

EUROLEAGUE BASKETBALL



Last week, as Euroleague began the second half of the season, Olympiacos was in a funk. At 7-7, the Reds knew it was time to step it up if they hoped to make the 8-team playoff at the end of the season. If they hope to make the playoffs, their offense is going to have to take it up a notch. A loss to Fenerbahce Beko Istanbul, 84-77, marked Olympiacos' third straight loss. It was an historic night for the Reds, though, as Olympiacos became the third team to reach 500 games played in the modern era of competition, behind FC Barcelona and CSKA Moscow. Olympiacos guard Kostas Sloukas made his first return to Fenerbahce after spending five seasons with the club, and wound up dishing out seven assists, but his 1-5 shooting from the floor did little to help Sasha Vezenkov, who led Olympiacos with 17 points.

The very next night Olympiacos traveled to Russia to take on Khimki Moscow Region, and the Reds proceeded to put forth their best performance of the season in a 105-88 beatdown, snapping their own three-game losing streak. Sloukas bounced back after a disappointing outing the night before with 25 points, Vezenkov added 19, and Octavius Ellis pitched in 17 as Olympiacos tied a club record with 16 three-pointers and matched its highest scoring total in a Euroleague road game to get the Reds to 8-8. [Here's a link](#) to the highlights from an historic night for Olympiacos. Next week the Reds will take on fourth-placed Bayern Munich and 12th-placed Maccabi Tel Aviv.



First year head coach Giorgos Vovoras knew this would be a rough season for Panathinaikos. A roster overhaul and new management meant that the Trifylli had a long season ahead of them. At 5-9 heading into last week, Panathinaikos dropped two more road games, the first of which was an 89-81 setback in Tel Aviv to Maccabi Playtika. With Maccabi leading by as much as 17 in the second half, sweet-shooting combo guard Nemanja Nedovic led Panathinaikos to within two in the final minutes by matching a career high with 39 points. It wasn't enough, however, as he was the only team member to reach double figures. Unfortunately, the Trifylli dropped their fourth in their last five games the next night in Belgrade, as Crvena Zvezda mts took a tough 74-71 decision. Swingman Ioannis Papapetrou led the way for Panathinaikos with 20 points and Nedovic chipped in 16 more as the Trifylli stayed close, but in the end they weren't enough—Panathinaikos cannot seem to get a break. The long season continues Wednesday night, as the Trifylli look to switch on another gear to at least stay relevant.

STONIE'S SPORTS HANDICAPPING

I would like to start by wishing each and every one of you that has been in on my column and video from the start a very Happy New Year. I've tried to give you the best information I can for you to maximize your money. If you have not yet seen the video portion of the column, it's posted every week, usually on Friday, and if you subscribe to the video you will get notified the minute one goes up. The current video is located [right here](#); you will be able to see what I posted on New Year's Eve. The next video will go up this Friday with breakdowns of all six NFL Wild Card Playoff games, the NCAA Football National Championship on Monday night, and a whole slew of college basketball for you to build your bankroll on Saturday. Thanks again for visiting the newsletter, my column, and the video, and remember: IF YOU'RE GONNA WIN BIG, YOU GOTTA BET BIG! GOODLUCK2YA!

—Stonie