

2012-13 Phoenix Suns Player Review: Marcus Morris

Written by
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Judging Morris with respect to Morris

Obviously I have to get the obligatory super twin reference out of the way before I can get to the substantive portion of the review. So did we draft the lesser brother, or did we trade for the lesser brother? That has been a recurring theme of late... but what happens when they're both the lesser brother?

2012-13	AGE	MP	FG%	3P%	eFG%	ORB	AST	STL	BLK	TOV	PTS	WOB
Marcus Morris	23	3524	0.422	0.369	0.564	6.5	1.5	0.5	1.8	14.1	0.041	
Markieff Morris	23	1857	0.407	0.336	0.732	7.8	2.1	1.5	1.3	2.0	13.1	0.031

The thing that jumps out to me is the eFG%. Markieff's paltry .442 eFG% ranks him near the bottom of the barrel (80th) among power forwards. While Marcus isn't exactly lighting the world on fire, his rank of 37th among power forwards is by no means deplorable for a second year player. Not a power forward you say? Among small forwards Marcus ranks 54th. Less effective with respect to his peers, but still in the top 60.

Markieff edges his brother out in several other categories, but the chasmic disparity in scoring efficiency gives Marcus a very slight overall edge. Coincidentally Unsurprisingly, the twins are almost identically bad.

Grade: C+

Judging Morris with respect to his trade

But how bad, and is their hope for growth in Phoenix's fertile soil? It's not adumbrating

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favorably at this point...

2012-13	AGE	MP	FG%	3P%	FT%	ORB	AST	STL	BLK	TOV	PTS	WS/WSL	
Marcus Morris Phoenix	23	21.4	0.428	0.381	0.803	0.320	0.8	1.5	0.8	0.5	1.7	14.5	0.061
Marcus Morris Phoenix	23	14.7	0.406	0.308	0.405	0.021	0.4	1.0	0.4	0.3	11.7	0.020	

Starting with his fourth game after the trade to Phoenix, Morris had a 6 game stretch where he shot 52% (29-56) from the field and 53% (9-17) from three point range while averaging 12.7 points per game. Things were going swimmingly. During this period Marcus played between 23-28 minutes in each game. Six straight games with 20+ minutes. The optimism fostered by this stretch was annulled, however, as after that point he played over 20 minutes just three times in the final 18 games...

In fact, Marcus went through a stretch of 10 games from 3/18 - 4/7 where he had four DNP-CD's and only played double digit minutes twice. Murmurs of disciplinary actions levied by fledgling head coach Lindsey Hunter abounded, though I never heard of concrete specifics on Marcus's transgressions. The reasons I was given via hearsay were insubordination, a sense of entitlement and/or lack of effort.

Taking all that under consideration, though, it is quite obvious that Marcus struggled to find his niche in Phoenix's changing culture. Did the Suns get swindled out of their second round pick? What was the underlying reason that the Rockets gave up on Morris for the #34 selection in this year's draft? Were the issues that sabotaged Marcus's play in Phoenix already a concern beforehand? Was the regression actually predictable, or did Marcus just step into a maelstrom of suck and get drug under like others on the team?

Grade: D (benefit of the doubt for some of the Suns' culture change sabotage)

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Judging Morris with respect to his improvement

Next year could be a good litmus test. The Rockets version of Morris makes him a serviceable backup. The Phoenix version of Morris makes him a fringe NBA player. Will the real Marcus please stand up?

Marcus Morris	AGE	MP	FG%	3P%	FT%	4P%	ORB	AST	STL	BLK	TOV	PIS	WV%
2011-12	22	328	0.296	0.118	0.790	0.355	4.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	1.1	11.4	-0.05
2012-13	23	328	0.421	0.168	0.808	0.500	4.3	1.3	1.2	0.6	0.4	11.1	0.028

Because if the real Marcus was the one in Houston and the regression at the end of last season is correctable, the 2013-14 season could be a paradigm shift for the young man. The 2011-12 data has a very small sample size, so that may detract significantly from the analysis, but Morris showed significant improvement nearly across the board.

Minor improvements on these overall numbers would be enough to turn Morris from the liability he was for most of the time in Phoenix this last season into an asset. Hell, just a return to his 2012-13 Houston numbers would make him a top eight player on the Suns' roster.

Grade: C+

Overall Grade: C-

Marcus Morris showed me enough in his time with the Rockets, and his early time in Phoenix, to suggest that he has at least the capability to be a serviceable backup. When the Suns traded a second round pick for a (low) lottery talent I applauded the move. Although it hasn't been a spectacular success so far, I think there is still some potential it could work out.

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