

Pacers 113, Hawks 96

## Pacers Granger does more than score

4th-year player delivers leadership along with season-high 34 points



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Posted: November 19, 2008

The lead was never really in danger, but a slight sense of uneasiness was understandable considering they had blown a 26-point lead days earlier.

The [Indiana Pacers](#) saw what was a 17-point lead early in the fourth quarter shrink to seven in about four minutes.

There wasn't a letdown inside Conseco Fieldhouse this time, though.

[Danny Granger](#) supplied a vocal lift to go with his play, and Rashaun Nesterovic had his best all-around game of the season to help lead the Pacers to a 113-96 victory over the Atlanta Hawks on Tuesday night.

"Danny and Rashaun were terrific," Pacers coach Jim O'Brien said. "To single two guys out, not only from scoring, but Rashaun had eight deflections and Danny had seven deflections to go with the points. Really a terrific effort. A great team win for our franchise."

Granger continued his season-long scoring spree with 34 points, three shy of his career high, on 13-of-18 shooting.

As big as Granger's third 30-point game of the season was, it was his leadership that stood out to O'Brien.

Granger spoke up during a timeout and told his teammates that the "bottom line (is), let's win this game," after the Hawks cut the Pacers' 17-point lead to nine on a Joe Johnson 29-foot 3-pointer seconds earlier.

Point guard Acie Law's layup after the timeout got Atlanta within 95-88, but the Pacers responded with a 9-2 run. Granger had seven points during the run.

"I think in the last two years that I have been here, his best leadership came tonight," O'Brien said. "He really did a great job of verbally communicating to the team what we needed to do to win this game. . . . I thought his leadership was off the chart. At timeouts, coming off the court, he really grasped what we're really trying to accomplish."

The Pacers, who shot 55 percent from the field, had six players score in double figures and they had only 14 turnovers. Troy Murphy had his fifth double-double of the season with 10 points and 19 rebounds. Johnson led the Hawks with 25 points.

"Our defense was very solid and we shot 55 percent," Granger said.



**Danny Granger** #33 of the Indiana Pacers reacts scoring against the Atlanta Hawks at Conseco Fieldhouse

Ron Hoskins/Getty Images

"We had a very bad performance in Chicago and we wanted to get it right. Sometimes we do some little things that are uncharacteristic of us, such as stepping out of bounds and just turning the ball over. We've got to eliminate these things, keep concentrating on doing the things that will help us win basketball games."

Nesterovic, an experienced, steady player who does a little bit of everything, scored 21 points on 10-of-19 shooting to go with his seven rebounds, five assists, two steals and three blocked shots. Three of his five assists, including finding Murphy on a backdoor play that resulted in a dunk, came in the fourth quarter when the Pacers were pulling away from the Hawks, who are on a four-game losing streak.

"We worked on mismatches on pick and rolls, which gave me chances to get buckets," Nesterovic said.

"Our team does not depend on one person. Anyone can step up on any night and get the job done. Box scores don't mean anything if we don't win. We did win."