

Ranking the Phoenix Suns Trade Assets - Let's Make A Deal?

Written by
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A case can be made that the [Phoenix Suns](#) have their plan in place: a bag full of first-round draft picks and a roster full of role players to surround those draft picks with veteran leadership and skill.

As many as three players are worthy of starting on a playoff-caliber team: [Goran Dragic](#) , [Marcin Gortat](#) and [Jared Dudley](#)

. None of those players are likely a #1 or #2 option on a contender, maybe even not a #3, and maybe not all three on the same team, but before you go too far with the bashing of these guys' league-wide value let's look at how they fare compared to their peers.

Very few teams have an entire starting lineup of players better than anyone on the Suns. One example is the [Los Angeles Lakers](#) , and look how that's turning out for them (21-26, 10th place in the West as I write this post).

The [Miami Heat](#) start [Mario Chalmers](#) . Atlanta starts [Jeff Teague](#) , [Zaza Pachulia](#) and [John Jenkins](#)

. Denver starts

[Kosta Koufos](#)

. Indiana starts

[Lance Stephenson](#)

and

[George Hill](#)

. Memphis starts

[Tony Allen](#)

. New York starts

[Chris Copeland](#)

. OKC starts

[Kendrick Perkins](#)

and

[Thabo Sefolosha](#)

. San Antonio starts

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[Danny Green](#)

and

[Tiago Splitter](#)

. Utah starts Jamal Tinsley and

[Randy Foye](#)

.

None of those guys are categorically better than their positional counterpart on the Suns, and that's just to name a few.

With three weeks until the trade deadline, the Suns front office must decide if those three are (a) a good fit in the same lineup going forward and (b) worth more to the Suns than someone else.

A lot of factors go into a player's trade value: talent, skill, basketball IQ, attitude, age, years under contract, salary per year. Additionally, the player's own front office has a value they place on each player which may or may not coincide with the front office of an interested buyer.

All of those factors have to be in alignment with the acquiring team. The last factor - current team's sense of player worth vs. acquiring team - is usually the one that scuttles deals and/or eventually costs GM/Presidents their jobs.

Let's take a fan's point of view (which is almost always wrong and/or unrealistic) of which players on the Suns have the most trade value. This is just me writing from my couch, so none of this is verified or even necessarily accurate. Take that for what it is.

Goran Dragic

- Talent: starting quality point guard, top-10 in league. Can pass, shoot, create own shot, man-on-man defend.
- Skill: nearly as good as talent, but not quite there. Not as effective on defense as athleticism would allow, and not shooting high enough percentage on jump shots. Also, not enough 'alpha' mentality to be the top-dog on the floor.
- Basketball IQ: high
- Attitude: really great teammate, well-liked, but not an "alpha" dog who runs the team
- Age: 27 - at prime of career, will likely still in prime through end of contract (Age 30)
- Contract: 3 more years at \$7.5 million per year. Bargain for starting quality PG.

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My guess: I can only see the Suns trading Goran to get back an even better, younger point guard. What team would do that?

Marcin Gortat

- Talent: starting quality center, top 15-20 in league. Can rebound, block shots and play solid post and help defense. He has quick feet to slide left and right, and strong nose for the ball.
- Skill: topped out - no real potential for dramatic improvement, but that's not a knock. He's good - just not going to step into All-Star status. But he has no consistent self-made offense and rarely boxes out his man while he goes for rebounds, which can hurt the team's total rebounding effort.
- Basketball IQ: high
- Attitude: nice guy, but kind of a loose cannon. Could not have helped himself by complaining about role in offense while team trying to find itself earlier this year.
- Age: 29 - at prime of career, but about to roll down the back side
- Contract: 1 more year at just under \$8 million. Bargain for starting quality C.

My guess: Gortat has great production for his contract price, which has to be attractive to buyers. However, he only has 1 year left on it and will likely want a huge raise on his last big contract. He will be a free agent, able to sign with any team in 15 months. This means that teams will likely offer less talent back to the Suns than the Suns want for a top-20 C. Only a desperate team wanting to make a playoff push right now would offer an equitable package (Boston?)

Jared Dudley

- Talent: Rotation-quality guard/forward. Can pass, shoot, defend.
- Skill: Tons higher than talent. Loads. While Dudley's talent profiles as a middling rotation player, he far exceeds that by clearly deserving starting minutes because he does everything with such purpose and efficiency. He can play either wing position and will always be a net-positive on the court.
- Basketball IQ: high High HIGH
- Attitude: really great teammate, well-liked, always talking about TEAM over individual accomplishments
- Age: 27 - at prime of career, will likely still in prime through end of contract (Age 30)
- Contract: 3 more years at \$4.25 million per year. Bargain for starting quality SG/SF.

