

## Internally, Who Replaces Alvin Gentry

Written by

Friday, 18 January 2013 13:15 -

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In the end it came down to a mutual decision between the owner, president, and the coach to part ways and head in a different direction with the head coaching job. After five seasons, 148 wins, and a trip to the Western Conference Finals, this is the way Alvin Gentry's tenure with the Phoenix Suns comes to an end.

To modify the great T.S. Elliott, "this is how the 2012-2013 season ends, not with a bang, but with a loss to the Milwaukee Bucks."

Now the focus turns to deciding which member of the staff with no NBA head coaching experience is going to run the show for 41 games as an open audition. Who is up for the task?

From early reports it looks like the Suns like Lindsey Hunter internally, but they are hesitating on that move in order to give him a "clean slate" starting next season according to Yahoo! Sports Adrian Wojnarowski reports:

Adrian Wojnarowski (@WojYahooNBA) tweeted at 11:15 AM on Fri, Jan 18, 2013:

After firing of Alvin Gentry today, top candidates to become Suns interim coach: assistants Elston Turner and Lindsey Hunter, sources say.

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Adrian Wojnarowski (@WojYahooNBA) tweeted at 11:17 AM on Fri, Jan 18, 2013:  
Suns front office installed Hunter into organization and see him as future head coach there. Turner is a favorite of owner, Robert Sarver.

### **Here are the candidates for the job:**

#### **Lindsey Hunter**

Hunter is a favorite around the league and was in the running for head coaching jobs this past summer. After not getting on a staff he took over the Suns Player Development program, tasked with bringing along Kendall Marshall. Little did he know that 41 games in he would be in a position to coach Marshall in the NBA after a stint in the Developmental League for both of them.

This would be a big jump from player development to holding the clipboard with 13 professionals looking to you for answers.

The league has been filling up with former back-up point guards moving into head coaching jobs young, and with lots of success. Hunter is believed to be one of the next in that line. Naming him now gives a 41 game sample before deciding this summer if they want to go external with the coaching search. They may not have to.

#### **Elston Turner**

Similar to Hunter, Turner was in interviews all summer to get a head coaching job. He was a finalist for the Portland Trail Blazers job before it went to Terry Stotts. On this staff he is the defensive coordinator and has cache around the league as a future head coach. Over the course of the two seasons with the Suns the team has shown improvement, but then drastic regression, mainly due to the inconsistency among the roster.

#### **Dan Majerle**

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Over the years Majerle has flirted with head coaching jobs including with the Philadelphia 76ers before they hired Doug Collins. Right now most would say he is not ready, but has spent time on the bench next to Gentry for five years as an assistant.

Don't count out Thunder Dan as a local favorite and having played for Pat Riley, Cotton Fitzsimmons, and Paul Westphal over the years.

### **Long Shots:**

#### **Noel Gillespie**

Nine seasons as an advanced scout and now playing a dual role as an assistant coach makes Gillespie as knowledgeable as anyone on the staff. He has seen the reign of Mike D'Antoni, Terry Porter, and Alvin Gentry while playing an invaluable role on the team.

Down the road Gillespie will be running or coaching a team.

#### **Igor Kokoslav**

The first European with an NBA Championship as a coach has the resume to get in the interview room for a head coaching job. He has spent 12 seasons as an NBA Assistant with the Los Angeles Clippers, Detroit Pistons, and currently the Suns. On the staff he is known as a teacher and developer. Over the years he has worked with many players in Europe at a high level and in the NBA.

Is it time for the Suns to hire a foreign born head coach, with the credentials and internal experience?