericks star Dirk Nowitzki said. "It was no secret; we stayed home a little more on 3-point shooters, but you've got to give them something, and Duncan in there is obviously still solid."

Duncan scored nine points on 4-for-5 shooting from the paint in the final quarter to help the Spurs overcome a 10-point deficit.

"Timmy, he's not going to score 24 a game or anything like that," San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich said. "He's the base from which everything else occurs, whether he's scoring or not. It just gives us a comfort level and a point from which to operate. He plays (defense), rebounds, scores here and there. He just does his job."

Parker had 21 points, and Manu Ginobili added 17. Kawhi Leonard had 11 points and 10 rebounds and Tiago Splitter pulled down 11 rebounds for top-seeded San Antonio, which has won 10 straight against Dallas.

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Devin Harris scored 19 points for the Mavericks, who nearly pulled off a huge upset.

The Spurs had insisted that what happens in the regular season doesn't matter, and they were proven right for much of the game — much to the home fans' dismay. Absent were the crisp passing, aggressive defense, bench scoring and 3-point shooting that made for the league's best record.

"It's always tough to change gears from the regular season to the playoffs when you're preparing for a team and they're preparing for you specifically," Duncan said.

San Antonio returned to its winning formula over the final seven minutes, taking an 86-81 lead with a 15-0 run. Splitter tied the game with five minutes remaining, rolling to the basket off a screen for an easy layup off a pass from Parker.

The All-Star point guard then drove the lane for a layup and drained a 13-foot jumper, which he punctuated with a loud scream after Dallas called timeout with 2:45 to go.

"I was able to push the ball and get some easy baskets," Parker said. "It got our confidence going, so once again defensively, the stops that we made helped us offensively."

Dallas had taken an 81-71 lead when Brandan Wright completed a three-point play with 7:45 remaining. The Mavericks proceeded to miss their next 12 shots and committed three turnovers.

"Defensively, we started making stops," Ginobili said. "We were at a point where they were getting to the rim. They were making shots and nothing seemed to work for brief periods. There was a point where we were down 10 where we made a couple of steals. We ran, we got fouled, we got a couple of easy buckets, and that changed our mentality."

Nowitzki, who finished with 11 points, was 2 for 6 from the field in the final quarter. The veteran forward was closely defended by Splitter.

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"They're not necessarily unbelievably athletic and long, but they are very smart," Nowitzki said. "What they want to do defensively is take you out of your comfort zone."

Duncan, wearing a heavy brace on his left knee, walked off the court gingerly with 3:24 remaining in the third quarter after banging knees with Monta Ellis. He did not get up as he customarily does during a timeout to greet his teammates.

Duncan later left the court, followed closely by trainer Will Sevensing and team doctor David Schmidt, returning a minute later limping slightly less, and he played big down the stretch.

"I knew as soon as I felt it," Duncan said. "My leg just kind of went numb, so I knew it was hopefully just a charley horse. I knew I needed just a couple of minutes just for the feeling to come back and I would be fine."

NOTES: Referee Joey Crawford screamed twice at a pair of scoring officials during a timeout, telling them at one point to do their jobs. Crawford, who once ejected Duncan for laughing from the bench during a game against the Mavericks, was booed regularly by the fans.