

# The Star-Ledger

**Nets start off quickly, then cruise to victory**

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**BY MATT BEARDMORE**

For the Star-Ledger

This 32-year old Kidd from the Bay Area made the Golden State Warriors look like a bunch of kids.

Fresh off a 15-point, 16-assist performance on Friday against the Denver Nuggets, Nets guard Jason Kidd scored 14 points and dished out nine assists in the first quarter last night as the suddenly hot- shooting Nets converted 76 percent from the field in the opening 12 minutes and blitzed Golden State, 118-90.

"The first half was a carryover from the Denver game," said Kidd, who made 6-of-7 from the floor in the first quarter, and fell one rebound short of his 69th career triple-double with 24 points, 13 assists and nine rebounds. "We understand the energy that we have to bring on a consistent basis."

The 12th-year guard from California drained 10-of-17 from the field, and sent the 14,919 at Continental Airlines Arena to the exits early with a performance that turned a competitive game into a rare laughter for the Nets.

"I can't remember the last time we had one of those (blowouts)," said Richard Jefferson, who had 17 points. "It was extremely nice for us to get out to a good start and to keep it going. They're a very dangerous team. They shoot more 3s than anybody in the NBA so you know they have the ability to come back."

But not on this night. The Nets made their first nine shots from the field and sank 16-of-21 in the first quarter, including 5-of-7 from 3-point range. The team that entered the game with a 44.2 shooting percentage didn't miss a field-goal attempt until Nenad Krstic (17 points) came up short from the left wing with 5:41 remaining in the first quarter.

"Once again, we set a really good tone early in the game," said Nets coach Lawrence Frank, whose team has won two in a row after losing three straight. "We were able to separate ourselves a little bit."

Just five days after shooting less than 40 percent from the field and suffering their worst loss of the season -- 94-74 at Washington -- the Nets couldn't do anything wrong last night.

They finished with season highs in total points, field goals (46), first-quarter scoring (37), field-goal percentage (57.5) and field-goal percentage in a half (64.3 in the first).

"We weren't ready to play and they obviously were, so end of story really," said Golden State coach Mike Montgomery, whose squad has won nine of 13 against Eastern Conference opponents. "(Vince) Carter didn't miss a shot, Jason Kidd didn't miss a shot, and there wasn't much we could do."

After a pair of free throws by Golden State forward and Sparta native Troy Murphy (team-high 19 points), Kidd and Carter combined to score the next 18 points for the Nets in the final 4:52 of the first quarter as New Jersey surged ahead 37-24.

"We really came out and focused on what needs to be done as a unit," said Carter, who made his first six shots and scored 15 of his game-high 25 points in the opening 12 minutes. "I think everybody has pushed aside whatever needs to be put aside and just focused on us being a team, one unit."

Jefferson got the final piece of the Nets' Big 3 rolling with a slashing slam dunk to open the second quarter. The fifth-year forward from Arizona scored 10 of his 17 in the second quarter as the Nets scored a season-high 66 points in the first half and took a 27-point lead into the locker room.

"More or less, we've been waiting for that to happen," Kidd said. "It just shows that we all can go at the same time and have the success."

Murphy led the Warriors with 19 points. Baron Davis added 18, but Golden State lost for the fourth time in six games.

"We weren't ready to play and they obviously were, so, basically, end of story, really," Montgomery said. "We just weren't ready to play and there's just no other issue. They just drilled their shots early. We didn't defend them and then off they went."