

Are the Phoenix Suns rebuilding or building up for something much bigger

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The NBA has been regarded as a trendy league by many, more interesting to the younger demographic, and appealing to the masses that want to be entertained. Over the years internally the league has set many trends.

Whether that is with dynasties like the early 1960's [Boston Celtics](#) or with fashion like [Russell Westbrook's](#) fish lures T-Shirt at the 2012 [NBA Finals](#); trends are set and followed for years or generations.

One of the more recent trends seemingly was started when [LeBron James](#) decided to join forces with [Chris Bosh](#) and [Dwyane Wade](#) with the [Miami Heat](#). They did not create this trend, but rather perfected it.

That trend was set a few years prior with the blockbuster trades of [Kevin Garnett](#) and [Ray Allen](#) to the Boston Celtics for a package of talent that allowed the disgruntled star the opportunity to land on a winner. It seemed as if loyalty was going to be the downfall of a brilliant career for Garnett, but after wading through four losing seasons, seven straight losses in the first round, and no direction for the future Garnett finally had enough to make the decision to move on.

In recent years there have been numerous stars that have threatened to jump ship, but only

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after a handful of years of service, much different than Garnett.

All of those teams faced the same decision as the [Minnesota Timberwolves](#) with Garnett and brought back package deals of talent for their disgruntled star. Garnett and the Wolves did not invent this system, but they were a part of the recent plunge into superstar trading and teaming up to make on-court replications of The Avengers sent out to defend their cities sending the rest of the NBA into a black hole in space.

Superstar talents such as [Deron Williams](#) , [Carmelo Anthony](#) , [Chris Paul](#) , and most recently, [Dwight Howard](#) , have delivered ransom notes to their teams a la Garnett six years ago.

The Garnett trade was years in the making as the Celtics were transitioning from the [Paul Pierce](#) and Antoine Walker Era to the next wave. Those two had a run that came close several times, but never cultivated the type of winning that the Pierce-Garnett-Allen trio would. It took type, three years specifically, to build the required assets to make this type of move as well as the right circumstances.

"When teams have maybe a disgruntled superstar, what are they looking for in return? Well, they're looking for picks, that's what they want," Phoenix Suns General Manager Ryan McDonough stated.

Over the three year window from 2004-2005 and 2006-2007 the Celtics shrewdly acquired assets that resembled a youth movement and rebuilding process. The team won 102 games over that stretch and drafted six attractive first round picks filled with potential, athleticism, and versatility.

Instead of going full fledge rebuild the circumstances presented themselves to Danny Ainge to flip three of those young talents ([Al Jefferson](#) , [Ryan Gomes](#) , and [Gerald Green](#)), two first round picks, and cash for Garnett.

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That move was made possible due to long-term planning and a rare, unique situation presenting itself. The team had struggled for years, but had a star in Paul Pierce.

Jefferson had just come off his third season in the NBA, at 23 years old, and was poised to be a double-double machine (16.0 and 11.0) going forward with his size, strength, and skill in the paint. He was the centerpiece in this move as a player that had a modest chance of replacing the star power of Garnett.

Add to that a 22 year old Green; athletic, high-flying, and filled with potential that would allow him to rival [Vince Carter](#) and [Tracy McGrady](#) as they were on their way out of their individual primes. Gomes was steady, an additional asset added, and a piece to add to the transition for the Timberwolves.

The picks wound up to being false hope as they turned into [Wayne Ellington](#) (2009) and [Jonny Flynn](#) (2009).

Throw in [Sebastian Telfair](#) and [Theo Ratliff](#) to make the trade financially achievable, then you have a transcendent move that shakes the basketball world to its core.

Circumstance played a major role in the move happening as the Celtics also built up other assets to land former All-Star Ray Allen on draft night. The combination of Allen and Pierce were enough to sway Garnett into allowing the trade and moving on from the team he had been the face of for 12 years.

