

Phoenix Suns' Goran Dragic making most of frustrating season, reaching elite heights

Written by
Monday, 25 March 2013 10:05 -



Unlike many of his teammates, [Phoenix Suns](#) point guard [Goran Dragic](#) has been the picture of consistency this season. He plays every minute like it could be his last, leaving nothing in reserve when the final buzzer sounds.

And not coincidentally, Dragic is having the best season of his five-year career.

His effort has always been there and his shooting percentages are down this season, but no one does more for this team than The Dragon.

Trip Dub

Last night's near-triple double against a playoff team (32 points, 12 assists, 9 rebounds) might have been his best stats game all season but, true to form, Dragic was having none of it.

"It doesn't matter about statistics," Dragic said to Craig Grialou of arizonasports.com last night, via twitter. "I try to win games and unfortunately we lost."

This was the second time this season that Dragic flirted with a triple-double. He tallied 19 points, 9 assists and 8 rebounds against Dallas on February 1 (also a loss).

Dragic' 9 rebounds last night were the third-most of his career. He'd previously had 10 boards twice and 11 once in April of 2011 for Houston when Kyle Lowry went down and Dragic finished the season out.

But rebounds are not what Dragic's game is all about. His job is to make himself available to the

Phoenix Suns' Goran Dragic making most of frustrating season, reaching elite heights

Written by

Monday, 25 March 2013 10:05 -

rebounder to bring the ball up the court and possibly start a fast-break. If he's down amongst the trees in the paint for rebounds, those breaks aren't happening.

Dragic's main job: gobbling up points and assists for a poor offensive team.

The Dragon has 16 games with 10+ assists, and is second in the league with 11 such double-digit assist games since the All-Star break last month.

He has scored 10+ points in 57 of 69 games this season. The Suns are 2-10 in games he has not scored in double-digits.

Elite Company

No NBA player has topped his 31-12-9 line all season. Not [LeBron James](#) . Not [Kevin Durant](#) .

Not

[Russell Westbrook](#)

or

[Rajon Rondo](#)

.

And no Phoenix Sun since Kevin Johnson in 1993 has put up a line like that either. KJ's 32-14-9 came 20 years ago when the Suns were an NBA juggernaut.

Putting last night aside, on the season only FOUR players in the entire NBA are putting up more **points, assists, steals and rebounds** than the Suns' Goran Dragic.

LeBron James. [Chris Paul](#) . Russell Westbrook. [Jrue Holiday](#) .

That's it. FOUR.

Phoenix Suns' Goran Dragic making most of frustrating season, reaching elite heights

Written by

Monday, 25 March 2013 10:05 -



Sitting down, Dragic plays the game better than most, makes the correct shots and does the things that's
But the offense sucks

Yet, it's a bit early to call Goran Dragic a savior, and it's certainly wrong to absolve him of all blame for the Suns' season.

The Suns' offense has been terrible this season and you can't shift all blame away from the head of the snake. After starting the season with a middle-of-the-pack offense under [Alvin Gentry](#), the Suns have been one of the worst offenses in the league since interim head coach [Lindsey Hunter](#) started playing the younger guys.

Right now, the Suns sit at [29th in offensive rating out of 30 teams](#) .

Only Washington is worse, but they are charging fast with [John Wall](#) powered up. The Suns could easily finish the season with the league's worst overall offense. After being in the low teens in offensive efficiency as late as Christmas, the fall-off has been dramatic.

Is it the Dragon's fault?

Sure, you can't put all the blame on Dragic. He's hustling and trying his best out there - it's obvious to anyone who watches the game.

But Dragic is not a team leader who absolutely requires the others to follow his lead. He does not get in players' faces. He does not require them to get into position before he starts the offensive play. He just wants to do his job the best he possibly can.

If the offense is failing, part of that falls on Dragic.

Phoenix Suns' Goran Dragic making most of frustrating season, reaching elite heights

Written by

Monday, 25 March 2013 10:05 -

He has not found a bread-and-butter play that works when all else fails. He has not made the most of a career 38% three-point shooter ([Jared Dudley](#)) on a team with the worst three-point shooting in the league.

Except for a two-week span just after the All-Star break, he has not found great chemistry working with talented pick-and-roll finisher [Marcin Gortat](#) . With Nash, Gortat flashed great ability to finish on the roll, even leading the league in that category. But he and Dragic have not found rhythm.

And now Gortat is out. [Channing Frye](#) has been out all season - a very underrated loss for the Suns' spacing. Jermaine O'Neal has missed time too.

Rotations are changing every night, as Hunter tries to mix and match youth to winning. In a lost season, it's tremendously important to play everyone on the roster to see their strengths going into another summer of overhaul.

New offense?

Lindsey Hunter loves Goran Dragic. He is quick with praise any time Goran's name comes up in conversation, and puts Dragic back in the game in the fourth quarter of a 30-point deficit just to send a message to the rest of the players about effort.

Hunter has said that he wants to change the offense this summer to fit Dragic's talents better as a slasher, a guy who can drive and kick rather than float around on the perimeter.

Hunter has mentioned [Manu Ginobili](#) as a comparison to Dragic and has played rookie PG [Kendall Marshall](#) side-by-side with Dragic for long stretches this past month, possibly hinting he sees Dragic in that supporting-assassin role rather than traditional PG.

Certainly, the current offense is not working. Maybe a new one will be better.

Phoenix Suns' Goran Dragic making most of frustrating season, reaching elite heights

Written by

Monday, 25 March 2013 10:05 -

All I know is this: the Suns are better off as long as Goran Dragic plays 30+ minutes a night.