

TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



Lakers overpower Spurs to sweep series, 114-94

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — For Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, the Los Angeles Lakers' easy three-game playoff sweep of the San Antonio Spurs is no mystery.

"We are a better team than the Spurs," said Abdul-Jabbar Wednesday after scoring 25 points and leading the Lakers to a 114-94 victory over the Spurs. "I think the series speaks for itself."

The win propelled the defending world champion Lakers into the second round of the playoffs with the winner of the Utah-Dallas series.

Spurs Coach Cotton Fitzsimmons had to agree with Abdul-Jabbar.

"I told our guys you just have to give the Lakers credit," Fitzsimmons said in the locker room. "They are the champions. I thought our guys did the best they could. LA just has a great team."

Earvin "Magic" Johnson, who finished the game with 14 points, 17 assists and 10 rebounds, said the Lakers will "take a 3-0 sweep any time we can get it."

"The Spurs just couldn't get it going in the three games and we really played well," Johnson said.

Johnson's 48 assists for the three-game series is an NBA record.

The Lakers never trailed the entire game Wednesday.

The Spurs, who lost 21 of their last 26 regular season games, managed to pull to within 6 points at 48-42 in the second period. But they never moved that close again.

Jabbar's steady scoring in the third period set the final pace as the Lakers scored 28 points to the Spurs' 15.

The third period scoring barrage powered the Lakers from a 6-point advantage to a 21-point lead.

Spurs point guard Wes Matthews lead all scorers with 30. He was trailed by Mike Mitchell and Artis Gilmore, with 17 apiece.

Maurice Lucas put in 17 for the Lakers.

The visitors out-rebounded the home team 53-33 and led in field goal percentages 55 percent to 41 percent in the slow-moving contest.

The margin of victory was the smallest in the playoff series between the two teams. The Lakers won the first two 135-88 and 122-94.

Jazz 100, Mavericks 98

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Utah's Karl Malone took advantage of an open opportunity and that kept the Jazz alive in their NBA first-round best-of-five series with Dallas Wednesday night.

Malone scored with 50 seconds left to lift Utah to a 100-98 victory over Dallas and shave the Mavericks' playoff advantage to 2-1.

"I thought the opportunity presented itself, the shot was there and it just fell for me," said Malone, who also grabbed a key rebound at the other end of the court to keep Dallas from tying the game a 13th time.

"I wasn't trying to do anything unusual — I was just trying to make the bucket," said Malone, who finished the game with 16 points. "It was a big shot, but you have to give all the credit to Rickey (Green) and Thurl (Bailey)."

Malone earlier tied the game at 96-all after he stole the ball and scored with 2:30 left.

Green, who scored a playoff career-high 32 points for Utah, scored on a 20-footer a minute later to put the Jazz, playing without the injured Adrian Dantley, ahead 98-96. But Rolando Blackman converted two free throws for the Mavericks with 1:10 left to tie the score.

Malone hit the game-winner 20 seconds later. On Dallas' final possession, Blackman's shot rolled over the rim and Malone ripped the rebound from James Donaldson.

Thurl Bailey and Bobby Hansen joined Malone with 16 points each for Utah, while Donaldson led the Mavericks with 17 points and 20 rebounds. Blackman finished with 16, including five during the final 3:35 as Dallas overcame a 94-89 deficit to tie the game at 94.

Behind Green's 17 points, Utah led by as many as 14 points in the first half before the Mavericks rallied.

Whalers edge past Canadiens in OT, 2-1

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Kevin Dineen scored an unassisted goal 1:07 into overtime Wednesday night, lifting the Hartford Whalers to a 2-1 victory over the Montreal Canadiens and deadlocking their Adams Division final series at two games apiece.

NHL Playoffs

Dineen picked the puck up in the neutral zone, stepped around defenseman Larry Robinson and lifted a wrist shot over Canadiens goalie Patrick Roy.

Game 4 of the best-of-seven series will be played at the Montreal Forum Friday night.

Mats Naslund had scored a power-play goal with 7:38 remaining in regulation to tie the game. The

puck popped out of a crowd of players in front of the net and Naslund lifted it over the outstretched glove of Whalers goalie Steve Weeks, who was starting in place of injured Mike Liut.

A shot that went into the Montreal net was disallowed with 6:45 left when referee Denis Morel ruled that he had blown his whistle before Hartford's Torrie Robertson pushed it by Roy.

Weeks, making his first start of the playoffs, and Roy, the Canadiens 20-year-old rookie, played strong games, stopping 18 and 22 shots, respectively.

Rangers 6, Capitals 5 (OT)

NEW YORK (AP) — Bob Brooke, who tied the game with a goal late in

the third period, scored the game winner 2:40 into overtime Wednesday night to give the New York Rangers a 6-5 victory over the Washington Capitals and tie the NHL playoff series at two games apiece.

Game 5 of the best-of-seven Patrick Division final will be played Friday night at the Capital Centre in Landover, Md.

The Rangers, who seemed a defeated team in the third period, rallied to tie the game 5-5 when Brooke connected from the lower slot at 17:25 of the third period to force the overtime period.

Brooke, a right wing, then drove in a 30-footer from the right faceoff circle to beat Capitals goaltender Pete Peters on his left side after stealing an errant pass.

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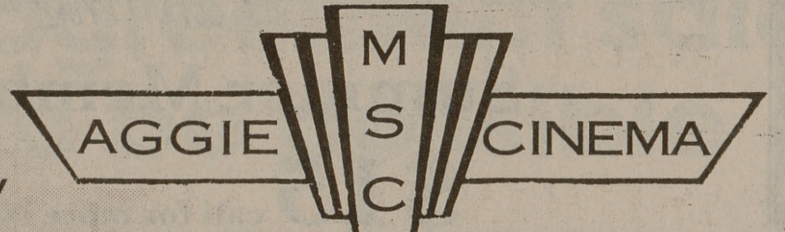
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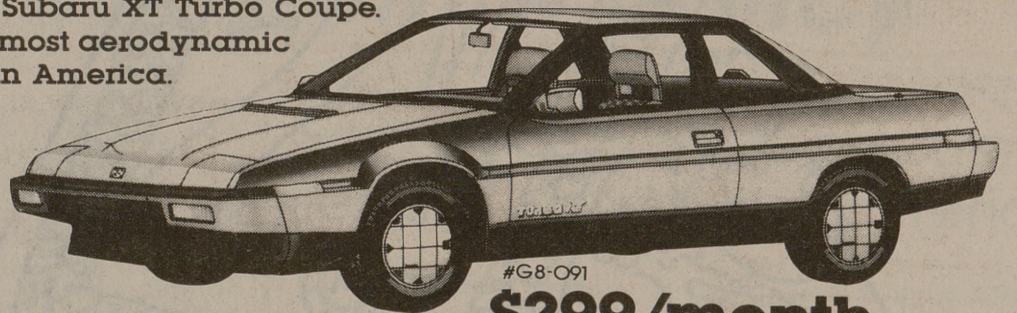
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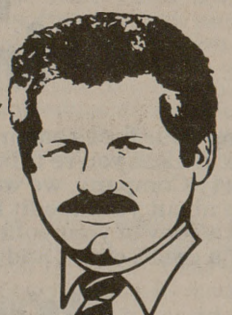
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