

Duckworth's shot gives Portland 1-0 lead

PORTLAND (AP) — Three weeks ago, Kevin Duckworth broke his right hand, and his NBA season seemed to be over.

Monday night, he used that hand to swish a game-winning eight-foot jumper with 17.3 seconds left, giving the Portland Trail Blazers a 100-98 victory in the opener of the Western Conference finals.

"He's phenomenal," Portland's Buck Williams said. "The man came back with a broken bone in his hand. He's playing on a lot of courage right now. That's all he's playing on."

Duckworth, who missed six games before returning in the seventh game of the conference semifinals against San Antonio on Saturday, sank the game-winner on a pick-and-roll play that he and Terry Porter have run "a zillion" times, he said.

"We've won a lot of games with that play," Duckworth said.

Duckworth didn't even have his fingers in a splint for this game. He said he only feels soreness in his wrist.

"I really don't remember having a big impact on a game like this in a playoff situation," he said.

With the score tied 98-98, Porter took the ball and drove to the basket, then passed off to Duckworth when defender Mark West left the big Portland center.

"I expected Terry to take the shot," Duckworth said, "but as soon as he penetrated, I knew I would get it back."

Portland coach Rick Adelman said thrilling games would be the norm in the series.

"We should have really controlled this game better than we did," he said. "But what I liked about it is defensively we did what we had to do and then Duck made the big shot."

Phoenix had a chance to tie after Duckworth's shot, but Danny Young,

who is listed at 6-foot-4 but is certainly smaller, blocked Mike McGee's shot. Williams saved the ball from going out of bounds and Portland stretched its homecourt playoff record to 7-0.

"When he shoots the ball he puts it right in front of his face," Young said. "Eddie Johnson fell down and I was trying to get to the ball and I saw McGee was wide open and I thought 'Oh no.'"

It was the third straight home thriller for the Blazers, who beat San Antonio in double overtime and overtime in the last two games in Portland.

Phoenix coach Cotton Fitzsimmons said the Suns showed the effects of a six-day layoff after upsetting the Los Angeles Lakers in the conference semifinals.

"Our execution was rusty. We weren't real sharp," he said. "But give Portland credit. They played hard and they got what they needed to win at the

end." Portland, making its first appearance in the conference finals since 1977 when the Trail Blazers won their only NBA championship, defeated the Suns for the 18th consecutive time at Memorial Coliseum.

PHOENIX (98)

Chambers 10-24 7-7 29, Rambis 9-2 5-6 5, West 4-9 2-4 10, K. Johnson 8-20 4-4 20, Hornacek 7-13 0-1 14, Majerle 5-8 1-2 11, E. Johnson 3-11 1-2 7, Lang 1-2 0-0 2, Battle 0-2 0-0 0, McGee 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 38-92 20-26 98.

PORTLAND (100)

Kersey 8-18 3-3 19, Williams 6-8 4-5 16, Duckworth 6-14 0-0 12, Drexler 10-18 0-0 20, Porter 6-14 0-0 14, Cooper 1-1 0-0 2, Young 0-2 0-0 0, Robinson 2-7 2-2 6, Petrovic 5-11 0-2 11, Bryant 0-3 0-0 0. Totals 44-96 9-12 100.

Phoenix 26 22 32 18-98
Portland 24 26 34 16-100

3-Point goals—Phoenix 2-8 (Chambers 2-3, McGee 0-1, Hornacek 0-1, E. Johnson 0-3), Portland 3-7 (Porter 2-4, Petrovic 1-1, Drexler 0-1, Young 0-1). Fouled out—None. Rebounds—Phoenix 57 (West 12), Portland 58 (Kersey 11). Assists—Phoenix 19 (K. Johnson 11), Portland 24 (Porter 9). Total fouls—Phoenix 14, Portland 19. A—12,884.

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