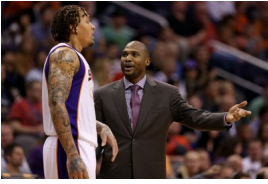


Ranking the NBA: Small Forwards

Written by
Wednesday, 14 August 2013 11:00 -



S : Best in the game (LeBron)

A+ : Right on heels of best player (Durant)

A : Top 5 player

A- : Top players at their position/Potential All-NBA players

B+ : All-Stars

B : Good starters/fringe All-Stars

B- : Good starter

C+ : decent starter

C : fringe starter/bench player

C- : good bench player

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D+ : average bench player

D : Fringe rotation player

D- : bad player

F : not NBA caliber

Factors: production+efficiency+talent (emphasis on this year but whole career taken into account)

*Note: There is no specific order within each tier

- Previous Position Breakdowns -

- [POINT GUARDS](#)
- [SHOOTING GUARDS](#)

For the purpose of these grades/rankings, I am not looking at last season in a vacuum. I am trying to give an idea of where each of these players stands in regards to each other after last season. One poor season doesn't sink a player's stock if the rest of his career paints a different story, the exact opposite is true as well. However, I am not factoring potential into my rankings, meaning rookies are graded as NBA players and do not garner special consideration because of their youth.

I'm probably making this more complicated and subjective than it needs to be, but I suppose that only makes for more discussion. With that being said, on to the rankings.

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Mandatory Credit: Derick E. Hingle-USA TODAY Sports **Tier 1 (S)**

- [LeBron James](#)

I think we can all agree at this point that LeBron James is the best player in the NBA ...

Tier 2 (A+)

- [Kevin Durant](#)

... and that Kevin Durant isn't far behind.

Tier 3 (A-)

- [Carmelo Anthony](#)

Melo is a bit of a controversial player, with some fans loving his talent and others hating the way he uses it. He's not on the same level as James or Durant, but he is a step above everyone else at his position.

Tier 4 (B+)

- [Paul George](#)
- [Andre Iguodala](#)
- [Luol Deng](#)

This tier is pretty easy. It corresponds with the three small forwards (not already listed) that made the All-Star Game this year, and all three were deserving. All three are two-way players who were key pieces to really good teams last year.

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Mandatory Credit: Debby Wong-USA TODAY Sports

Tier 5 (B)

- [Danilo Gallinari](#)
- [Nicolas Batum](#)
- [Kawhi Leonard](#)
- [Paul Pierce](#)

Paul Pierce was a tough call here. At 35 years old, is he still on the legit All-Star tier or not? I decided not, although it's still pretty close. The defensive side of the ball is what made the difference for me, as the three in the tier above are all great defenders as well as good offensive players.

Tier 6 (B-)

- [Andrei Kirilenko](#)
- [Shawn Marion](#)
- [Wilson Chandler](#)
- [Gordon Hayward](#)
- [Chandler Parsons](#)

This tier includes two vets who are winding down their careers but still productive, a productive player in his prime, and two productive young players on the way up. You can sort out who's who on your own.



Mandatory Credit: Mark J. Rebilas-USA TODAY Sports

Tier 7 (C+)

- [Jared Dudley](#)
- [Rudy Gay](#)
- [Thaddeus Young](#)
- [Jimmy Butler](#)
- [Kyle Korver](#)

Korver and Dudley are elite shooters and really smart players overall, even though they have their athletic limitations. Thad Young has no such limitation, although his skill level isn't on the same level as those two. Jimmy Butler is a young versatile player with great advanced stats.

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And Rudy Gay... well, he's one of those guys I wasn't quite sure where to place.

Tier 8 (C)

- [Dorell Wright](#)
- [Harrison Barnes](#)
- [Michael Kidd-Gilchrist](#)
- [Chase Budinger](#)
- [Caron Butler](#)
- [Martell Webster](#)
- [Evan Turner](#)
- [Gerald Wallace](#)
- [Mike Dunleavy](#)

These players can start and play a decent role on the right teams, but might be even better coming off the bench. Barnes and MKG are young players that should make a jump this coming season, but neither one was all that great on a consistent basis during their rookie year.

Tier 9 (C-)



Mandatory Credit: Brad Penner-USA TODAY Sports

- [Trevor Ariza](#)
- Al-farouq Aminu
- [Moe Harkless](#)
- [Corey Brewer](#)
- [Tayshaun Prince](#)
- [Matt Barnes](#)
- [Shane Battier](#)
- [Landry Fields](#)
- [Marvin Williams](#)
- [Quincy Pondexter](#)
- Luc Richard Mbah a Moute
- [Alonzo Gee](#)
- Ron Artest
- [P.J. Tucker](#)
- [Chris Copeland](#)
- [Dante Cunningham](#)

Shooting, defense, athleticism, energy... all these players bring something to the table. But none of them are complete players or big difference-makers. It's pretty impressive that P.J. Tucker

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was able to go from out of the league to being considered not only a rotation-worthy player, but a good one at that.

Tier 10 (D+)

- [Jae Crowder](#)
- [Kyle Singler](#)
- [Jeff Taylor](#)
- [DeMarre Carroll](#)
- [Reggie Williams](#)
- [Marcus Morris](#)
- [Draymond Green](#)
- [Marquis Daniels](#)
- [Austin Daye](#)
- [Stephen Jackson](#)
- [DeShawn Stevenson](#)
- [Hedo Turkoglu](#)

This is a tier of young players trying to find their place in the league and older ones closing in on the ends of their careers. All of them are bench players at this point, but they all can bring something to a team's rotation. Even Mook, who has shown the ability to at least do something, and probably would have played more last year and shown that under a different coach.

Tier 11 (D)



Mandatory Credit: Mark J. Rebilas-USA TODAY Sports

- [Ronnie Brewer](#)
- [Corey Maggette](#)
- [Richard Jefferson](#)
- [Dahntay Jones](#)
- [Luke Walton](#)
- [Sam Young](#)
- [Omri Casspi](#)
- [Wesley Johnson](#)
- [Chris Singleton](#)
- [James Jones](#)

These players all have skills that they have used to make rotations and contribute at one point or another during their careers, but none of them did much last season.

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Tier 12 (D-)

- [Jerry Stackhouse](#)
- [Linas Kleiza](#)
- [Jan Vesely](#)
- [Darius Miller](#)
- [James Johnson](#)

I still can't believe Stack was on a roster last year...



Mandatory Credit: Christian Petersen-Getty Images **Tier 13 (F)**

- [Michael Beasley](#)
- [Victor Claver](#)
- [DeQuan Jones](#)

You guys watched last season. I don't think I need to offer any explanation for this tier.

An there you have it. My take on the small forward position in the NBA. This position is as strong and as deep as any in the NBA today, and looking at next year's draft projections, it's going to continue to get deeper.

What do you think about my rankings? Who do I have too high? Who am I too low on? Did I nail the [Suns](#) small forward hierarchy at least?