

Spurs use teamwork to crush Heat

Written by Administrator
Friday, 13 June 2014 11:13

MIAMI (AP) — Gregg Popovich called Game 3 of the NBA Finals an anomaly.

He couldn't use the same word to describe Game 4. It was repeat show of dominance, one that put the San Antonio Spurs one win away from ending the Miami Heat's reign as NBA champions.

Kawhi Leonard scored 20 points and grabbed 14 rebounds, Tim Duncan set a pair of playoff records and the Spurs controlled play throughout on the way to a 107-86 win over the Heat in Game 4 of the NBA Finals on Thursday night. San Antonio leads the series 3-1, and can capture its fifth NBA championship by winning at home Sunday night.

"They're playing beautiful basketball," Miami's Chris Bosh said.

"We're playing Spurs basketball," San Antonio's Tony Parker said.

Different sentences, same meaning. The Spurs' game is the beautiful one right now, and the way they came into Miami and frustrated the Heat not once but twice was simply remarkable.

"Now we've got to go back home and play as well — or better," said Popovich, the Spurs' coach.

Hard to imagine them playing much better.

In Game 3, the Spurs' biggest lead was 25, while Miami never led by more than two.

In Game 4, the Spurs' biggest lead was 25, while Miami never led by more than two.

Spurs use teamwork to crush Heat

Written by Administrator
Friday, 13 June 2014 11:13

Eerie and telling, all at the same time.

"No," Duncan said, "we didn't plan on that."

The similarities didn't end there. San Antonio shot 59 percent from the field in Game 3, and 57 percent in Game 4. The Spurs were 9 for 20 from 3-point range in Game 3; 9 for 21 from beyond the arc in Game 4. They led by 21 at halftime of Game 3; they led by 19 at halftime of Game 4.

Add it all up, and the only numbers that matter are the win totals: Spurs 3, Heat 1, and Miami is well aware that's a deficit no team has ever overcome in NBA Finals history — in 31 previous tries.

"We put ourselves in a position where it is about making history," said Miami's LeBron James, who led the Heat with 28 points. "But all we can do is worry about Game 5. We've got to worry about Sunday first. Try to go up there in a hostile environment, where we were able to steal one in Game 2, and try to get another one and go on from there. Obviously, I do know the numbers. It's never been done before, but we're still a confident bunch."

The Heat rallied from 3-2 down against the Spurs in the finals last season, though it would be futile to draw too many parallels from that, primarily because Miami played the last two games of that series at home — and now have to win twice more in San Antonio in order to capture a third straight crown.

Daunting, sure. But Heat coach Erik Spoelstra conceded nothing.

"Our group has been through everything you can possibly be through except for this circumstance," Spoelstra said. "So why not? Why not test ourselves right now collectively, our championship resolve that we've proven, time and time again?"

Spurs use teamwork to crush Heat

Written by Administrator
Friday, 13 June 2014 11:13

Spoelstra said he doesn't want the Heat thinking about winning three games, instead focusing on one at a time, starting Sunday.

And that one will be tough enough.

James was his typically brilliant self, making 10 of 17 shots and added eight rebounds. But Dwyane Wade struggled, shooting 3-for-13 and scoring only 10 points. Bosh scored 12 and one of the few offensive highlights for Miami came after most of the 19,900 people in the sellout crowd departed — James Jones scored 11 points off the Heat bench in the span of 93 seconds as the game was winding down.

"We're not even giving ourselves a chance," Bosh said. "Sometimes they're going to score on us when we do things, and we just have to be a lot tougher to get this job done. We're here now. There's nothing we can do about it."

Parker scored 19 points for the Spurs, who got 14 from Patty Mills and a 10-point, 11-rebound night from Duncan — the 158th double-double of his career, passing Magic Johnson for the NBA playoff record. Duncan also passed another Lakers legend for another NBA record in Game 4; he now has 8,869 career playoff minutes, 18 more than Kareem Abdul-Jabbar logged in his tenure.

Duncan called it an honor to have those marks, but quickly stressed he wants something else.

"The focus is winning one more," Duncan said. "And once that one-more is done, I can look back and say, 'Hey, it's truly an honor.'"

NOTES: Ball movement has been everything for the Spurs. San Antonio now has 101 assists in the series to Miami's 61, and no player in the finals has more assists than Boris Diaw's 23. ... Miami has lost consecutive playoff games for the first time since the 2012 Eastern Conference finals. It had been 13-0 since that series in games immediately following a playoff loss. ... Both

Spurs use teamwork to crush Heat

Written by Administrator
Friday, 13 June 2014 11:13

teams are scheduled to be off Friday.