

Phoenix Suns Summer League Recap: The Veterans

Written by
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Winning the inaugural Summer League championship would have been nice, but the real reason teams head to Vegas is to give their young players experience and to evaluate players who after hoping to make it in the league. The [Suns](#) sent a grizzled veteran, two third-year players and two second year players from last year's roster in addition to the two rookies Ryan McDonough just drafted. Five other players joined them in Vegas hoping to impress someone in an NBA front office. Finally, new Suns head coach Jeff Hornacek made his NBA debut.

First, let's evaluate the players who were on the Suns roster last season.

The Vets

[Marcus Morris](#)

PPG	FG%	3FG%	FT%	RP
14.3	47.2	47.8	61.8	3.9

Mook led a balanced scoring attack from the Summer Suns at 14.3 points per game on a respectable 47.2 percent from the field. However, take out his 6-9 and 8-11 games and Marcus shot just 35 percent from the field in his other five games. He was given the freedom to handle the ball and create his own offense, and unfortunately that led to a lot of long jumpers. He actually shot better from 3-point range than he did overall at 47.8 percent, which is something that should translate well to the regular season. He chipped in a little bit in the rebounding, distributing and steals department, but the vast majority of his value is in his scoring. He finished with the second highest +/- overall at +45 and his only minus game came at -2.

Overall, Marcus was one of the Suns' best players and was a big reason for the 6-1 record. But he didn't show much improvement in terms of creating good shots off the bounce. Mook still looks to me like his best role is as a spot-up 3-point shooter who can slash and handle the ball

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every now and then. Ask him to do more than that and you're asking for inefficient play.

Markieff Morris

PPG
13.6

FG%
52.2

3FG
25.0

FT%
90.5

RP
6.4

Keef wasn't far behind his twin in terms of scoring (those guys do everything together) at 13.6 points per game. He actually shot over 50 percent from the field unlike last year and made almost all of his free throws. Markieff was playing center again and held his own on the boards, pulling down 6.4 per (equivalent of 10 boards per 36 minutes). He passed the ball around and protected the rim a bit. He still fouled a whole lot, but he managed to avoid fouling out even when the limit dropped back down to six in the tournament. Markieff really struggled in the last two games, but was really solid in the first five and was more impressive than he was last year despite the raw numbers being smaller. He reverted back to the jumpshot-jacking, inefficient guy we all know in the last two games which was evident in the numbers (-26 over the last two games, and he missed his last six 3-pointers).

If Keef can play more like he did in the first five (scoring more in the paint, taking mostly open 15-footers instead of contested 20-footers or shots off the dribble), we might have a rotation-worthy player just yet.

P.J. Tucker

11.9 PPG, 55.0 FG%, 2-8 3FG, 75.0 FT%, 5.9 RPG (1.7 ORPG), 1.4 SPG, 1.1 APG, 1.3 TPG, 22.6 MPG, +11

PPG
11.9

FG%
55.0

3FG%
25.0

FT%
75.0

RP
5.9

P.J. Tucker was a beast. He was one of the more experienced players in Vegas and he played like it. He took over when the Suns were struggled and willed the team to victory. He scored efficiently inside and rebounded at a high rate. He was the guy we expected him to be. However, as well as he played, he was more or less the same old Tucker. His points came

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mostly in the paint and his jumpshot still resembles a medieval catapult (with about as much accuracy). He shot just 2-8 from beyond the arc in his seven games. Improving his 3-point stroke is what Tucker needs to focus on most to be a more effective NBA player, but at this stage in his career I don't know how much improvement we can hope to see.

Kendall Marshall

5.6 PPG, 38.7 FG%, 40.0 3FG% (15), 81.8 FT% (11), 4.0 APG, 2.0 TPG, 20 MPG, +9

PPG	FG%	3FG%	FT%	AP
5.6	38.7	40.0	81.8	4.0

Marshall still struggled statistically, but he did make progress from where he was at this point last year. Marshall showed flashes of improvement throughout his seven games. He was more aggressive at times. He attacked the basket and used his body to create space and get off shots, which is something he's going to have to learn how to do as a bigger guard who lacks quickness. He shot 40 percent from 3-point range on 15 attempts, which is over two per game, and he made all but two of his free throw attempts. I thought his defense was adequate for the most part. And of course, he distributed the ball well both on the break and in the half court. Marshall still made plenty of mistakes, and he's still not as developed as he needs to be to be effective consistently, but he is making progress. Marshall had a lot of work to do when the Suns drafted him, and so far he's only had one year to work on that.

Diante Garrett

5.7 PPG, 42.9 FG%, 2-6 3FG, 2-6 FT, 3.9 APG (12 assist game), 1.0 TPG, 16.7 MPG, +57 (+20 in one)

PPG	FG%	3FG%	FT%	AP
5.7	42.9	33.3	33.3	3.9

Garrett got off to a bit of a slow start but picked it up as the tournament rolled along. His production was very similar to Marshall's, although he got it done in a different way. Marshall actually shot better than Garrett, but Garrett was better at getting to the hole and finishing.

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Garrett's assist and +/- numbers are really impressive, although both are boosted by great games of 12 assists and +20.

Overall, Garrett is who we thought he was. A guy who can do a little of everything but doesn't have one go-to skill. He still needs to improve his jumper, but his distributing looked good. And he did post the highest +/- on the team. Garrett certainly didn't play himself off the roster, but with an unguaranteed contract and a full roster I don't know if he played well enough to stay on it.

*Part 2: The Rookies and Roster Hopefuls coming soon!

In the mean time, what did you think of the veterans' improvement Bright Siders?