

Pippen and the Blazers grab win against Dallas

PORTLAND, Ore. — Scottie Pippen had 17 points, including three 3-point baskets in the decisive third quarter, to lead the Portland Trail Blazers to a 107-94 win over the Dallas Mavericks on Monday night.

"We did a better job finding guys for layups and dunks in the second half," Pippen said. "We just took our time and were much more patient. We found the tempo we need to play instead of playing their tempo."

The Blazers led 52-51 early in the third when Pippen hit his first 3-pointer from the corner. Pippen hit two more long shots during the next three minutes as the Blazers went on an 18-8 run from which the Mavericks didn't recover.

Damon Stoudamire and Detlef Schrempf also scored 17 points for Portland, which has won 15 of its last 16 games against the Mavericks. Schrempf had 14 points in the fourth, when the Blazers took an 18-point lead.

Dirk Nowitzki led Dallas with 19 points and Cedric Ceballos added 18 points and 11 rebounds. Rookie guard Damon Jones made four of his five 3-point baskets in the fourth quarter, finishing with 15 points.

The Blazers took a one-point lead at

halftime before pulling away in the third quarter.

Pippen, Stoudamire and Rasheed Wallace turned up the intensity at both ends of the floor. Stoudamire scored 10 points in the third and also had a pair of steals, while Pippen and Wallace each scored nine points. Pippen also had two assists and a steal during Portland's run.

The Blazers led 78-67 entering the fourth, when their reserves took over. The Mavericks closed the margin to seven points early in the fourth, but Schrempf responded with two quick baskets and the rout was on. Later, Schrempf made a pair of 3-point baskets.

Jones had three points entering the fourth but got hot from 3-point range when the outcome was settled. He made five of his six 3-point attempts in 24 minutes of play.

Nowitzki's shooting kept the Mavericks close in the first half. The Mavericks trailed 38-30 when Nowitzki scored six points during a 10-0 run that put them ahead 40-38 with 3:05 left in the second quarter.

Brian Grant made two 15-foot jumpers late in the quarter to put the Blazers ahead 46-45 at halftime.

The Associated Press

Duncan puts up 46 points, San Antonio topples Utah

SAN ANTONIO — With Spurs fans chanting, "MVP, MVP," Tim Duncan played the part.

Duncan scored a career-high 46 points to lead the San Antonio Spurs to a 93-86 victory over the Utah Jazz and back into first place in the NBA's Midwest Division.

"It felt good," said Duncan, who outscored Utah 19-18 in the fourth quarter. "After giving the effort we gave, it would have been bad to get a loss. It was a huge win. We needed it bad. We've played well two games in a row, and now with this third game we keep rolling."

The Spurs, who now lead the Jazz by a half game, had only two players in double figures as Terry Porter added 16 points.

Duncan, who also pulled down 14 rebounds, was 16-of-28 from the floor and 14-of-16 at the free throw line as he topped his previous career-high of 42 points.

Duncan scored 49.5 percent of his team's points, the highest percentage in the NBA this season.

"He shot the ball every time he touched it," San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich said. "He's a special player and he had it rolling."

Karl Malone scored 23 points to lead Utah; Howard Easley added 16, and Bryon Russell had 15.

"We couldn't do anything with Duncan tonight," Utah coach Jerry Sloan said. "He is a tremendous player and an obvious

MVP candidate. He scored on almost every possession in the final quarter down the stretch."

Utah closed the third quarter with a 10-2 run capped by Easley's 3-point field goal with 46 seconds remaining that gave the Jazz a 68-59 lead going into the fourth.

Trailing 70-61 after a dunk by Greg Osertag, San Antonio rallied with a 17-4 run, capped by a breakaway dunk by Antonio Daniels with 6:11 to play.

With Duncan dominating in the low post, San Antonio stretched its advantage to 84-78 on Duncan's jump shot with 1:56 to play.

Two free throws by John Stockton brought Utah to 84-82 with 1:13 remaining.

Porter put the game away for San Antonio with consecutive 3-pointers in the final 51.1 seconds. His second gave San Antonio a 90-84 lead with 16.9 seconds to play.

Utah scored its final eight points at the free throw line, with Malone connecting on a pair to bring the Jazz to within 90-86 with 10.8 seconds remaining.

