

Fan(atic)s of the Worst-in-West Phoenix Suns are a special breed

Written by

Wednesday, 14 August 2013 09:00 -



By any predictive measure or model, the [Phoenix Suns](#) should be the worst team in the Western Conference.

No other Western team sports such little talent. No prior Suns team has ever entered a season with such low expectations from either the fans or the media. And no prior collection of Suns players have been treated as nothing more than holdovers until a better talent replaces them.

Fan(atic)

Sports fans have always been loyal to a fault. Love and loyalty, along with a good bit of fanaticism, is a recipe for annual over-hyping of the team's chances. Last year, many of us not only drank the kool-aid, we "cooked" our own batch and kept an inventory for the whole season.

On the other side, there are the fanatics who, determined never to be disappointed, systematically expect the lowest probable outcome and laugh at lecture helpfully advise the optimists who consume the kool-aid. When they see the kool-aid, they don't just chuckle and turn away. These realists run over and try to knock the kool-aid out of the drinker's hand. No kool-aid for you!

Both groups are "realists". Perception is reality. Fandom has it's own ruleset for each individual. You're a realist, and everyone who disagrees with your basic point of view is delusional. That's just the way it is.

There is no middle ground

Many of you reading this article have already told yourself you're neither an optimist nor a pessimist. You're right in the middle, and those extremes don't apply to you. Only silly people live on the extremes, you say.

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I say you're full of bunk, and it's only a question of whether you're only lying to us or if you're lying to yourself as well.

Check it: If you're reading an NBA blog on the worst team in the Western Conference in the middle of the August, you're a fan(atic). Admit it. Pick a side and stay there.

We good? Everyone on their side? Good. We can move on now.

Pre-game warmups

Now that we're all safely ensconced on our side, it's time to take stock of our teammates. Look around you.

If you're on the team that says the Suns will be better than 22 wins next season, your teammates are the optimists.

If you're on the team that says this game is bull-pucky and are asking each other why you're even here, your teammates are the pessimists.

Some of your teammates are, admittedly, more fanatical than you. And some are less fanatical than you, prompting you to briefly consider if they're actually a spy from the other side.

That's okay. You still have the same basic leanings.

It's time to start planning your attack for the upcoming season.

Optimistic strategy

Quickly, the optimists realize they've got a tough road to hoe. It chaps your hides that the damn

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pessimists finally got what they wanted - a loser to the highest degree.

The optimists spend the first twenty minutes of the strategy session hating on the pessimists.

Eventually, the conversation turns to strategy. Do we find solace in individual stats? Do we focus entirely on the Rookie of the Year race, or the visually-obvious development of the young players into better players who can play for an eventual playoff contender? Or, do we run analytics till our fingertips bleed to find statistic evidence of an improving team? Or do we rosterbate McStunna's next move to vault the Suns back into immediate contention?

Yes, to all of the above!

Never once does the conversation turn to the win-loss record. In August, wins and losses don't matter. Yet.

Pessimistic strategy

The pessimists realists spend the first few minutes making jokes about the optimists delusional fans who keep trying to find the silver lining in the clouds. It's a veritable Comedy Central Roast. Sports pessimists, by nature, are a quick-witted lot who fancy themselves just a tiny bit more enlightened than the average fan.

Just like with the optimists, the pessimists see some of their teammates on the extreme edge. But they still have the same internal bent, so they go along. Asshat Dave made them pick a side, so whatever.

After a while, the pessimists get down to business because that's what they do. They are a serious bunch, much more serious than the typical optimist delusionist.

They talk about tanking, about losing in the best possible way. They talk about doing whatever it takes to ensure the Suns get a top-notch talent in the next draft. The pessimists occasionally

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harken back to the moves that got the Suns into their current predicament, go on a ten to fifteen minute rant, then finally get back to business at hand.

How do we survive the upcoming season that promises 60 losses? First of all, we start obsessing about the East. Those futhermuckers have at least two or three teams as bad as the Suns. Maybe five. What if the Suns end up with the fifth pick again? And, god forbid, have to decide between two combo guard PGs as the best available talent? Oh no.

Yes, Virginia, it CAN get worse than it already is.

Moment of truth

The rubber will meet the road when live games actually start in October.

Optimists fanatics who have spent all summer "okay" with the prospect of 60 losses will realize they can't stand the idea of 60 g**ddam* losses. Only losers pray for losses!

Pessimists realists who have spent all summer expecting 60 losses will realize they don't like being in the majority. They don't like having the big, bad team of pessimists. They're used to being the contrarian. It's no fun popping balloons if other people beat you to it, or if the optimist delusionist (gasp) left their balloon at home.

I, for one, am fascinated to see how this season shakes out amongst the Phoenix Suns fans.

At the very least, being a fan of the Phoenix Suns is still interesting and polarizing. And more popular, on BSotS anyway, than it ever was before.

Which side are you on, dear reader? And, how will you handle 60 losses?