My guess: Dudley's skill so far exceeds his talent that I wonder what another team will offer. His talent alone would garner no better than a second-round pick, but his skill should command one or two #1 picks. The challenge is matching the wants of the seller with the needs of the buyer. How bad does someone want the intangibles that Dudley should be able to provide?

Sebastian Telfair

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- Talent: Rotation-quality backup point guard. Can defend like a mad-man and make open jumpers (38% on threes this year), but otherwise has trouble running an offense and creating his own shot.
- Skill: Matches his talent. A good backup PG.
- Basketball IQ: Not sure how to rank Bassy here, so I'll punt.
- Attitude: Hard-working teammate, does his job and goes home
- Age: 27 - at prime of career
- Contract: Expiring, at \$1.5 million this season

My guess: Sebastian probably has the 4th-most value on the trade market, only because Jermaine O'Neal has the heart issue and has not played for a couple of weeks. Several teams could use a strong backup point guard who will defend his heart out and make open three-pointers as they come. His expiring contract helps to drum up interest, but will also drive down the trade price since the buyer only gets two months of service. Bassy is likely worth a second-round pick that will actually come to fruition (as opposed to those conditional ones), unless the Suns find a home for Bassy with the team of his choice rather than taking the highest bidder.

**Other Expiring contracts - [Shannon Brown](#) (mostly), [Wesley Johnson](#) ,
Jermaine O'Neal,
[Diante Garrett](#)**

,
[Luke Zeller](#)

None of these guys will return a first-round pick all by themselves. Maybe in tandem with someone else, it could happen. It's also possible the Suns use these guys to bring back a worse (longer or higher or both) salary if it nets a good draft pick in the near future. But that all depends on the offers on the table.

But if traded by themselves at this point in time (February 2), they won't get a lot back. (If Jermaine O'Neal returns to form, he probably has the same value as Bassy if not a little more: a sure-fire second-round pick, unless the Suns are placing him with his favored team rather than finding the highest bidder.)

Young guns on cheap rookie deals - [Markieff Morris](#) , [Kendall Marshall](#)

By themselves, they are not worth the price the Suns originally paid for them at this time - a #13 pick. Yet, they do have talent and it's possible another team will swap one of them for their own comparable rookie/second-year player. But that rarely happens.

If guys like these are ever traded, they are usually included as icing on a cake to increase the return on a bigger deal (ie. Gortat and Morris for player A). You saw it a few months ago, when Houston used #12 pick [Jeremy Lamb](#) to help close the deal on getting [James Harden](#) .

Little to no trade value - [Luis Scola](#) , [Michael Beasley](#) , [Channing Frye](#)

For sure, Luis Scola cannot be traded until July 1 at the earliest. That's part of the deal with an amnesty claim. So he will be donning the purple/orange/black all year.

Michael Beasley is being paid too much (\$6 million) for too little production to net anything worth consummating a trade. The Suns just signed him a few months ago. It is way too early to give someone else a draft pick to take him off the Suns' books, and almost no one has that

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much free cap space anyway. It is also too early to trade him for someone else's bad contract.

I would guess that Channing Frye will almost certainly remain a Sun at the deadline. He has two years left on a contract paying more than Beasley, yet his future is totally up in the air. No one knows if he will play again, and no one can count on him retiring to free the cap space.

Wrap up

I wrap this up with another disclaimer: this article is purely one of a blogger opining from his couch. I used no inside sources (they wouldn't be completely candid right now if I tried, anyway) and am only assigning value based on my personal knowledge of past NBA trades.

These deals are complicated. That's why so few come to fruition.

Since Dudley was mentioned in talks for Rudy Gay (that Memphis decided against pursuing), none of the Suns have bubbled into any real trade rumors. Bassy was recently mentioned on the Knicks radar (what?) and Gortat was mentioned in a since-refuted Josh Smith rumor. But that's really it.

If I had to guess, I'd say that Jared Dudley, Jermaine O'Neal and Sebastian Telfair are the most likely to be traded in the next three weeks.

Some contending team will give good value on Dudley (a protected #1 in the next couple years, or a recent high draft pick), and someone will give #2s for Bassy and O'Neal.

Other than that, I don't anticipate a lot of moves.