

## Phoenix Suns' Kendall Marshall starting to demonstrate his value

Written by

Wednesday, 13 March 2013 09:04 -

---



Backup point guard [Kendall Marshall](#) was handed a rotation spot in early February and is slowly but surely playing with confidence.

"To help the team, I have to be able to step outside my comfort zone." -Kendall Marshall

"Earlier in the season, I tried to just do what was comfortable for me," Marshall acknowledged recently about the difference between now and two months ago. "But to help the team, I have to be able to step outside my comfort zone."

Kendall Marshall was taken 13th overall in the 2012 draft by GM Lance Blanks and his crew. Marshall began the "draft season" as college's highest assist man in a decade, the top-rated point guard and clear top-10 overall pick after leading North Carolina as a sophomore to a top seed in the NCAA tournament.

Despite concerns over Marshall's lack of athleticism and jump shot, Suns GM Lance Blanks and his scouting staff zeroed in on Kendall Marshall as one of their top options with the #13 overall pick. Marshall profiled as a tremendous floor leader, something the Suns would definitely need once they let [Steve Nash](#) go that summer.

Only 20 years old, Marshall struggled in summer league, preseason and later in D-League, fueling the fires of calling him a draft bust. He is still not even ranked in David Thorpe's weekly top-50 rookie rankings.

### *Marhsall's amazing bounce pass*

The passer extraordinaire logged fewer than 2 assists in 10 of his first 12 games. He took almost no shot attempts and was quick to dump the ball off to anyone who would take it once he crossed mid court.

But since he was handed a rotation spot on February 1 after the Suns had fallen completely out

## Phoenix Suns' Kendall Marshall starting to demonstrate his value

Written by

Wednesday, 13 March 2013 09:04 -

---

of the playoff picture, the now-21-year-old Marshall has dished at least two assists in 14 of the last 18 games (averaging 2.8 per game in 16 minutes). Modest totals to be sure. But progress is progress.

His best games have come against tough competition: in February against Memphis (11 points and 4 assists) and last Saturday against Houston (9 and 4).

"I think you saw him growing up a little bit tonight," said head coach [Lindsey Hunter](#) after the Houston game. Marshall had an eye-popping assist between the legs of Asik (see video below) and a running jumper to hold onto a fourth-quarter lead.

Modest stats, to be sure. But Marshall has gotten the respect of his teammates.

"I am always on the floor a lot of minutes," point guard [Goran Dragic](#) said of the Houston game. "Tonight Kendall played great, so I spent more minutes on the bench. I was happy for him."

"Kendall played a great game," [Jared Dudley](#) said. "I could play with him any day. He's always looking to pass. He has some deficiencies, but his passing makes up for it."

Ah yes, the deficiencies. Mainly, his jump shot is so bad that he's afraid to take the shot even when he's open, and it's such a set shot he can't take it with a defender on him.

Marshall has scored more than 5 points in only 5 of 30 games this season. He has made only 40% of his shots this season, 33% of three-pointers. He has taken more three-point shots (36) than two-point shots (34), getting assisted on 92% of his threes.

"I know my jump shot is what it is" -Kendall Marshall

"I know my jump shot is what it is," Marshall says. "It's just getting to the point of being comfortable enough to take that shot. It's repetition, every single day. One thing Lindsey [Hunter] told me is that I'm never allowed to take a day off."

## Phoenix Suns' Kendall Marshall starting to demonstrate his value

Written by

Wednesday, 13 March 2013 09:04 -

---

On an off day, Marshall takes enough jumpers to make 300 a night. On practice days, its a minimum of 150 makes, with half of them off the dribble.

Sometimes, he even goes to the practice court to shoot after a game. "It's just to blow steam off," he said. "If I didn't shoot the ball well, or didn't shoot it confidently."

Lately, we are seeing Marshall stay on the court even after Dragic returns. Against Houston, Dragic played the off-guard position in the fourth while Marshall played the point. Dragic was able to attack and score, getting 15 of his 18 points in the 4th quarter alone.

Against Denver, it was often Dragic and Marshall playing together opposite Denver's two point guards, Andre Miller and [Ty Lawson](#) .

Marshall is aware of the comparisons of his game to [Andre Miller's](#) .

"We're both not the most athletic people in the world," he starts off about Miller, with a chuckle. "He's also an extremely talented passer and that's something I take pride in, running a team. Honestly, I was looking forward to playing against him, someone I watched growing up."

Marshall expanded on how Miller makes up for his lack of elite athleticism to remain a threat.

"You could see some of the tricks of the trade he's learned throughout the years," Marshall said. "He used them on me. Stuff that hopefully I can pick up and use in my own game."

Regarding a particular example, he replied without hesitation, "In the first half, in a pick and roll I was trying to push [Miller] to our big man who was sitting there waiting on him and all he did

## Phoenix Suns' Kendall Marshall starting to demonstrate his value

Written by

Wednesday, 13 March 2013 09:04 -

---

was, right before he curled off the screen, he's dribbling the ball, he bumps me, takes one dribble, pulls up and I can't contest it. When somebody bumps you, that takes your legs from you."

"Just little crafty stuff like that I want to learn from him."

What point guards in the NBA does Marshall want to emulate? "Andre Miller, Steve Nash, [Jason Kidd](#)

,  
[Jose Calderon](#)

," he replied quickly. "I feel like I can get the most out of myself if I can take bits and pieces out of their game."