

## NBA Mock Draft: Phoenix Suns selecting Victor Oladipo at #5 overall is harder than it looks

Written by  
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It sounds perfectly easy, or lazy, or both, for the [Phoenix Suns](#) to have selected Indiana shooting guard Victor Oladipo in the SB Nation Mock Draft after Noel, McLemore, Porter and Len had been taken 1-4. Oladipo was (and is) clearly one of the five best talents in the 2013 NBA Draft.

### [SB Nation Blogger Mock Draft](#)



[Suns Select Oladipo at #5!](#)

But nothing is that easy, nor should it be.

We kicked off our Mock Draft on a Sunday night, with Cleveland on the clock. Each pick would be given 24 hours maximum so teams could consider trades and consult with their "front offices."

While waiting for the Suns pick at No. 5, I received a couple of offers to trade down but declined them immediately. The Suns needed the best possible talent they could acquire, and trading down from a top-5 pick wasn't going to get it done.

I went into the draft determined to get the Suns a wing player. Specifically, I wanted either Ben McLemore or Victor Oladipo with the first Suns pick. My assumption was that C Nerlens Noel (or Alex Len) was going Np. 1 to Cleveland and that SF Otto Porter was going No. 3 to Washington. Neither team needed a two-guard, since they'd just drafted two-guards a year ago at 3rd and 4th overall.

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That left two slots (No. 2 Orlando, No. 4 Charlotte) ahead of the Suns into which those two favorites could easily slip and be gone by the time the Suns were on the clock.

So I got scrambling. I am not one to sit idly by with crossed fingers.

I explored trading up from No. 5. I first talked with Orlando for the No. 2 pick, but Orlando wanted me to take back long-term salary just for the right to jump three spots. I thought about it and posed the question to the "front office." Did we really think buying a guarantee of McLemore or Oladipo was worth an additional several million in salary for years (the cost of a higher pick, plus the cost of a veteran)? One of them might fall to us anyway.

Barring trades, Charlotte (No. 4) was the wild card. Orlando would take one of Oladipo or McLemore. As mentioned before, Cleveland and Washington were not a threat. But what about Charlotte? Would they take a wing, or a big (Bennett or Len)?

Considering that Oladipo/McLemore would just duplicate Charlotte's restricted free agent [Gerald Henderson](#), I concluded that Charlotte was better off taking a big. The [Bobcats](#) had to get better in this draft, and the only way to do that was to add a big and re-sign Henderson.

Another consideration was whether Cleveland (No. 1), Washington (No. 3) or Charlotte would trade out to a team that really needed a wing, resulting in both McLemore and Oladipo being taken before the Suns pick.

That was always a possibility, but I gave the other GMs the same logic I used for myself - none of them would trade out of the top 5 this season. If anything, they'd only jockey amongst themselves for positioning. The lower teams wouldn't offer enough talent to justify dropping into the lower lotto picks.

So, we declined the Orlando offer and stuck to our guns. Oladipo or McLemore would drop. And

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if they didn't, I liked C Alex Len, PF Anthony Bennett and SG C.J. McCollum enough to be the consolation prize. I'd try to trade down a couple spots if it got me another asset.

Ultimately, the draft went clean. No trades. Cleveland, Orlando and Washington all drafted according to form. When Charlotte took Len, Victor Oladipo was all ours.

Now, the fun starts.

*It's time to pair Oladipo with another lottery pick or two...*