Making a defining move like this takes years of strategy, planning, circumstance, and luck. Obviously lots and lots of luck.

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Winning only 102 games in three seasons also means losing 144 games and acquiring six Top 25 picks and other assets along the way. A three year strategy of building up young assets is tough to watch, but can have a payout that is immeasurable as seen in Boston.

Translating that from Green and Yellow Prestige with a Championship to Purple and Orange might be a complex game of connect the dots, but the dots are starting to form. It took the Celtics three years and 144 losses to build the assets that allowed the right circumstance to turn into the perfect storm for them.

In a sense the [Suns](#) just wrapped up season number three with 132 losses (lockout shortened 2011-2012 season included) and just now they are building assets on the roster.

The Suns are four years removed at the start of this season from a trip to the Western Conference Finals; a boxout from a Game 7 in Los Angeles where they could have been in the Finals against those same Celtics.

They were recently very good and as a franchise have always been consistently competitive with the rest of the league. Since then the team has stripped away the roster and eroded the competitive gear that they have always had. That is a necessary evil as the Celtics were five years removed from a trip to the Eastern Conference Finals before their massive overhaul.

Today the Suns are seemingly putting themselves in a similar situation with The Deputy (Ryan McDonough) stepping into his former boss The Sheriff (Danny Ainge) job in a new city. He has begun the process of building the assets needed to watch a young team go through growing pains or to make a bold move.

With the coaching staff and decision-makers all locked in and on board the roster is something that needed cultivating and to be massaged.

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Instead of that McDonough took a jack hammer to the team carefully sidestepping the holdover talent that will be a part of the future while shaping the roster in his image. Lots of young, athletic players that can be assets or building blocks for the future. Based on the philosophy Ainge has seemed to embed in McDonough this is a part of a much more masterful plan.

"I think we're well positioned to strike if and when the next disgruntled superstar becomes available," McDonough recently said in a 620 KTAR Radio Interview.

The current roster is a list of assets at this point.

Here is the list: [Eric Bledsoe](#) (No. 18 Overall, 2010), [Markieff Morris](#) (No. 13 Overall, 2011), [Marcus Morris](#) (No. 14 Overall, 2011), [Kendall Marshall](#) (No. 13 Overall, 2012), [Alex Len](#) (No. 5 Overall, 2013), and [Archie Goodwin](#) (No. 29 Overall, 2013). Mix in the future picks for 2014 (three first round picks) and 2015 (two first round picks) giving this team ample assets to rebuild through themselves methodically or with a dramatic, league altering move.

Add in veterans with value such as [Marcin Gortat](#) , [P.J. Tucker](#) , and [Channing Frye](#) and the Suns are in a position to make a big splash for an impact player.

If a package of Jefferson, Gomes, Green, Ratliff, Telfair, and two future picks were worth a superstar why can't a package of current Suns do the same thing? The Celtics were able to keep [Tony Allen](#) , [Kendrick Perkins](#) , and [Rajon Rondo](#) in their trade as well to make the team a legitimate contender. That was an afterthought in the trade, but in building the assets to make a major move it is pivotal to gain more than you need to make the move. This way you do not bring in the stars to an empty roster and become the [New York Knicks](#) or Brooklyn [Nets](#) , good, but not Championship material.

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Could a package of a few young prospects, a few veterans, and picks sway a team to part with a "disgruntled" superstar talent?

The element the Suns are missing is that "Paul Pierce level talent" that attracts others to the team like Garnett and Allen while gluing together a high profile trio or ensemble. This is just a theory, but looking at the current make-up of the roster it is clear that some pieces fit while others do not. Having luck and circumstance has to play into the teams favor for any of this to work, but the assets acquired are similar, if not better, than the package that brought together a trio that won a Championship just a few years ago.

Will that situation manifest for the Suns in the near future?

Maybe and then again maybe not, but one thing is for certain. The team has the pieces and just the right man to pull the trigger on a bold decision that would alter the basketball world. After all, he was already a part of it once before.