

## Steve Nash Returns With The Same Class, But With Different Threads

Written by

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[Steve Nash](#) walked into U.S. Airways Center the same way as he always did before, but made a right turn down the corridor instead of a left, heading towards the visitors' locker room.

Coming from the airport to the arena there was nothing but light bulbs and cameras. When he finally arrived it was a quick walk to a hall of crowded reporters, media, and Suns personnel that welcomed him back. The fanfare and excitement were on the level of rockstardom though his demeanor didn't give off the aura of rockstar.

He spoke as soft, and as thoughtful as he always had here decked out in a tailor made suit answering questions left and right. Not about the game, but rather about the reaction and hoopla that surrounds what amounts to his return to the city and team that originally drafted him and where he became an all-time great.

"I thought that was the way that it would go," stated Nash on the potential of retiring in Phoenix. "I thought I would retire in Phoenix, but it is a difficult business to make any sort of predictions like that. It just became apparent in the last couple of months before free agency that wouldn't happen. That is when other options became a reality."

At one point that was the expectation of the two time League's Most Valuable Player. Why not? The team was not that far removed from a third trip to the Western Conference Finals before the roster deconstruction began that eventually chased away the likes of [Amare Stoudemire](#) , [Grant Hill](#) , and Nash for virtually nothing. In a three year window the team lost three leaders and two of the franchises all-time greats.

Now he is a member of [Los Angeles Lakers](#) team that has struggled, but is putting it together and is far too talented to remain in the pitfall that they are in right now. Especially with a leader like Nash.

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His departure, like any other star, led to the team scrambling to get the necessary pieces to replace the production. As hard as that is, that is the easy part when you consider the intangibles Nash brought off the court.

Nash was the emotional leader of this team, the barometer for eight years, and in the blink of an eye he was replaced with draft picks from one of the teams biggest rivals. That was a tough pill for fans to swallow because they wanted Nash to move on, go after a ring, and allow this team to rebuild. Going to the Lakers was a shock, but hindsight allowed the fans and the organization time to understand what he meant to this franchise.

He was the leader on the court, but also helped make lost role players into household names like [Boris Diaw](#) , [Joe Johnson](#) , Quinten Richardson, [James Jones](#) , [Jared Dudley](#) , [Marcin Gortat](#) and [Matt Barnes](#) . He maximized their potential.

Getting teammates in the right shape and doing the right things with their body was the matriarch of Nash. The training staff does a great job of getting players healthy, but Nash was the conscience of the team to keep them healthy.

Those are all intangibles that make a special leader.

Not the back-to-back Most Valuable Player Awards, not the seven All-Star appearances, not the All-NBA Team recognition, and not the status of being No. 5 all-time in assists in NBA History. Those were what made Nash a great basketball player, not what made him a special member of this franchises history.

When Nash was announced, last by the way, the crowd erupted like it was Game 6 of the 2006 Western Conference Finals and their leader was being introduced to strike fear into the opposing team looking to take them out.

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"At guard," Phoenix Suns PA announcer Kip Helt belted. "From Santa Clara, SSSSSTEVE NAAAAAASH!"

The pure elation from the crowd was chilling to say the least as Nash marched onto the court with no smoke, no strobe lights, and no video playing above. Just the unmeasurable respect from 17,184 fans.

"It was a great reception," said Nash after the game. "Obviously this is a special place for me and to be recognized by the fans was incredible and I am definitely very grateful to them for the reception, but also for my time here, which are among the best years of my life."

The debate can be had that the years were equally, if not more special, for the fans during that same time window who were able to witness greatness before them. It was the best kind of greatness, the kind that was unexpected, but over-exceeded any expectations laid forth. That is Steve Nash.