

Heat edge past Spurs to force Game 7

Written by Nicholas Norman
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A Facebook user says: “The writer for Scandal must be directing these NBA Finals.” With a clutch three-point shot from Ray Allen to send game 6 into overtime, LeBron James and the Miami Heat edge the San Antonio Spurs to force game 7.

Neither team has yet to win back to back games in this series, yet the Heat must do so to win the Larry O’Brien NBA Championship Trophy.

Lebron James drifted through much of Tuesday night confused and perhaps let a little self-doubt start to creep into him. After losing Game 5 of these NBA Finals in San Antonio, James said he embraced the challenge of having to win consecutive games at home to claim his second straight championship. But the pressure appeared ready to swallow him whole, once again and the enormity of the moment seemed too great for him to grasp.

The San Antonio Spurs had worn on James, and as the Spurs hiked their lead deeper and deeper into the second half, the Miami Heat’s championship reign moved that much closer to expiring.

In the end, maybe that was all James needed to jolt him. The NBA’s best player finally took charge, rallying the Heat to a thrilling 103-100 overtime victory at America Airlines Center.

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“If we were going to go down tonight, we’re going to go down with me leaving every little bit of energy that I had on the floor,” James said. James ended his night with a triple-double of 32 points, 11 assists, and 10 rebounds. More importantly, 18 of his points came after the third quarter.

Tim Duncan delivered a half for the ages, scoring 25 of his 30 points in the first two quarters, but was largely contained after that. He also added 17 rebounds.

James came in averaging 31.5 points in elimination games, highest in NBA history, according to a stat provided through the NBA by the Elias Sports Bureau.

This wasn’t quite the 45-point performance in Game 6 of last year’s Eastern Conference finals in Boston, but given the higher stakes may go down as more important.

The Heat are 13-0 after losses over the last five months, though this was nothing like the previous 12 that had come by an average of nearly 20 points. Nor was it like the previous four games of this series, which had all been blowouts after the Spurs pulled out a four-point victory in Game 1.

If the Spurs can pick themselves up after squandering a championship that was oh so close, their goal is clear: Become the first team in 35 years to win a Finals Game 7 on the road. Not since the Washington Bullets beat the Seattle SuperSonics for the 1978 championship has any team done so.

Game 7 will be played Thursday night in Miami at American Airlines Center.