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Miller catches fire in fourth quarter - buries five treys

PACERS TAKE 3-2 LEAD INTO MARKET SQUARE ARENA

W.G. Ramirez

Indiana Pacers Head Coach Larry Brown labeled Game 5 of the Eastern Conference Finals the most important game in his career and the franchise's history. What Brown didn't realize is that it would become the darkest memory in Knicks history since April 19, 1971 when the Baltimore Bullets stunned the defending champions in Madison Square Garden with a 93-91 win in Game 7 of the Eastern Conference Finals.

Wednesday evening, at that same Garden, the Pacers did just that, stun the Knicks, to take a 3-2 lead in their best-of-seven series. Behind a vicious offen-

sive attack by Reggie Miller, the Pacers were able to erase a 12-point Knicks lead in the third quarter, moving one win shy of the NBA Finals.

The Houston Rockets, who defeated the Utah Jazz 4-games-to-1 in the Western Conference Finals, is waiting in the wings for the winner of the Knicks-Pacers series. The NBA Finals will begin next Wednesday, June 8, in Houston at The Summit.

Heading into the fourth quarter, the Knicks weren't able to maintain their lead when Miller caught fire immediately, nailing 19 points en route to an Indiana 23-3 run.

New York pulled within two, 81-79, with 4:11 remaining in the game when Patrick Ewing canned two from the charity stripe but four more points from Miller, sandwiched around a Dale Davis deuce, pushed the Pacers' lead to eight and they never looked back from there.

It was all New York in the first half as they were able to capitalize on a ferocious defense applied to Indiana, opening up a 15-2 lead. While New York enjoyed a 12-0 run early in the first quarter, Indiana began their game shooting a dismal 16% from the field.

The Knicks converted on six of their first eight shots to pad their 13-point cushion. After a timeout at 6:56, the Pacers' Rik Smits and the Knicks' Charles Smith traded shots, and New York led 17-4.

The first proved to be a highly productive quarter for New York, continuing to answer Indiana's occasional bucket, as Patrick Ewing and Charles Oakley moved the Knicks ahead 22-8. Miller could only produce one

field goal as he saw his scrappy young team trail the top-seeded Knicks 28-16 at the end of the first quarter.

The second quarter saw a few Indiana runs, but New York was able to keep their distance behind a pair of John Starks three-pointers. The Knicks went into the locker room at halftime with a 43-35 lead.

An evenly matched third quarter saw both teams trade shots back-and-forth, but the Knicks were able to increase their lead, heading into the fourth quarter up 70-58.

Miller opened the final period by burying a trey at the 11:05 mark but then Oakley answered with a pair of free throws.

That is when the Pacers went on a 14-0 run, 10 from Miller, to take over the lead. Indiana outscored New York 35-16 in the fourth quarter and will hope to carry the momentum over to Game 6 Friday evening at Market Square Arena, where they haven't lost in the 1994 playoffs yet.

