

# Rockets roll, upset Spurs 91-89



HOUSTON (AP) — Kenny Smith scored Houston's final eight points, including a 10-foot bank shot for the game-winner with 1.8 seconds to play, lifting the Rockets to a 91-89 victory over San Antonio Tuesday night, snapping the Spurs' five-game winning streak.

Smith started his decisive spurt with a fast-break layup after stealing a pass from David Robinson, giving the Rockets an 85-84 lead.

Robinson's free throw with 1:31 to play tied the score, but Smith responded with three more baskets, carrying the Rockets to their third straight victory.

Otis Thorpe led the Rockets with 25 points and 11 rebounds and Smith finished with 23 points and eight assists.

The Spurs led 84-77, their biggest

margin of the game, with 4:07 to go before the Rockets scored eight straight points to get back in the game.

Rookie Sean Higgins led the Spurs with a career-high 22 points. Robinson and Rod Strickland each scored 16 points, and Robinson grabbed 17 rebounds.

Smith had 13 first-quarter points and Thorpe scored 15 in the first half, leading the Rockets to a 54-45 lead at the half.

Houston expanded the margin to 62-49, its biggest lead of the game, with 8:25 to go in the third period. But the Spurs outscored Houston 16-4 over the rest of the quarter and trailed 66-65 going into the final period.

The Rockets played their 13th game without center Akeem Olajuwon, who has been on the injury list since Jan. 4 recovering from eye surgery.

Vernon Maxwell, who hit a career-high 51 points in his last game, missed his first 10 shots against the Spurs and finished with four points on 2-for-16 shooting.

## Rangers sign three rookies

ARLINGTON (AP) — Three rookies have agreed to one-year contracts with the Texas Rangers, team officials say.

First baseman Rob Maurer, 23, along with pitchers Robb Nen, 21, and Mark Petkovsek, 25, agreed to contract terms, club officials said Monday.

The Rangers now have 12 of the 40 players on the roster under contract for 1991.

Texas still faces arbitration hearings on the salaries of several key players including first baseman Rafael Palmeiro and outfielders Rubeen Sierra and Pete Incaviglia.

Nen was 1-4, 3.69 in 11 starts at Port Charlotte and 0-5, 5.06 in 7 starts in Oklahoma City in 1990. Petkovsek was 7-14, 5.25 in 28 starts at Oklahoma City last season and Maurer batted .300 with 21 home runs in 104 games at Tulsa in 1990.

The Rangers will open their 1991 spring training schedule March 8 against the Baltimore Orioles in Port Charlotte, Fla.

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# Mavs rally to edge SuperSonics

DALLAS (AP) — Randy White had 10 of his 24 points in the fourth quarter as the Dallas Mavericks beat Seattle 117-112 Tuesday night to win for only the third time in 10 games while extending the SuperSonics' road losing streak to eight.

White took a pass from Derek Harper for a layup and a three-point play to put the Mavericks ahead to stay at 97-96 with 8:24 remaining.

Rodney McCray added 23 points and 10 rebounds as Dallas got only its second victory in its last seven home games. The Mavericks shot 54 percent from the floor (45-84).

Derrick McKey led the Sonics with 24 points, and Dale Ellis added 23.

Dallas guard Kelvin Upshaw, averaging 3.4 points per game, scored a season-high 13 points, all within 3:02 of the second quarter. Upshaw scored all 11 Mavericks points in a two-minute span during which Dallas took a lead it held until the fourth quarter.

Sedale Threatt put Seattle ahead twice early in the fourth period, and Eddie Johnson's jumper gave the Sonics a 96-94 lead which White

erased with his three-point play. White added a tip-in and a jumper for a 107-101 lead, and Derek Harper and Rolando Blackman sank 3-pointers to hold off Seattle.

White hit a career high in points and called it his best game yet as a pro.

"My field goal percentage was 11-for-17, and that's my best so far," he said.

"Rodney shot well (9-12), and I shot well, and both of us took a lot of pressure off Ro (Blackman) and Derek."

"I had a lot of confidence going after the first half. Then you kind of got into a rhythm, and you can groove."

Mavericks coach Richie Adubato often used three guards to beat the Seattle press, yet rotated his big men

enough to match the Sonics, the No. 1 offensive rebounding team in the league, on the glass, 36-36. Dallas had 17 offensive boards to Seattle's 14.

"This is the first night that Randy and Rodney have had a combined good game of scoring, rebounding and defense," Adubato said. "Our No. 1 job was to keep them (Seattle) off the glass, and we did a pretty good job."

"It was a nice win for us, because they (the Sonics) are ahead of us — four games now. We tightened up our defense and forced a lot of turnovers (the Sonics made 19) with our press."

