

Worthy: 'Nobody said it would be easy'

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP)—The Los Angeles Lakers expected a tough playoff series with the Houston Rockets.

Although they went up 2-0 in the best-of-five opening series with a 104-100 win Sunday, the Lakers are getting just what they expected.

"Nobody said it would be easy," Laker forward James Worthy said after he scored 32 points — five in the final 1:19 — as the Lakers came back from a 17-point deficit in the second half.

"We've had to work for everything we've gotten against them," Worthy said. "They're a big, physical team and they feel like they've got a lot to prove."

Worthy had 34 points in the Lakers' 101-89 victory in the opener, when they also trailed at halftime.

The Lakers trailed 65-48 at half-

Rockets giving Lakers all they can handle in series

time Sunday, but came back with a defense that held the Rockets to 17 points in the third quarter and 18 in fourth.

Trailing 100-97, he had five straight points that put them ahead to stay as Los Angeles scored the final seven points of the game.

"At halftime, a spirited oration is not what happened," Riley said. "Halftime was about being outplayed, being outrebounded and getting our tails kicked."

The Lakers came out to trim the difference to 82-75 heading into the final period, then won the game in the final minutes.

The victory made Riley the winningest coach in playoff history.

With 100 victories in post-season play, he moved one ahead of Red Auerbach, who got most of his playoff wins with the Boston Celtics.

"It's a significant achievement for me and the team," Riley said. "But right now, it doesn't mean a heckuva lot. I'm sure I'll appreciate it more in the future."

No. 100 was a tense one. The Lakers picked away at the Rockets' lead in the second half, then outplayed them down the stretch.

But they still trailed 98-93 with 2:36 to go when Orlando Woolridge made two free throws to cut it to three points. Then Vlade Divac followed up a Woolridge miss to make

it 98-97.

After Houston's Vernon Maxwell hit a short jumper to make it 100-97 with 1:30 remaining, Worthy made a pair of free throws with 1:19 left.

Then Worthy intercepted a pass by Akeem Olajuwon and broke away for a layup that made it 101-100 with 33 seconds to go.

After Maxwell missed, Worthy was fouled and made one of two free throws.

A shot by Olajuwon went in and out of the basket and Byron Scott was fouled and made two free throws for the final margin.

"We had a couple of shots and turnovers down the stretch that hurt us at the end," Rockets coach Don

Chaney said. "We learned a great deal from this experience. We have to look ahead now and concentrate on the two games that will be played at Houston."

Those games will be Tuesday and Thursday at the Summit, where the Rockets won both games this season.

Magic Johnson had 17 points and 14 assists for the Lakers, and Scott had 17 points, including 13 in the third quarter, when he shot 5 for 5 with three 3-pointers.

Sleepy Floyd had 27 and Maxwell 24 for the Rockets. Olajuwon was held to 11 points, but he blocked a playoff record-tying 10 shots and had 11 rebounds.

The Rockets built their first-half lead behind 17 points from Floyd and 14 from Maxwell.

Walls signs two-year deal with Giants

DALLAS (AP) — Dallas veteran defensive back Everson Walls, who has led the NFL in interceptions three times, said on Sunday he has signed a two-year deal worth more than \$1 million with the rival New York Giants.

Walls, a 10-year veteran, was unprotected by the Cowboys under the NFL's Plan B program.

He had a falling out with coach Jimmy Johnson during Dallas' disastrous 1-15 season. Johnson questioned Walls' dedication.

Walls said on Sunday he would have liked to remain with the Cowboys but Johnson and owner Jerry Jones wouldn't talk money to him.

"All they had to do was let me know there was a problem with my salary," Walls said. "As it worked out, it was much better I went to the Giants. I'll have a lot more opportunities after football, playing in New York."

Walls said he was unhappy the way Johnson treated him.

"I was dumbfounded some of the things he said to me," Walls said. "He kept telling me I was the best one to practice. I told him what difference did it make if I was on time."

"He replied, 'You're not late, you're late.' So, I started to get to practice on time and then the coaches started showing up late. I just thought (Johnson) was needing me."

Walls said: "I got the feeling he wanted to stick a knife in me and twist it. I guess the season was wearing on him. Then he chewed me out coming off the field after the Phoenix game when I stopped to talk to somebody."

Walls said in another game he was made the goat for two touchdowns passes on his side of the field that were not his fault. But coach Johnson acted like it was.

Walls said he will play safety for the Giants, work into the nickel coverage on obvious passing situations, and also play cornerback.

"I'll be at the mini-camp on May 23rd," he said. "This is a great chance for me, a great shot. I'm excited about playing football for New York."

Mavs desperate as series resumes

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Strong rebounding and superior depth have lifted the Portland Trail Blazers within one victory of their first playoff series triumph in five years.

