

Phoenix Suns move on from Lance Blanks, but to where?

Written by

Tuesday, 23 April 2013 09:23 -



It was a small step for Lon Babby, but the first big step for Suns-kind.

Now that Lon Babby has taken what I believe is the first step in the rebuilding of the [Phoenix Suns](#), his next one will have to be even better.

Sure, it won't be difficult to find a General Manager with better results than Lance Blanks produced. Logic tells me they can't get worse than regressive win totals of 54 to 40 to 33 (in 66 games) to 25 in the last 4 seasons.

The 25 wins were the fewest since the Suns inaugural season in 1968, but many would argue that this past season was the very worst in franchise history. By the end of the season, not a single player wants to be part of a repeat. Not one player wanted the season to continue as it was going.

[Goran Dragic](#) said they needed changes. [Jared Dudley](#) suggested that everyone on the roster ought to be used as trade bait to get younger talent.

[Michael Beasley](#) said the season was very frustrating. Exiled [Shannon Brown](#) said he was lied to about playing time opening back up for him.

[Marcin Gortat](#) said he wouldn't ask great friend, mentor and free agent Jermaine O'Neal to come back.

Behind the scenes, fingers pointed in the general direction of Lance Blanks.

Phoenix Suns move on from Lance Blanks, but to where?

Written by

Tuesday, 23 April 2013 09:23 -

Reportedly, it was Blanks who championed many of the worst (in retrospect) decisions in the past three years. Blanks reportedly felt Goran Dragic wasn't even the second-best PG on the roster in 2011. Blanks targeted Michael Beasley as their #1 free agent. Blanks said Luke Zeller was the best shooter in the world. Blanks tabbed [Lindsey Hunter](#) to coach the squad this spring after [Alvin Gentry](#) couldn't get them into playoff contention. Blanks somehow made himself invisible to the public and media, leaving media duty to Gentry, Hunter and Babby. In a rare occurrence after the Gentry firing, Blanks said he'd expected no worse than being 10th in the West, but maybe as high as 6th.

The first big step has been taken - the step of acceptance.

To credit the organization, they have not shied away from admitting mistakes. Managing Partner Robert Sarver admitted in 2008 his biggest early mistake was botching the [Joe Johnson](#) situation back in 2005 and 2006. Later that spring of 2008, he and Steve Kerr admitted the failure of Terry Porter, eating more than \$5 million of his \$7.5 million contract.

In the summer of 2009, they offloaded the failed Shaquille O'Neal contract and ate about \$10 million of [Ben Wallace's](#) contract to let him walk away. After failed signings in 2010, they quickly found a taker for [Hedo Turkoglu](#) after only about 20 games. Two summers later, they ate the last \$22 million of [Josh Childress](#)' 5-year contract to clear cap space for new players.

In the spring of 2011, they traded young PG Goran Dragic and Orlando's just-acquired #1 pick to Houston for [Aaron Brooks](#). A year later, they re-signed Goran Dragic to bring him back where he belonged in the valley. The re-signing was reportedly all Robert Sarver, apparently in a parking lot while [Eric Gordon](#) was being wooed inside.

And they finally stopped trading draft picks away, rather acquiring additional ones on top of their own.

There have been a lot of mistakes, but there have also been a lot of examples of admitting those mistakes.

Phoenix Suns move on from Lance Blanks, but to where?

Written by

Tuesday, 23 April 2013 09:23 -

They have now admitted yet another mistake. Lance Blanks is gone, and rookie head coach Lindsey Hunter is sure to follow (though I do still think he did a yeoman's job this spring in very difficult circumstances).

The problem to date hasn't been an inability to admit mistakes.

The problem has been an inability to make great decisions in the wake of those mistakes.

The Suns have yet another chance to hit a home run now. Qualified candidates won't be beating down the doors at US Airways Center. [Phil Jackson](#) didn't hop on a plane on Monday night. Neither will many of the other experienced big-name front office guys. The Suns have run their reputation ragged.

But Lon Babby has been good at convincing people the Suns are a destination, and he's got to be at his best in these next few weeks to recruit his next big front office surperstar.

The Suns have a good situation to sell:

- a rebuilding program with public expectation to lose a lot of games for another year or two
- 10 draft picks in the next 3 years
- a top-5 pick in two months
- lots of cap space to be had
- solid veterans with trade value
- not a single "untouchable" player on the roster

Babby's next step is his biggest yet.

"We have to nail it," he said to arizonasports-620 last week in reference to this rebuild.

Phoenix Suns move on from Lance Blanks, but to where?

Written by

Tuesday, 23 April 2013 09:23 -

To everyone's relief that begins with a new GM and a new coach.