

SPORTS

JORDAN AT THE BUZZER... YESSS

By W.G. Ramirez

They battled the whole game long. Foot-for-foot. Stride-for-stride. Dunk-for-Dunk. But when it came down to it, with time running down, it came down to one person, one shot. Chicago Bulls' star Michael Jordan rose up just inches above the labeled "Jordan-stopper," Gerald Wilkins, and released the winning shot to push the Bulls into the Eastern Conference Finals. Although Cleveland led much of the game, including a 10-point advantage with 9:16 remaining, Chicago narrowly escaped with a 103-101 victory.

Jordan and Wilkins battled all evening in a brilliant matchup. In 40 minutes, Jordan tallied 31

points (hitting 11-24 from the floor), 9 rebounds and 6 assists. Wilkins, in a 39-minute performance, scored 22 points, had 2 rebounds and 6 assists. Wilkins also had 3 steals, including a crucial one from Jordan late in the game.

The Bulls disposed of Cleveland in four games, and have now won nine straight playoff games, dating back to the NBA Finals last year against Portland. Chicago swept Atlanta in Round 1, before dismissing Cleveland.

Immediately following their sweep of Cleveland, the Bulls set their sights on what could very well be one of the best Conference Finals ever, against the New York Knicks.

"Now we can rest while they still have to work," exclaimed Jordan.

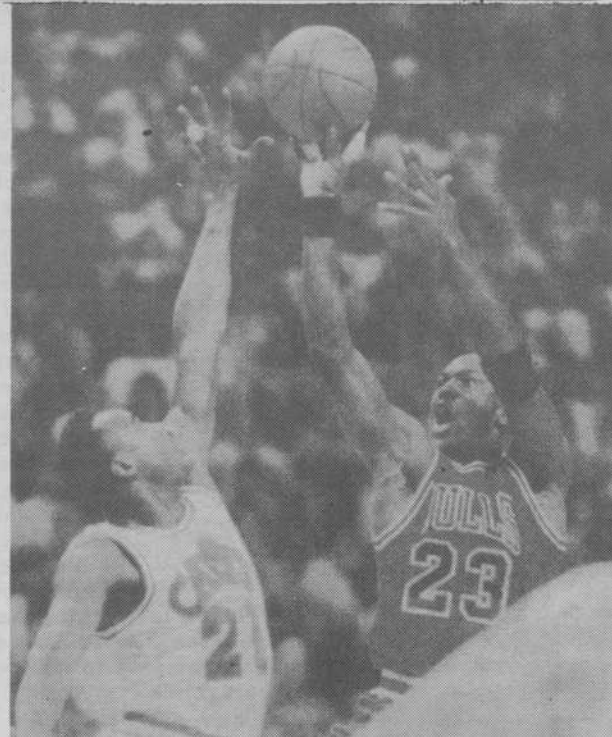
Chicago won't be the only team resting though, as the Knicks knocked the young Charlotte Hornets out of the playoffs Tuesday night in New York 105-101. Although they only managed to win one game, the Hornets gave the Knicks a tough battle. Game 2 went into overtime, which N.Y. won by the identical score of Tuesday's Game 5. Game 3 saw double OT with Charlotte utilizing their youth and outlasting the Knicks, 110-106.

Tuesday night though, the Knicks earned their 25th consecutive victory at Madison

Square Garden and advance to the conference finals for the first time since 1974.

Despite an off-night by Patrick Ewing, the Knicks got the job done on the heels of Charles Oakley who had 21 points and 11 rebounds. Oakley had an award-winning supporting cast to help fight off the nagging Hornets. Doc Rivers, Anthony Mason and Charles Smith chipped in 20 in the third period alone to push New York's lead to 12.

Chicago will travel to N. Y. to begin the Eastern Conference Finals Sunday morning. Sports books have opened the Knicks as a 2-1/2 point favorite over the two-time defending champs.



Michael Jordan rose up just inches above the labeled "Jordan-stopper," Gerald Wilkins and released the winning shot to push the Bulls into the Eastern Conference Finals. Tony Dejak/AP

HOME TEAM REMAINS DOMINANT IN WESTERN CONFERENCE SEMIS

By W.G. Ramirez

As Game 6 of both Western Conference semi-finals draw nearer and nearer, Game 7 is looking more and more apparent. Both matchups, Phoenix-San Antonio and Seattle-Houston, resume tonight in the state of Texas. The Suns will meet San Antonio in the HemisFair

Arena at 4 p.m., and the Rockets will host Seattle in The Summit. If an ambush occurs, and both the Spurs and Rockets are victorious, Game 7 would be scheduled for Saturday afternoon.

