

## Phoenix Suns Practice Report: Lindsey Hunter Is In

Written by  
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For roughly a week the U.S. Airways Center has been an icebox in preparation of Disney on Ice coming to town to entertain the kids of the Valley. That frigid, icy nature created an aura as well as a ripple effect with the Phoenix Suns (13-28) to come to a "mutual decision" with now former head coach [Alvin Gentry](#) to part ways.

That has been covered with ferocity and quality over the past 48 hours [here on Bright Side](#).

Now, at least for the next 41 games, head of player development [Lindsey Hunter](#) takes over the reigns as head coach. Some feel that this was the plan all along albeit a little earlier than expected, but when Lance Blanks and company brought Hunter on they saw him as a future head coach in this league.

### Welcome Lindsey Hunter?

There is nothing to say of Hunter as a head coach or a coach in general, this is his first time on the sidelines. This season he has served as the head of player development and sat on the bench for games, but he is yet to be seen as a strategist or a tactician.

One thing does work in his favor however and that is that he has played for a litany of head coaches with unparalleled track records.

He spoke about the former coaches he has played for and how he plans on grasping at different elements of what made them successful to eventually become the coach he will be.

Utilizing a defensive strategy will naturally be Hunter's first approach and maybe his defining

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quality as a well known defender in the NBA for 17 years including an NBA Championship with the Detroit Pistons in 2004. He spoke to that as the first thing that comes to mind on what he wants to fix with this team. The pieces are in place to be a good defensive team, but that requires a sacrifice on the offensive end.

Developing the teams defense as well as the young players will be important this season.

This is a very dangerous move and sets an uneasy precedent of a player development coach jumping not just the assistants, but the lead assistant to get on as the interim head coach. The Suns are walking a fine line of alienation towards their coaches. It is not a move that can be judged on the surface, for all we know Hunter could develop into one of the next great head coaches. Letting this play out will let the Suns see on a daily basis if this is their guy past 41 games.

### Goodbye Thunder Dan?

From the looks of practice it looks like [Dan Majerle](#) and lead assistant [Elston Turner](#) took the news of Hunter becoming the head coach the hardest. Neither were participants in the practice and Majerle was not in the building. As an outsider looking in the coaching staff will likely be filled with Igor Kokoslov, Corey Gaines, and Noel Gillespie for the remainder of the season.

Hunter on his staff, "It is still up in the air. Right now I am not at liberty to speak about it."

Turner has an "in" with the [Milwaukee Bucks](#) so keep an eye on that if he officially leaves and Majerle has his restaurants if he decides to hang-up the whistle for the time being. That will be a shock to the fans of the valley as Majerle is embedded with the community.

UPDATE: Sean Rooks has also left the team to coach overseas.

### Coach Hunters First Words:

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As the media scrummed around the new interim head coach for the Suns he had to adjust his eyes to not only the amount of microphones in his face, but also the bright lights that are literally and figuratively now on him for the second half of the season.

I am a little overwhelmed right now, a little tired, but today was fun. If you don't know by now I am a basketball junkie. This is my ideal situation. It was a good day, first day of practicing and I think the guys enjoyed it. The guys played hard and it was fun. It was fun.

### **More Coach Hunter on if this was what he envisioned, to become a head coach:**

Always. I have always thought since high school considered myself a coach on the floor. I have always had really tough coaches that demanded that, i embraced it, and I enjoyed it.

### **Coach Hunter**

We're developing everybody. I am developing, the assistant coaches are developing, and every player will be developing. If they come out and they work hard and do what is asked of them then they will play. If you do what you are supposed to do then you will get on the court. If you don't, then your time will probably be a little limited, but I think everyone wants to play ultimately and we will try to get them there.

### **The 2013 NBA Draft Update**

As of today the team is slotted in the 4<sup>th</sup> spot and the 11<sup>th</sup> spot in the draft if it were to happen today. The 11<sup>th</sup> pick comes via the [Los Angeles Lakers](#) who are playing sub-playoff quality basketball hence the swap of the pick.

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The [Suns](#) would also receive the [Memphis Grizzlies](#) pick (No. 26) today.

Here are the players they are taking in the current [Mock Draft](#) (The Mock does not reflect current standings:

At No. 4 - [Shabazz Muhammad](#)

At No. 11 - [Dario Saric](#)

At No. 26 - [Jeff Withey](#)