Sonics hope to shut down Barkley, Majerle and Co.

SEATTLE (AP) — The Seattle SuperSonics hope they've seen the best of Charles Barkley and Dan Majerle. One thing is certain: They haven't seen the last of them.

If Barkley and Majerle batter the Sonics in Thursday's Game 6 of the Western Conference final in Seattle the way they did in Game 5, the Suns will be going to the NBA Finals.

The Sonics, trailing the best-of-7 series 3-2, are hoping to force a decisive seventh game in Phoenix on Saturday.

But Barkley is talking about wrapping up the series in Seattle, where the Suns, who had the best regular-season road record in the NBA, took Game 3 104-97. "Obviously, we'd like to win it as soon as possible," the league's MVP said.

"We have a chance to close it out and we want to do that." Suns coach Paul Westphal said.

In Tuesday night's fifth game at Phoenix, Barkley and Majerle led the Suns to a 120-114 victory.

Barkley scored a career playoff high 43 points, also pulling down 15 rebounds and adding 10 assists. He was 16-for-22 from the field and 11-for-11 from the freethrow line

"That was Charles Barkley at his best," Seattle's Shawn Kemp said.

Majerle was hot, too, scoring 34 points — his playoff best — and setting an NBA playoff record with eight 3-pointers.

"It was just one of those nights where you feel it, you shoot it and it goes in," Majerle said. "I was just feeling comfortable."

The Suns outrebounded the Sonics 42-25. Seattle's 25 rebounds marked the Sonics' lowest total ever in a playoff game. The team's previous low was 29 against the Los Angeles Lakers in a 1987 playoff game.

"But they played their best and they couldn't put us away," the Sonics' Michael Cage said.



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