The Dallas Mavericks have played at the slow-down tempo they've wanted in the first two games of their best-of-5 first-round series. The Mavericks also have controlled Portland's leading scorer, Clyde Drexler. But the Blazers have won both games on their home court — 109-102 on Thursday night and 114-107 Saturday.

"We can play better and we know it," Portland's Jerome Kersey said. "But we're still winning."

The Blazers have a 93-74 rebounding advantage in the two games, including a 41-20 edge on the offensive boards.

"We need to stop them from getting second shots," the Mavericks' Roy Tarpley said. "That's what's killing us. We need to be the aggressors from the beginning to the end. We've had a tendency to slack off."

"We've had a tendency to slack off and when we do that, they take it to us."

—Roy Tarpley, Mavericks' forward

The Mavericks are tired and bruised as they head home for Tuesday's third game. Dallas never has come back from a 2-0 deficit to win a series.

The Mavericks are without Brad Davis and Adrian Dantley because of injuries. Starting center James Donaldson played only 13 minutes Saturday night because of knee, ankle and toe injuries.

That left coach Richie Adubato with little choice but to play his starters for as long as he could.

Tarpley, who has been the most consistent Dallas player so far in the series with 44 points and 31 rebounds in two games, played all 48

minutes Saturday night. Rolando Blackman played 44 and two other starters, Derek Harper and Sam Perkins, played 41 apiece.

"There's no relief," Adubato said. "It's a tough situation because when you get tired, you don't shoot the ball well."

While the Mavericks were weary, the Blazers got a big lift from their bench in Game 2. Reserve guards Drazen Petrovic and Danny Young scored 22 of Portland's first 24 points in the second period as Portland rallied from a 15-point first-quarter deficit.

"Their bench beat us," Adubato said. Petrovic and Young were 4-of-5 from 3-point range.

"They were game savers," Drexler said. "They really saved our neck. They deserve the game ball."

Drexler struggled for the second game in a row. He is 12-for-40 from the field in the series.

"I can't throw it in the ocean, but it's not something to worry about," he said.

Blues battle Blackhawks in final to encounter Oilers

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Brett Hull has scored against all three Chicago Blackhawks goaltenders, and he doesn't care who he and the St. Louis Blues see in Game 7 of the Norris Division final.

"If you shoot the puck, it's got a chance to go in," said Hull, who scored two of his NHL-leading 13 playoff goals in the Blues' 4-2 victory in Game 6 Saturday night.

Game 7 is Monday in Chicago. The winner advances to the Campbell Conference final against Edmonton, which swept Los Angeles in the Smythe Division final.

The Blackhawks also eliminated Minnesota in seven games in the first round of the playoffs, while the Blues dispatched Toronto in five games.

"It's been a fantastic series and

this game is probably going to be the highlight of my career, winner take all," said Hull, whose father, Hall of Famer Bobby Hull, played for the Blackhawks.

"It doesn't really matter who's in the nets."

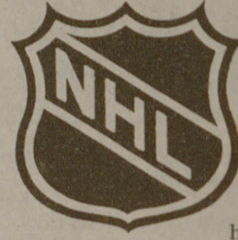
"I don't prepare for goals, I prepare for the other team."

It's a good thing, since Blackhawks coach Mike Keenan

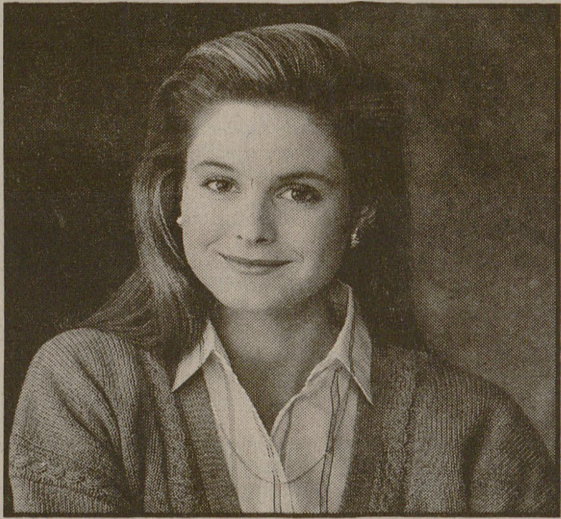
has had trouble deciding No. 1 with Greg Millen starting the first three games, then watching the last three.

Rookie Ed Belfour starred in the Blackhawks' victories in Game 4 and 5, but was pulled in favor of Jacques Cloutier only 2:30 into Game 6 after Hull and Dave Lowry scored on the Blues' first two shots.

Cloutier likely will be the starter in Game 7.



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