Tuesday night, in The Coliseum, Seattle gave their fans a delight as Ricky Pierce, Gary Payton and Shawn Kemp put on

a clinic for Houston. Pierce, Payton and Kemp combined for 66 points in the Sonics 120-95 win over the Rockets. Kemp also grabbed 12 rebounds.

Hakeem Olajuwon led Houston with 26 points and 14 rebounds. The NBA's Defensive Player of the Year couldn't manage one blocked shot after nailing 22 shots in the four previous games.

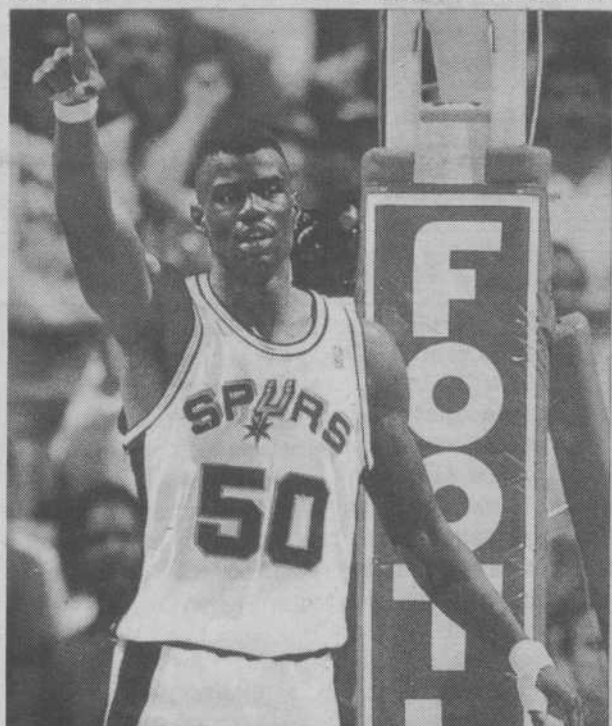
In Phoenix Tuesday night, Charles Barkley finally took over when his team needed it most, scoring 19 fourth quarter points, bringing the Suns from behind to top San Antonio 109-97 and a 3-2 advantage in the series.

Following a Sean Elliot dunk, which put the Spurs up by 13 with 11:04 left in the game,

Barkley ultimately took over. Barkley tallied all of the Suns' points during an 11-4 run which resulted in a 99-91 Phoenix lead. The Spurs were paced by David Robinson and Dale Ellis who scored 24 points each. Elliot added 15 points to the cause.

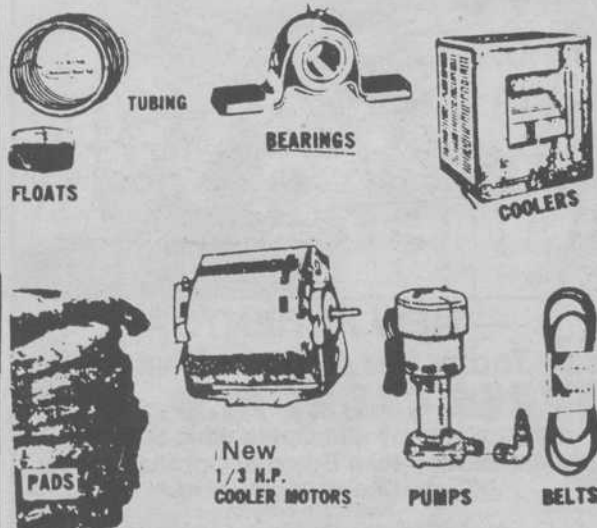
If Phoenix wins the series they will have home court advantage in the conference finals, if the Spurs win the final two games to advance, they will be the road team in the conference finals.

Throughout the Western Conference semi-finals, the home team has tasted victory every time. If both series continue the same format, Phoenix and Seattle will have a date in the conference finals.



THE ADMIRAL...BACK TO THE ALAMO - David Robinson and the San Antonio Spurs will try to prolong their season and force a Game 7 against Phoenix in the Western Conference Semi-Finals.

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