

Quiet offseason has Phoenix Suns fans antsy, but satisfied there is a clear plan

Written by

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A lot of time has passed since the [Phoenix Suns](#) last won a playoff game, and not one player remains on the active roster that has endured each of the last three years in the Suns lineup.

[Goran Dragic](#) was a Sun in 2010, but he took a detour to Houston where he developed into a full-fledged starter and returned last summer with a big contract in hand. [Channing Frye](#)

was a Sun in 2010 and signed a contract to remain in Phoenix, but he missed all last season with a heart ailment that may or may not heal in time to continue his NBA career. No one else from that 2010 team remains a Phoenix Sun.

While both are likely to help the Suns rise from the ashes beginning next season, neither is guaranteed or even very likely to wear the home uniform when the Suns host another playoff game.

As the crickets chirp in the desert during this free agent period, the Phoenix Suns appear to have fully embraced the rebuilding effort.

Rebuilding efforts have some basic tenets to follow.

Don't spend stupid money

It's tough to sit on the sidelines while money is flying left and right, but a smart team invests cap space in acquiring young talent with upside rather than spending it on a free agent. Rarely does an NBA free agent fit the profile of "young, with major upside".

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) allows teams to keep full control of players on cheap contracts for up to 4 years, which usually puts them at 24-26 years old by the time they can field offers from rivals. At that age, if a player is really good then they get a new contract

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worth a lot more than they've ever made before, sometimes putting them into the overpaid category with the stroke of a pen.

The ones available on the cheap are those that disappointed their original team on some level, or they would have been signed to a large extension before ever hitting the market.

Good examples of the need to refrain from spending stupid money: [Michael Beasley](#) . [Tyrus Thomas](#)

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[Al Jefferson](#)

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[O.J. Mayo](#)

. Just about any 5-year mid-level deal.

"Rebuilding" and "long-term contracts for 25ish year old players" do not go hand in hand.

Use cap space on short-term rentals, ideally to get a young asset

A perfect example of this is the [Eric Bledsoe](#) / [Caron Butler](#) acquisition, set to be introduced at a presser later today. The Suns used some of their \$10 million in cap space to absorb a large one-year contract (Butler) in order to get a young player who might just outplay any contract the Suns give him (Bledsoe).

They used another 884K of that space to absorb [Malcolm Lee's](#) final guaranteed year for the right to move up a spot in the Draft and take [Archie Goodwin](#) before some other team did.

They used the rest of the \$10 million available to guarantee the final year of Tucker and Brown's contracts.

Altogether, the Suns used the \$10 million on expiring contracts. This accomplished two primary goals:

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1. \$19 million in expiring contracts, including Gortat, to use as trade assets during the season when a team needs to clear it's 2014 books and will give up a young asset to get that and
2. \$19 million in cap space next summer if not used in trades beforehand

Wait for the trade market, after all the spending dies down

The Suns are in the trade market. Since the end of the season, the Suns have added six players (Len, Goodwin, Lee, Oriakhi, Bledsoe, Butler) while only subtracting two ([Hamed Haddadi](#) , [Ja red Dudley](#)). They need to pare down the roster by training camp.

To this point, teams would rather just sign players on [the open](#) market than give up assets in trade. The only trades that have gone down so far are those involving sign-and-trades, where at least one team has cap space to absorb money.

Within a few days, all teams will be roughly capped out. At that point, the real trade market will open wider.

Who knows what the Suns will do, but it appears that dollar-for-dollar trades are up next on the agenda.

A rebuilding team does not need disgruntled veterans. While Goran Dragic is still young enough to ride out the rebuild, the same cannot be said of Marcin Gortat and Luis Scola. The Suns may hold onto them for while, but I doubt they keep these players around for an entire season.

Stay tuned.