

Spurs beats Mavs 109-103, take 3-2 series lead

Written by Administrator
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SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Tony Parker was nursing a sprained left ankle and playing a critical playoff game on no sleep only hours after the birth of his first child.

It was the perfect formula for a resurgent performance from the San Antonio Spurs point guard.

Parker had 23 points and five assists and San Antonio never trailed in a 109-103 victory over the Dallas Mavericks on Wednesday night, taking a 3-2 lead in the first-round series.

"Coming into the game I told him this is perfect for you," Spurs forward Tim Duncan said. "This is what he does in situations like this where he doesn't get a lot of sleep or is in a stressful situation. He always seems to play better. I somewhat expected it from him.

"He was really excited before the game. Obviously, he was really excited to have his son here and wanted to get this game really badly not only for his son but for the situation and the timing of it. He was really focused and it was good for us."

Parker's rebirth put San Antonio on the verge of closing out a tense series against its intrastate rival with Game 6 set for Friday in Dallas.

Vince Carter scored 28 points on 10-for-16 shooting for the Mavericks.

Carter's 3-pointer with 3 minutes left pulled Dallas within 98-94 but Parker followed a minute later with his only 3-pointer of the game for a 101-94 advantage, punctuating the shot with a loud scream.

His son Josh was born early in the morning to his fiancée Axelle Francine.

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"It was crazy, 'cause it happened last night, late," Parker said. "I didn't sleep. I basically didn't sleep the whole night and just played on adrenaline today.

"I'm a happy man right now."

After shooting 5 for 14 in scoring just 10 points in San Antonio's Game 4 victory, Parker responded with a frantic start. He mixed in three driving layups and two mid-range jumpers to start the game making 5 of his first 7 shots.

Parker's drives helped the Spurs' struggling offense maintain a consistent rhythm for the first time in the series.

Manu Ginobili had 19 points and Tiago Splitter added 17 points and 12 rebounds as San Antonio regained home-court advantage. Duncan added 16 points and 12 rebounds and Kawhi Leonard had 15 points for the Spurs.

After averaging 16 points in the series' first four games, Mavericks forward Dirk Nowitzki found the stroke in scoring 26 points on 10-for-20 shooting. But it wasn't enough to overcome Parker and the Spurs returning to form.

"Vince shot the ball incredibly, Dirk found his rhythm and really made some tough shots," Duncan said. "But we were able to counter that offensively by moving the ball, hitting the glass, getting into the paint and getting some easy stuff for ourselves and loosen it up."

San Antonio took its largest lead of the game at 24-11 6 minutes into the first quarter as Ginobili hit a 3-pointer seconds after entering the game.

The Spurs rediscovered the aggressive defense, long-range shooting and fluid ball movement that fueled them to the league's best record.

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San Antonio was 8 for 16 from 3-point range and had 24 assists while committing just six turnovers. The Spurs finished with 54 points in the paint while shooting 47 percent overall from the field.

"I think they moved the ball well and, of course, they got a lot of layups, so that's most of it," Carter said. "They did a great job of just moving the ball and making the right decisions, keeping us on our heels. I think we just have to go back to the drawing board and let it all hang out."

Danny Green hit a 3-pointer to give San Antonio a 67-57 lead with 7:22 remaining in the third quarter after starting a fast break by tipping the ball from behind on a driving Ellis.

Splitter threw a bounce pass into the lane to feed a cutting Parker for a layup with 7 minutes remaining in the game for a 91-81 lead.

Splitter had nine points, six rebounds and four assists in the fourth quarter.

The Mavericks were within four points with 3 minutes remaining. Nowitzki had an opportunity to pull Dallas closer but upfaked Splitter and dribbled out of a clean look at a 3-point attempt only to miss a 17-foot jumper with 2:35 remaining.

"I would obviously like to have that one back there on the wing when I faked Splitter, to make it a two-point game," Nowitzki said. "That was a big shot. I have to make that one."

NOTES: After initially stating that an ouster of Los Angeles Clippers owner Donald Sterling was a "slippery slope," Dallas' Mark Cuban refused to comment after NBA commissioner Adam Silver did just that Tuesday. "I'm going to tell you exactly what I did," Cuban said. "I went and looked at a picture of my house since I'm on the road and I saw that it was made out of a whole lot of glass, so I decided I don't have anything more to say on the whole topic. That's my statement."... Dallas' Samuel Dalembert had to be helped off the court after twisting his left ankle while getting tied up with Green on a rebound. Dalembert returned in the second quarter

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and finished with two points and nine rebounds in 23 minutes.