

Houston (63) vs. Florida (65) Apr 7, 2025 - Game Analysis

Game Overview

In a tightly contested championship matchup, **Florida (65)** staged a second-half comeback to defeat **Houston (63)**. Despite Houston leading for much of the game and holding a 12-point advantage midway through the second half, Florida's efficiency at the free-throw line and Houston's late-game turnovers proved to be the deciding factors.

The Turning Point: Free Throw Efficiency

The most glaring difference in a two-point game was the performance at the charity stripe. Florida capitalized on their opportunities, shooting an impressive **81.0% (17/21)**. In contrast, Houston struggled, converting only **64.3% (9/14)** of their free throws. This eight-point scoring gap from the line allowed Florida to stay within striking distance even when their field goal shooting fluctuated.

Late-Game Execution

The final three minutes were a masterclass in high-stakes basketball. After **Walter Clayton #1** tied the game at 60-60 with a clutch three-pointer at the 3:22 mark, the lead traded hands in the closing moments:

- **H2 2:44:** Houston's  **L.J. Cryer #4** scored to put Houston up 62-60.
- **H2 2:27:**  **Will Richards #5** drew a foul and sank two free throws to tie it again.
- **H2 0:49:** With Houston leading 63-62,  **Alijah Martin #15** drew a critical foul on Joseph Tugler and calmly made both free throws to give Florida a 64-63 lead.
- **Closing Seconds:** Houston had two final possessions to win or tie, but **Emanuel Sharp #21** committed two costly turnovers—one with 30 seconds remaining and another with just 5 seconds left on the clock—preventing Houston from getting a final shot off.

Key Performers

Player	Team	Stats	Impact
 Will Richards #5	Florida	18 Pts, 4/7 3PT	The game's high scorer; his perimeter shooting kept Florida alive during Houston's runs.
 L.J. Cryer #4	Houston	19 Pts, 4 Ast	Carried the Houston offense, but lacked enough late-game support to seal the win.
 Thomas Haugh #10	Florida	5 Pts, 4 Ast, +14 +/-	The "unsung hero" of the game; Florida outscored Houston by 14 points during his 24 minutes on the floor.
 Walter Clayton #1	Florida	11 Pts, 6 Ast	Provided veteran leadership and the crucial game-tying three-pointer late in the second half.

Winning Analytics

While Houston dominated the offensive glass (**16 offensive rebounds** compared to Florida's 8), they were unable to convert those second chances into a win due to a lower Effective Field Goal percentage (**38.0%**) compared to Florida (**45.3%**). Florida's ability to protect the rim (6 blocks) and Houston's inability to take care of the ball in the final minute (Houston finished with 8 turnovers, but several occurred in high-leverage moments) ultimately decided the 2025 Championship.