

Game Coverage of NBA Finals Game 4

Connor Creedon

After erupting for a historic triple-double performance, Jimmy “Buckets” Butler looks to lead the Heat to a Game 4 win, which would even out the series to 2-2 against the Los Angeles Lakers.

Quote from Butler about current position in the series

Both teams had plenty of adjustments to make coming into this game, with perhaps the biggest story being the return of the dominant Heat center, Bam Adebayo. After missing both games 2 and 3 due to a neck injury, Miami coach Eric Spoelstra is one of many happy to have him back on the floor.

Quote from Spoelstra on Adebayo’s presence and being back

In response to Bam’s return and Butler’s enormous Sunday performance, Los Angeles made the bold move early of switching All Star forward Anthony Davis to guard Butler, leaving Dwight Howard and the rest of the rotation to have his back.

After a close back and forth first quarter, the Lakers found themselves with a 27-21 lead, with head coach Frank Vogel only focused on one thing: turnovers.

Quote from Frank Vogel about the 6 first quarter turnovers

Although the focus for the Lakers had a large emphasis on limiting turnovers after quarter 1, Miami’s defense only stiffened as halftime neared, causing problems especially for LeBron James, who finished the half with 5 turnovers and only 8 points on 3/8 shooting.

Quote from LeBron James of thoughts on first half play by him and the team

The first half comes to a close with a low scoring 49-47 lead still held by Los Angeles. Both teams faced a little shooting trouble in the second quarter; the key for both teams will be knocking down open threes.

Much like the first half, the third quarter remained tight, with Lebron responding almost immediately to his tough first half by doubling his point total in the first four minutes of play. A common topic of discussion has been the foul calls, and how one sided it has seemed to be. The Heat in the first half had many more fouls for them, but throughout this third quarter the Lakers found their way to the line more by attacking the paint and fighting for offensive rebounds.

The Lakers maintained their lead 75-70 at the end of the third after pulling away to a seven-point lead earlier on. Although the Lakers were showing signs of wanting to pull away thanks to the ten-point lift from Kentavious Caldwell-Pope, the Heat remained resilient.

Quote from Kentavious Caldwell-Pope on his third quarter performance

The fourth quarter started with Butler, Adebayo, Davis, and James all on the floor, which showed signs of battle incoming as both teams look to take this game over as a pivotal moment for the rest of the season.

As the game gruelled on, Lebron and the Lakers seemed to find rhythm as he continued to make and-ones and find his way to the free throw line. With four and a half minutes to play in the game, the Lakers hadn't committed a foul in the fourth. With two minutes left in the game, Los Angeles led by seven after two giant buckets from the second half hero, Caldwell-Pope. All playoffs long, the Heat have been able to handle business in the crunch time of important games. Will it happen again when it's needed most?

The answer was no. Not this time. Jimmy Butler was only one assist away from another triple double, but the Lakers came into the second half with a fire that just couldn't be overcome.

With the final score of 102-96, the Lakers were able to bounce back after a disappointing loss in Game 3 as well as slow starts this game by LeBron James and Anthony Davis. The bench for both teams remained crucial, which allowed for The King to get hot and find his rhythm.

Quote from LeBron James on getting hot and play of teammates

Game 5 will commence on Friday with Miami down 3-1. The only other Finals team to pull off a comeback this huge was led by yours truly, LeBron James. Jimmy Butler and the killers from South Beach look to make adjustments and take their crack at this stupendous feat.