"Randy White really hit the boards and hit the shots — he did it all," Sonics coach K.C. Jones said. "I said before the game that they would be pumped."

"They wanted to get to the glass and get good inside stuff, and they did all that, and White gave them the outside stuff. Upshaw came in and killed us with a nice spurt that got them going."

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## Morris doesn't sign

NEW YORK (AP) — Jack Morris elected to become a free agent on Tuesday, and reliever Juan Berenguer left the Minnesota Twins and signed with the Atlanta Braves for \$2.1 million over two years.

The Twins, however, got a player back when they signed outfielder Chili Davis for one year at a guaranteed \$1.9 million, including a \$500,000 signing bonus. The Twins have an option of a \$200,000 buyout in 1992, or must pay \$2.5 million. Davis hit .265 with 12 homers and 58 RBIs for the California Angels last season.

Two other new-look free agents faced a midnight EST deadline to decide their futures, but no offers were reported for San Francisco pitcher Mike LaCoss and New York Yankees pitcher Dave LaPoint.

The five were among 15 play-

ers granted new-look free agency Dec. 7 as part of the \$280 million collusion settlement. The 15 had until Tuesday deadline to re-sign with their clubs, stay with their teams under their existing contracts or become free agents.

Morris chose the third option and thus abandoned both his roster spot with Detroit and his salary arbitration case. The pitcher had been asking for \$3.35 million, while the Tigers were offering \$9.3 million over three years according to Detroit spokesman Dan Ewald. Morris's salary in 1990 was \$2.1 million.

Richard Moss, the pitcher's agent, said the Tigers had offered a multiyear deal and that other teams were interested in Morris, the winningest pitcher of the 1980s. But he indicated he was unsatisfied with other teams' offers when he said, "Jack has no interest in a one-year contract."

## Shula leaves for new job

CINCINNATI (AP) — The Cincinnati Bengals on Tuesday hired Dallas Cowboys assistant coach David Shula to coach wide receivers for the Bengals.

Shula, 31, son of Miami Dolphins coach Don Shula, had been demoted twice in the last two years at Dallas. He was the offensive coordinator in 1989 and was moved down to the quarterbacks coach last year. On Jan. 9, Cowboys coach Jimmy Johnson demoted Shula to passing game coordinator and fired two other assistants.

Under Shula, the Cowboys were last in the NFL in points scored.

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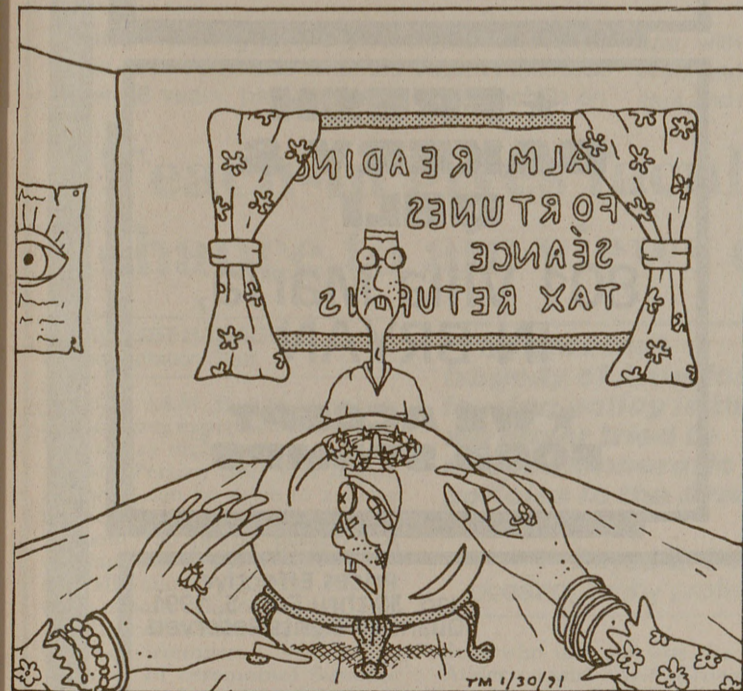
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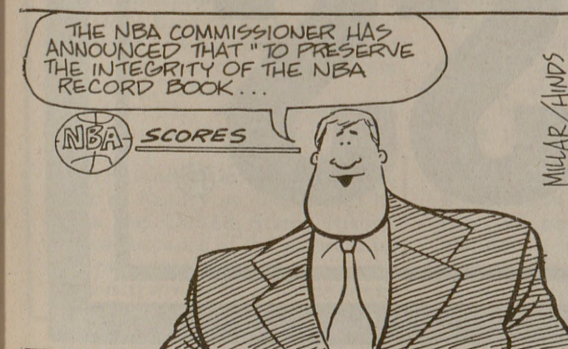
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