The Suns are now 22-45 on the season, and if the draft were to happen right now and the ping-pong balls held their order, Phoenix would have the 4th and 30th pick in the first round. The draft order could still change, and almost certainly will between now and the end of the season...but it's most likely that the Suns will be picking somewhere between 3 -10, in which all of the teams in that range are currently within one or two games of each other.

What seems less likely to change is the Los Angeles Laker's recent playoff push. While it's possible Utah could stop spiraling downward and reclaim the 8th spot in the West, it's looking more and more doubtful; especially with the Lakers ' inability to lose even without Kobe Bryant. It's most probable the Lakers will limp their way into the playoffs after all, and the Suns will likely have only one lottery pick this year.

However, don't fret, there are still plenty of talented prospects the Suns will have to choose from, and probably a couple of talented late first rounders that could still be available by the time the Suns make their second first round pick...but more on that another time.

For now, let's focus on who they will be looking at with their first pick in the draft. As it stands, the Suns' most pressing need is without question at the shooting guard position. However, the Suns could still choose to go in a different direction, or even make a draft day trade to acquire an additional pick. With that in mind, It's probably best to leave no stone unturned. So here are the top 10 prospects that I believe are the most likely candidates for the Suns to choose from with their first pick on draft day, who you should keep an eye on in the coming NCAA tournament:

Top 10 Suns Draft Candidates:

1. **Ben McLemore - SG, Kansas:**

McLemore will likely be the first pick in the upcoming draft after Nerlens Noel suffered an ACL tear earlier this season. McLemore would be a great fit for Phoenix, he has an uncanny feel for the moment and loves to take and make the big shots. He is super athletic and just a great scorer all around, plus he's a very good rebounder and has all of the tools to be a very good defender as well. McLemore could very well be the first player taken in the draft, so the Suns

might have to get lucky and win the lotto in order to get him.

2. **Nerlens Noel - PF/C, Kentucky:**

Even with the ACL injury, Noel is simply too much of a talent for teams to pass up on. He's a long, athletic 7footer (close enough) who has a knack for blocking shots and very good defensive abilities in general...Although his offense is still raw, he has tremendous upside in that regard as well. If he's still available and one of the top shooting guards isn't, I wouldn't be surprised to see the Suns swoop him up and place him in the immediate care of Aaron Nelson and company.

3. **Victor Oladipo - SG, Indiana:**

Oladipo has been skyrocketing up the mock drafts lately, and even though he has come back to earth just a bit over the past couple of weeks, I fully expect him to be a top 5 pick by the time it's all said and done. **At the moment, Oladipo would be my favorite pick for the Suns**. However, that doesn't necessarily mean I think he would be their first choice, which is why I placed him third on the list. He brings defense, hustle, and athleticism that the Suns are desperately in need of from the two-guard position. I'm sold, but are the Suns?

4. **Shabazz Muhammad - SG/SF, UCLA:**

Shabazz has had some inconsistent games lately with his shooting percentage all over the place, but there is no doubting his talent. He is averaging over 18 points and 5 rebounds per game, and is a very capable defender as well. I've never been on the Shabazz-wagon this year, as I believe there are other more talented prospects, but I certainly wouldn't be too disappointed if he was the Suns' selection either.

5. **Otto Porter - SF, Georgetown:**

Porter is one of the less heralded top prospects in this years' draft class, and I'm not sure why he's not talked about more than he is. Although the Suns currently have a glut of SFs, Otto Porter is an NBA ready player who is very versatile and has a great overall game.

6. **Cody Zeller - C, Indiana:**

Cody Zeller is a very skilled big man who is capable of scoring on the interior and has nice range as well. He is also surprisingly athletic, and has a high motor and b-ball I.Q. He does need to add some strength, but his skills make him the most NBA ready big man in the draft.

7. **C.J. McCollum - SG, Lehigh:**

McCollum is probably best known for his 30 point game that helped Lehigh upset Duke in last years NCAA tourney. Unfortunately, McColum has been out with an injured foot that has caused him to miss the last two months, but prior to that, he was averaging 23 points and 5 rebounds per game, and may be one of the biggest steals of the upcoming draft. Most mocks don't have him ranked in the top 10 yet, but that could certainly change by the time the combine comes around.

8. Anthony Bennett - PF, UNLV:

Although undersized for a power forward at 6'8", there is nothing tweener about Bennett's game. He plays much bigger than his size and is one of the most physical, explosive big men in college. He is athletic and powerful, a good rebounder, and can score both inside and out of the paint. Power forward isn't a big need for the Suns, but they may have to take a hard look at Bennett if some of the other candidates are off the board.

9. Marcus Smart - PG, Oklahoma St.:

Marcus Smart is a big, strong, explosive point guard who seems to have the clutch gene in his blood. Smart will likely be a top 5 pick, but he would be a long shot for the Suns who already have all the point guards they need and have other positions to address.

10. Alex Len - C, Maryland:

Len certainly has the size for the NBA, and will likely be a top 10 pick. However, I am not sold on him despite his tremendous upside. Ive seen too much inconsistency and passivity from him this season which scares me away. Still, if the Suns ever entertain the idea of trading Gortat, they may find themselves in need of a big man, and Len could be the best option available.

Other notable players: Kelly Olynyk (PF/C, Gonzaga), Trey Burke (PG, Michigan), Mason Plumlee (PF/C, Duke), Alex Poythress (PF, Kentucky), Archie Goodwin (PG/SG, Kentucky)

These are just some of the players to keep an eye on in the coming NCAA Tournament, as I'm sure many other names may continue to rise and become part of the discussion. We at Bright Side of the Sun will be offering a comprehensive and in-depth breakdown and comparison of

players at each position over the months to come, but this should at least give you an idea of who I currently believe would be the most likely candidates you should watch during the tournament who could end up on the Suns next season.

Poll **Who would you currently like the Suns to take with their first pick in the draft?**

- Ben McLemore
- Nerlens Noel
- Victor Oladipo
- Shabazz Muhammad
- Otto Porter
- Other

315 votes | Results