If the Pacers can defeat New

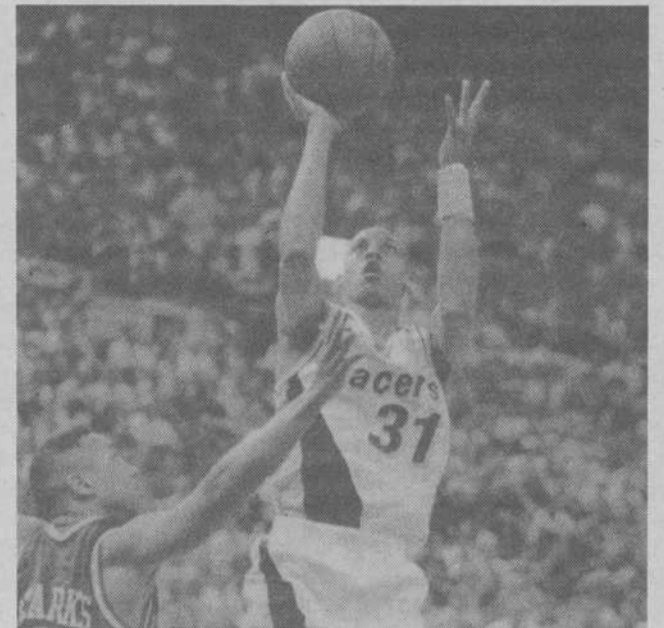


PHOTO CREDIT: Michael Conroy/AP

Scenes like this from Game 4 in Market Square Arena, when Indiana star Reggie Miller went in a scoring frenzy in the fourth quarter, became reminiscent Wednesday evening when he lit up Madison Square Garden for 25 points in the fourth quarter.

York in Game 6 they will advance to the NBA Finals against the Houston Rockets and the league will then be assured of a first-time championship for either franchise.

Not only would it be the first

trip for the Pacers to the NBA Finals, this season also marks the first time they've ever made it past the first round.

Coincidentally, New York was Indiana's assialint last season in the 1993 Playoffs.

Friday June 3 - Game 6
New York Knicks at
Indiana Pacers
Saturday June 5 - Game 6
(if necessary)
New York Knicks at
Indiana Pacers

**1994
NBA
PLAYOFFS**

Wednesday June 8 - Game 1
N.Y./Ind. winner at
Houston Rockets
Friday June 10 - Game 2
N.Y./Ind. winner at
Houston Rockets
Sunday June 12 - Game 3
Houston Rockets at
N.Y./Ind. winner
Wednesday June 15 - Game 4
Houston Rockets at
N.Y./Ind. winner
Friday June 17 - Game 5, if necessary
Sunday June 19 - Game 6, if necessary
Wed. June 22 - Game 7, if necessary

The
**1994
NBA
Finals**™

Troubles with Indiana reminiscent of '72-'73 season

NEW YORK KNICKS TRYING TO OVERCOME 21-YEAR DROUGHT

W.G. Ramirez

For the Houston Rockets it is a dream come true. For the Indiana Pacers, it would be a miracle. But as for the New York Knicks, they will be trying to overcome a 21-year drought from the sweet taste of championship fever.

It was 1973 when the Knicks,

led by center Willis Reed, last appeared in the NBA Finals. They faced the defending world champion Los Angeles Lakers and Wilt Chamberlain in a rematch of the previous year's Finals, which were captured by L.A. 4-games-to-1.

The series followed the opposite pattern from the year

before, as Los Angeles won the series opener 115-112, then dropped four games in a row. Reed scored 22 points and held Chamberlain to only five in the pivotal third game at Madison Square Garden, won by the Knicks 87-83. Dave DuBusschere of New York led all scorers with 33 points in the Knicks' 103-98 victory in Game 4. Five players scored in double figures as the Knicks clinched their second NBA World Championship in four years by winning Game 5 at Los Angeles 102-93.

What is interesting about that '72-'73 New York team is that it wasn't the NBA Finals that they actually struggled through, it was the Eastern Conference Finals against Boston where they found stumbling blocks.

The Boston Celtics earned homecourt advantage throughout the playoffs by winning 68 games that year, finishing 11 games ahead of the Knicks in the Atlantic Division and eight

games in front of Western Conference champ Los Angeles.

Exactly like this year, the Knicks had the league's #1 defense that season but were about to face the NBA's #2 offense led by John Havlicek. While the Knicks were only giving up 98 points per game, the Celtics were scoring 112 ppg.

The series opened in Boston and the Celtics romped all over the Knickerbockers 134-108. When the series switched scenery to Madison Square Garden, the Knicks poured it on for the home crowd, thumping the Celtics 129-96. Game 3 returned to Boston Garden, for what turned out to be a shocker for Celtics fans. With a tenacious defense applied, the Knicks stunned the favored Celtics 98-91 to take a 2-1 lead back home for Game 4, which turned out to be the most competitive game. It took two overtimes, but the Knicks eventually (See Knicks, Page 19)

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