

## Phoenix Suns 2012-13 Player Review: P.J. Tucker

Written by  
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A year ago, [P.J. Tucker](#) was a forgotten name in the NBA. He starred in college at Texas before being drafted with the 35th pick in the 2006 NBA Draft, but a poor attitude resulted in just 17 games played and 83 total minutes on the court for the [Raptor](#)  
[S](#) before he found himself out of a job and out of the league.

Tucker spent the next several years overseas, improving both his game and his attitude before returning to the United States last summer to give the NBA another go. Phoenix gave him a shot on the Summer League [Suns](#), and he parlayed that into first a roster spot, then a rotation spot, and finally a spot in the starting lineup.

### Grading Tucker with respect to the numbers

The per game numbers aren't anything special, but the rebounding, solid field goal percentage and positive assist-to-turnover ratio are all something the Suns didn't really get from their other wings not named Jared Dudley.

Expanding his numbers over [48 minutes](#), Tucker was above average for small forwards in offensive rebounding, 2-point field goal percentage and wins produced. He wasn't a major offensive threat in terms of scoring, but he played to his strengths and didn't try to do too much.

Again, the numbers aren't outstanding, but they are solid for a rotation wing whose strengths are hustle and defense. I'll give him a C+.

### Grading Tucker with respect to his peers

There wasn't much expected of P.J. Tucker coming into the year, but looking at his competition on the wing, it's not hard to see how he earned his way into the rotation. The numbers aren't very pretty, but take a look anyway.

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Tucker finished first in rebounds (offensive rebounds in particular) and field goal percentage, second in starts, minutes, steals, assist-to-turnover ratio, true shooting percentage and win shares. He was last in points at under 10 points per 36 minutes, but despite that he was still second in offensive win shares - three times as many as [Marcus Morris](#) who is third on that list. Tucker isn't a scorer and his lack of a reliable 3-point stroke hurts spacing, but even so he takes good shots, cuts to the basket and crashes the offensive glass hard. He's also the best defensive player of the group.

Looking at the numbers, it's pretty clear that Tucker was the second best overall wing on the roster this year behind only [Jared Dudley](#). Second best earns him a B grade from me.

### Grading Tucker with respect to expectations

Tucker was a free agent who made the team through his summer league performance. He wasn't even a sure bet to make the roster. So the expectations were pretty much non-existent. More heralded players like [Michael Beasley](#), Wes Johnson and [Shannon Brown](#) were expected to handle the wing minutes alongside Jared Dudley. Yet it was Tucker who earned those minutes while the other three each spent significant time riding the bench.

I'm going to go with an A+ here.

### Conclusion and overall grade

Regardless of where he was playing last year, P.J. Tucker has proven himself as an NBA player. He shouldn't have to worry about heading overseas to find a job next year. His contract with the Suns is not guaranteed for next season, but considering he's set to make less than \$900,000, there's no reason not to keep him around.

He does have limitations and likely isn't going to improve all that much, but what he is is an NBA rotation player who brings hard-nosed defense and rebounding. Ideally, Tucker would not be asked to play such a large role as he did this year. He's probably best as a 15-minute-per-game player coming off the bunch, and if the Suns can acquire enough talent for him to play that role, he'll provide even more value than he did this year.

P.J. Tucker went from completely off the NBA radar to one of the better players on the Suns'

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roster (for the moment, ignore what that says about the Suns). For that, he gets an A from me.