

# Portland blazes into NBA Finals, 112-109

By Walter Berry  
Associated Press

PHOENIX — Portland advanced to the NBA Finals for the first time since they won their only championship in 1977, taking advantage of a hamstring injury to Kevin Johnson to beat the Phoenix Suns 112-109 Thursday night.

The Trail Blazers, who had lost five straight playoff games on the road, including a 34-point blowout in Game 3 at Phoenix, scored the last six points of the game in the final 55 seconds to overcome a brilliant performance by Jeff Hornacek. The Suns guard scored 25 of his career-high 36 points after Johnson was injured late in the second period.

It was the first win by a road team in either of the NBA's conference finals, and gave the Trail Blazers a 4-2 victory in the Western Conference championship series.

"Everyone talked about how we can't win on the road, but we kept it close until the end," Portland coach Rick Adelman said. "People should realize we can win the close games."

"We're not thinking about The Finals, we're just going to take some time off. We've played every other day and need the rest."

Johnson, who had 13 of his 16 points in the first quarter, pulled his left hamstring with 2:54 remaining in the half, and went to the locker room for treatment. But the Suns' point guard did not play again.

Hornacek gave the Suns a 109-106 lead with two free throws with 1:09 left, but Phoenix did not score again.

Terry Porter, who scored 23 points, hit two free throws to draw Portland within one with 55 seconds to go.

After an exchange of posses-

sions, Jerome Kersey blocked a layup attempt by Hornacek, then completed a fast break with a layup of his own to put the Trail Blazers ahead to stay with 27 seconds remaining.

Tom Chambers then turned the ball over to Clyde Drexler, who was fouled and made two free throws with 6.8 seconds left and finished with 23 points.

A desperation 3-point attempt by Hornacek missed badly just before the buzzer.

Dan Majerle added 22 points for the Suns, while Chambers scored all of his 17 in the second half. But he was 5-for-16 from the field and was only 11-for-37 in the final two games.

"It's a great feeling to win," Blazers forward Buck Williams said. "Defensively we stopped Phoenix when we had to."

Portland, which meets the winner of the Chicago-Detroit Eastern Conference final, goes into the championship series with a 9-0 playoff record at home.

Portland, trailing 63-59 at halftime and 89-84 after the third period, tied the score at 89-89 on rookie Drazen Petrovic's 3-point goal and jumper 39 seconds into the fourth quarter.

The score was tied three more times until Chambers' free throw with 7:29 left put Phoenix ahead 96-95.

Hornacek, whose previous career best was 32 points, hit consecutive driving layups for a 100-95 lead with 5:59 to go.

Chambers sank a jumper with 5:15 left, and another with 4:41 showing. His foul shot with four minutes showing made it 105-99.

The Trail Blazers closed to

107-106 on Porter's fourth 3-pointer of the game, with 3:15 left, and Drexler's two free throws with 1:48 remaining.

The Suns, who built big leads in Phoenix to beat the Trail Blazers 123-89 in Game 3 and 119-107 in Game 4, struggled to a 63-59 halftime lead in Game 5.

Portland, trailing 47-35 with

7:46 remaining in the second quarter after a 13-2 Suns run, got three 3-point goals from Porter during a 22-9 run that gave the Trail Blazers a 57-56 lead with 2:31 left.

Majerle, who had 16 points in the second period, made two free throws with 50 seconds remaining and a three-point play 20 seconds later for a 63-57 lead.

The score was tied four times in the first quarter before Johnson scored six points in a 12-5 spurt to put Phoenix ahead 26-19 with 3:57 remaining.

Porter, who had 18 points in the first half but missed much of the second half because of foul trouble, keyed an 8-3 run that pulled the Trail Blazers to a 34-31 deficit after the first quarter.

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