

Blazers finish Wolves

■ The Blazers earn a couple of days off by winning an emotional Game 4 over the Timberwolves, 85-77

By Arnie Stapleton
The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Steve Smith got mad, then he kept the Minnesota Timberwolves from getting even.

Smith hit a key 3-pointer minutes after drawing a technical for tangling with Anthony Peeler, and the Portland Trail Blazers went on to eliminate the Wolves from the NBA playoffs with an 85-77 victory Tuesday night.

"I thought if I hit that one, it would really take the life out of them," Smith said.

And it did.

The Blazers won the best-of-five series 3-1 and advanced to face the Utah-Seattle winner. The Jazz lead that series 2-1 with Game 4 Wednesday night in Seattle.

Minnesota failed to reach the second round for the fourth straight season. Blame the Wolves' starters, who shot just 35 percent from the floor.

Smith and Peeler confronted each other with 5:07 left and the Wolves clinging to a 73-72 lead. Smith fell down after taking a long jumper, and Peeler, angered at having caught an elbow on the play, walked over him slowly. The two jawed at each other and drew double-technical fouls.

A minute later, Smith was called for a foul on Peeler, and Smith stared him down again. Blazers Coach Mike Dunleavy took Smith out briefly.

"I didn't want his emotions to get away from him," Dunleavy said.

Smith, who rarely gets rankled, said he just couldn't help confronting Peeler.

"I don't want anybody to step on me when I'm down," he said. "But that's over. I don't want to get into that. It was the heat of the moment. It's a playoff game. It's over."

And so is Minnesota's season, thanks to Smith.

After the game, Smith and Peeler put the dispute behind them, shaking hands as they walked off the court.

"We're tight," Peeler said. "We're friends."

The Blazers trailed 75-74 before Smith's 3-pointer with 3:45 left, and the Wolves never regained the lead.

Scottie Pippen (11 points) penetrated and dished off to Smith, who finished with 14 points, one fewer than Rasheed Wallace and Arvydas Sabonis.

"Pippen really helped me. He drew two defenders, and I was wide open," Smith said.

After Brian Grant's basket gave Portland a 79-75 lead, Terrell Brandon's layup made it 79-77 with just under a minute left.

Wallace banked in a jumper from the top of the circle with 32 seconds left, barely beating the buzzer and giving Portland a four-point lead. His two free throws 12 seconds later iced it.

Kevin Garnett, who nearly recorded his third triple-double of the series, finishing with 17 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists, said Smith's three and Wallace's buzzer beater were dual daggers.

"Those are like pins in your back, thorns in your arms," Garnett said. "Everything you have in you, it takes it out of you."

Greg Anthony capped the scoring with two free throws. It was the first time in eight games between the teams this season that the final margin was bigger than seven points.

The Timberwolves, who blew a 13-point lead, again got inspired play from their reserves. This time, Bobby Jackson, who didn't play at all in Game 3, scored 11 points, and the Wolves outscored the Blazers by 13 points when he was in the game.

Notes: The Wolves missed 12 of their first 17 shots, yet still managed to hold the halftime lead for the third straight game. They trailed by a point at the break in Game 1. ... After tying an NBA playoff record by combining for just 13 turnovers on Sunday, the teams eclipsed that with six minutes left in the first half. ... The Blazers signed a game ball afterward for assistant Bill Musselman, a former Timberwolves coach who is hospitalized in Rochester with cancer. "We want to dedicate this whole series and this win to him," Pippen said.

Sacramento evens series

■ The Lakers are one loss away from elimination as Chris Webber and the Kings' reserves spark a decisive Game 4 victory, 101-88

By Rob Gloster
The Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The Los Angeles Lakers were beaten by a bunch of reserves named Jon, Tony and Predrag, and the NBA's best team this season suddenly was one loss from first-round playoff elimination.

Chris Webber had 23 points, 13 rebounds, eight assists and seven blocks, and the Sacramento reserves provided the decisive spark for the second straight game as the Kings defeated the Lakers 101-88 Tuesday night to even their series at 2-2.

