



1987-88 Western Conference Finals

58-34 Chamberlain Division's 3rd Place Costa Mesa Condors
vs
68-26 Chamberlain Division Runners-Up Buffalo Blizzard

Regular Season: The Defending Western Conference Champions, the Costa Mesa Condors, finished with the league's 6th best record at 50-32. This is their 5th straight appearance in the Western Conference Finals. They were 3rd in the VBA in offense with 126.9 points per game. They had the league's top rebounder in Akeem Olajuwon at 13.0 boards per game. He was 2nd in steals with 2.9 and 2nd in blocks with 2.4. He also topped the Condors with 21.9 points per game. Zeke was the VBA's top passer with 10.5 dimes per contest and 2nd on the team with 18.9 points. Purvis Short chipped in 14.7 ppg averaging only 23.3 minutes. The Blizzard finished 60-22, just one game behind the division leading El Paso Scorpions. It's their 2nd consecutive trip to the VBA Playoffs, their only two appearances in their 9-year history as an original VBA franchise. They led the league in scoring with a 133.8 clip that earned them the league's 3rd best point differential at 9.7. They were led by the terrific trio of Clyde "the Glide" Drexler (22.7 ppg), Mark "Fat Daddy" Aguirre (22.5) and Karl "The Mailman" Malone (21.9). Tom Chambers wasn't far behind at 17.1. Malone was 3rd in rebounding at 11.4 per and Drexler was 4th in steals with 2.6 takeaways per game.



Playoffs: Because of Minnesota and El Paso earning byes, both teams started in Round One of the Playoffs. The Blizzard squared off against Bucks County and took the series 4-1. Aguirre averaged 23.0 points and Drexler 20.2. Malone was a 19.4 point-14.0 rebound guy. They advanced to face the El Paso Scorpions in Round Two and won game 7 by holding Michael Jordan to 29 minutes and 22 points (he averaged 36.6 during the regular season and had scored 40.5 ppg in the first 6 contests). Aguirre led the way with 20.7. Drexler was good for 19.6 and The Mailman delivered 18.9p/10.7r. Costa Mesa extinguished the Philadelphia Fire in 4 games. Olajuwon averaged 28.0 pts and 16.3 rebounds in the sweep. Isiah Thomas posted 22.0 points and 14.0 assists. In Round 2, they faced the Western Conference's best record, the 65-17 Minnesota Muskies. While they didn't have an answer for Sir Charles Barkley who averaged 38.0 points against them, they were able to come back from a 7-point deficit with 2:28 remaining to go ahead on Thomas' missed free throw and subsequent put back by Olajuwon in Game 6. They forced a bad shot in the waning seconds by

Craig Hodges to achieve the biggest upset of the playoffs so far. Akeem averaged 16.9 points and 10.5 boards in this series; Zeke tallied 16.5 and dished out 11.7 dimes.

Head-to-head: The teams squared off 8 times during the regular season, with Buffalo winning 5 games. This could prove to be an extremely high-scoring Conference Final as Buffalo averaged 150.3 points and Costa Mesa 148.3 head-to-head. Clyde averaged 25.9 pts and 7.3 asts; Malone 25.8 pts/14.3 reb and Aguirre 22.9 pts. Olajuwon scored 23.3 per game and pulled down 13.9 boards. Zeke was at 20.8 pts and 12.6 dimes. Short contributed 19.3 per contest.