Porter and Duncan answered with three free throws in the final 10.3 seconds to seal the victory.

"This is not surprising, he played fantastic," Daniels said of Duncan. "I didn't know anyone could score 46 points off the glass, but nobody is surprised with that performance."

The Associated Press

Fisk leads Hall of Fame hopefuls

By Ben Walker
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Carlton Fisk hit more home runs than any catcher in history, and when he connected for his most famous one of all, Tony Perez got a close-up look.

The former World Series rivals — and one-time teammates — hope to soon be linked again.

Fisk and Perez are considered the leading candidates for election to the Hall of Fame when results are announced at 2 p.m. EST Tuesday.

"I'm close," Perez said recently. "I hope this is the year. It would be the greatest thing that happened in my career."

Relievers Goose Gossage and Jeff Reardon and starter Jack Morris lead the list of 14 first-timers on the ballot. Gary Carter, Tommy John and Bruce Sutter also are among the 30 eligible players.

Last year, Nolan Ryan, George Brett and Robin Yount swept into the Hall on their first try, leaving little room for anyone else to get the required 75 percent in voting by members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

This time, with no sure-fire rookies, there's a better chance for holdover hopefuls such as Fisk and Perez. But this might be their best opportunity for awhile — next year, Kirby Puckett, Dave Winfield, Lou Whitaker, Don Mattingly and Dave Stewart become eligible.

"This is the ninth time I've been in the voting, and every year is the same," Perez said. "I'm not getting too anxious. You get used to waiting after waiting so many years."

The Veterans Committee will hold its vote on Feb. 29 in Tampa, Fla. Former manager Sparky Anderson and longtime Minnesota star Tony Oliva will be considered by the panel for the first time.

Induction ceremonies will be July 23 at Cooperstown, N.Y. The annual Hall of Fame game will be played the next day, matching Cleveland and Arizona.

Fisk caught the most games in major league history (2,226) and hit 351 of 376 career home runs while playing the position. But his most memorable shot did not count in that total.

Fisk won Game 6 of the 1975 World Series when he homered in the bottom of the 12th inning at Fenway Park, watching and waving the whole way. Once the ball hit the foul pole, he took off and passed Perez, the Cincinnati first baseman.

Perez finished with 379 career home runs. He also had a few that do not appear in his total — many fans do not recall that a day after Fisk's famous shot, Perez homered in Game 7 to help the Big Red Machine rally for a 4-3 victory and the championship.

Some might say that home run off Bill Lee's blooper pitch sums up Perez's career — his accomplishments always seemed to be overshadowed by others.

Perez has 1,652 RBIs, the most among players not in the Hall. Still, he is often overlooked in the glare of his Reds teammates — Pete Rose, Johnny Bench and Joe Morgan.

Last January in his eighth year of eligibility, Perez fell 71 votes short in getting 61 percent.

Fisk fell 43 votes shy and finished at 66 percent last time in his first year of eligibility.

Fisk made his major league debut with Boston in 1969 and stayed with the Red Sox through 1980, playing that last season with Perez. He left amid a lot of acrimony and then spent from 1981 to 1993 with the Chicago White Sox.

"I would say most of the people in the Midwest view me as a White Sox," he said. "As I travel around, because of that '75 World Series moment, most of the people throughout the country think I just finished my career in Chicago, played two or three years."

Last year, Fisk returned to the Red Sox as a special assistant to the GM. That led to speculation Pudge would wear a Boston cap

on his plaque, provided he joined the Hall's 244 members.

Relievers have rarely fared well in Hall elections, with Hoyt Wilhelm and Rollie Fingers the only ones to make it. Gossage and Reardon, however, were hoping for good showings.

Gossage recorded 310 saves and was a dominant stopper with his frightening fastball while Reardon had 367 saves.

Morris went 254-186 and was best known for his 1-0, 10-inning shutout in Game 7 of the 1991 World Series that lifted Minnesota over Atlanta.

Other players on the ballot for the first time are Hubie Brooks, Bill Gullickson, Dave Henderson, Charlie Hough, Kent Hrbek, Bruce Hurst, Steve Sax, Lonnie Smith, Rick Sutcliffe, Bob Welch and Willie Wilson.

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