The fifth and deciding game will be Friday night in Los Angeles, where the Lakers won the first two games of the series by comfortable margins. The Lakers, who went an NBA-best 67-15 this season, did not lose three straight games all year.

The winner of the series will face the Phoenix Suns in the Western Conference semifinals. Phoenix dethroned the San Antonio Spurs, wrapping up their series 3-1 with an 89-78 victory Tuesday night.

Kobe Bryant had 32 points for the Lakers, who never led in the game and got no closer than six points in the fourth quarter.

Shaquille O'Neal added 25, but struggled with his shooting touch for the second straight game. He went 10-of-22 from the field and missed seven of 12 foul shots.

Jon Barry had 17 points, Tony Delk had 12 and Predrag Stojakovic 11 as the Sacramento backups outscored the Lakers' reserves 42-8.

The Kings went 9-for-21 from 3-point range, compared to 3-for-17 by the Lakers.

Sacramento is trying to become the 13th team to rally and win a series after trailing 2-0. No team has accomplished that feat since the Houston Rockets in 1995.

The Kings led 56-45 at halftime. They extended their lead to 68-56 with 3:18 left in the third period, seconds after Bryant and Divac were assessed technicals for a skirmish under the Los Angeles basket.

O'Neal committed his third foul on a charge, knocking Divac to the floor, and Divac hit a short jumper at the other end to make it 72-59 with 1:30 left in the quarter. The Lakers finished the period with a 7-1 run, though, and trailed just 73-66 going into the fourth period.

Sacramento extended its margin to 12 points when Delk's bucket with 8:19 left made it 82-70. Bryant had three baskets as the Lakers used an 8-2 run to close to 84-78, but Barry hit a 3-pointer with 5:19 remaining and Webber followed with a steal and dunk to give the Kings an 89-78 lead.

Los Angeles never got closer than eight points after that, and Barry ran along the sideline giving fans high-fives in the closing minute.

The Lakers missed eight of their first nine shots and fell behind 9-2 in jet-engine loud Arco Arena. Los Angeles made just three of its first 16 shots, falling behind by as many as 11 points and trailing 27-18 after one period.

Los Angeles closed to 46-43 with 2 1/2 minutes remaining before halftime, but Nick Anderson and Barry hit consecutive 3-pointers as the Kings closed the half with a 10-2 run capped by Webber's hook with eight-tenths of a second left.

Notes: Kings assistant coach Pete Carril was released from Sutter Memorial Hospital, three days after having a minor heart attack, and planned to watch Game 4 at home on TV. ... O'Neal and Bryant each scored 90 points in the first three games of the series. ... Kings reserve forward Tyrone Corbin missed the game with a sprained left ankle. ... Rick Fox was with the Lakers a day after the birth of his daughter and played five minutes in the fourth quarter. ... Jason Williams struggled for the second straight game for the Kings, going 1-for-8 from the field.

It's here Now! UO Summer Session Duck Call.



Register Now for

Summer Classes.



Book Your Summer in Oregon

Summer session starts June 19. Pick up your free summer bulletin today in the Summer Session office, 333 Oregon Hall, or at the UO Bookstore. You can speed your way toward graduation by taking required courses during summer.

University of Oregon Summer Session
<http://uosummer.uoregon.edu/>

LOW STUDENT AIRFARES

Europe • Africa • Asia • South America
More Than 100 Departure Cities!
Eurailpasses • Bus Passes • Study Abroad

 student
universe
.com
IT'S YOUR WORLD. EXPLORE IT.

www.StudentUniverse.com

800-272-9676

Buenos Aires Lima Santiago London Dublin Paris Nice Copenhagen Stockholm Oslo Amsterdam Berlin Munich Zürich Istanbul

Rome Venice Florence Vienna Budapest Prague Warsaw Moscow Lisbon Madrid Barcelona Tel Aviv Johannesburg Delhi Hong Kong