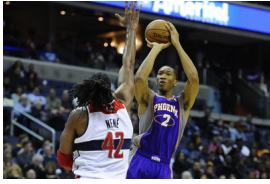


## Wesley Johnson Sees A Future With Phoenix Suns

Written by

Tuesday, 19 March 2013 13:51 -

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There is no doubting [Wesley Johnson's](#) physical talent as a basketball player. The 25 year old 6'7" shooting guard with long arms, athleticism, and a sweet stroke, along with one of the most photogenic smiles you'll ever see, has all of the physical tools to be a great NBA player.

These attributes, combined with a solid three-season college career at Iowa St. and Syracuse are what helped him skyrocket to the fourth overall pick in the 2010 draft, ahead of players like [Greg Monroe](#)

,  
[DeMarcus Cousins](#)

,  
[Paul George](#)

, and

[Gordon Hayward](#)

to name a few.

However, after only two sub-standard seasons with Minnesota, the [Timberwolves](#) decided to cut bait with the talented but so-far unproductive Johnson, and the [Phoenix Suns](#)

were able to make a three-team trade that dealt

[Robin Lopez](#)

to the

[New Orleans Hornets](#)

while acquiring Smilin' Wes and a first round pick.

At first, the Suns and then head coach [Alvin Gentry](#) gave Wes a short leash, and Johnson was quickly relegated to spot minutes after failing to impress in the sporadic, small amount of time he had been given. In fact, prior to the All-Star break, Wes had played over 10 minutes in only four games.

And while there is no doubt that Johnson is also at fault for his lack of playing time based on his performance when given those minutes (Shooting just 31% from the field while averaging

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approximately 2 points and 1 rebound per game), one could certainly make the case that Wes was never really given a fair opportunity to find his niche.

However, all of that changed when Alvin Gentry was shown the door, and interim head coach [Lindsey Hunter](#) made the decision to start playing the young guys more. Since the All-Star break, Johnson's playing time has increased from 7 to 25 minutes per game, and his productivity has responded as well.

Post All-Star break, Johnson's overall field goal percentage has increased from 31%-42%, and he's averaging 10.1 points and 4.2 rebounds per game. Not only that, but when you look at his production as a starter his shooting numbers further increase. In the starting line-up, Wes is shooting 43% from the field and averaging 12.1 points a game.

So what will happen to Wes at the end of the season?

Well. if you recall, Phoenix declined Johnson's team option for 2013-14 prior to the start of the season; which was smart being that he was a gamble, and picking up the option would have guaranteed Wes a \$5.4 million salary for next season.

Still, the Suns reportedly told Johnson at the time that [they were interested in re-signing him at the end of the season](#), and Wes also reciprocated his desire to stay as well.

However, that was before receiving very little chance to play during the first-half of the season. So has anything changed since then?

Apparently not.

As Johnson told [Paul Coro of the Arizona Republic](#) a few days ago, "I think this is a longtime

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place for me," Johnson said. "I told them from the jump that I wanted to be here. We'll see how it plays out in July."

If Johnson can continue to produce the way he has with his increased playing time, I'm sure the Suns will make good on their original plan to re-sign Johnson at the end of the season, and it looks like Wes is very open to remaining in Phoenix as well.