

## Parker scores 30 to help Spurs beat Warriors

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SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The San Antonio Spurs didn't let a third straight game slip away in the final moments. But boy, was it close.

Gnawed by last-second losses in their previous two outings, the Spurs got redemption when Roger Mason made an 18-footer with 23.9 seconds left and watched Monta Ellis clank a running 3-pointer at the buzzer to escape with a 107-106 win over the Golden State Warriors on Tuesday night.

Tony Parker scored 30 points and Tim Duncan scored 13 of his 21 in the fourth quarter, when the Spurs blew a late six-point lead but survived at the end.

It was thanks to Mason, who scored the last of his 24 points when he took a handoff from Duncan, rolled to the top of key and swished the game-winner.

"Definitely a relief," Mason said. "Those last few games stung."

Those included an 80-77 loss to Boston on Friday — when the Spurs missed their last six free throws in the final 2:32 — and an 87-85 defeat Sunday against Houston that cost them the Southwest Division lead to the Rockets. They could move back atop the division should the Rockets lose later Tuesday to Utah.

This one could've been another stinger. Ellis missed one chance to win the game on a jumper with 5.9 seconds left but missed, then the shot as time expired. He led the Warriors 27 points.

"It was good," Ellis said of final try. "Brought it up and let it go."

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In all, five of San Antonio's last six games have been decided by three points or fewer. They won only two, and have fallen to 11-6 in games decided by three or fewer points after once being 9-2 in that category.

The Spurs, who have lost three of five, broke a two-game skid and avoided dropping three straight for what would've been only the second time this season.

"We're obviously going through a rough patch," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "We can't seem to sustain what we're trying to do offensively, and Golden State's a high-scoring team."

San Antonio led 103-97 with 3:01 left before the Warriors regained the lead with a half-minute remaining. Swarming Duncan in the paint, Golden State stripped the ball and Kelenna Azubuike scooped it up to race down the court for an easy layup with 33.9 remaining.

That put the Warriors ahead 106-105, but not for long. Mason answered the next time down.

Warriors coach Don Nelson said he thought Ellis could've gotten a better look than the long 3-pointer he fired at the buzzer.

"I thought Monte could have gotten to the rim, certainly in five seconds get to the rim," Nelson said. "But anyways, that was what he chose to do. They made a big shot and we didn't. That's really the bottom line."

Azubuike finished with 13 for the Warriors, who have lost 17 of their last 19 road games. They have two more left on their four-game road swing with a stop in Dallas on Wednesday.

The Spurs head to Atlanta on Wednesday and may face the Hawks without Duncan. Popovich is trying to preserve his 32-year-old forward for the playoffs, and already sat out Duncan in a back-to-back games earlier this month.

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He gave no indication Tuesday whether Duncan would play against Atlanta.

Golden State played again without Jamal Crawford, who missed his fourth straight game in what has become a bizarre subplot with Warriors coach Don Nelson. In the past week, Crawford has been benched, allowed back, and benched himself — all while being perfectly healthy.

Nelson doesn't want Crawford back next season and sat him on March 17 in favor of playing youngsters. He wanted Crawford back into the lineup two games later, but Crawford said he wanted more practice time before jumping back in.

Golden State's next practice won't be until Thursday, after the Spurs play Dallas on Wednesday night.

Not that the Warriors didn't keep pace in San Antonio without him.

Facing the NBA's second-best defense, Golden State went into halftime ahead 54-52 with the league's worst. It was a seesaw match the rest of the way.

Ellis hit a jumper to put Golden State ahead 89-87 with under 7 minutes left before Duncan answered to knot it back up. They traded baskets before the Spurs went ahead by three when Parker converted a 3-point play before the frenzied finish.

Notes: The Warriors fell to 0-3 this season against the Spurs. They'll get one more shot at home next month. ... Little-used Spurs G Jacqué Vaughn played two minutes in the third quarter, recording an assist in just his 24th appearance of the season.

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