

BSOTS Roundtable: A Point (Guard) of Emphasis

Written by

Tuesday, 27 August 2013 11:00 -



Over the history of the [Phoenix Suns](#) there have been two constants -- they have been remarkably consistent over the years with winning seasons and they find elite point guards to run the show. Since the last great point guard left the reigns have yet to be taken over.

Is the next elite point guard on the horizon?

As the Valley has seen there are numerous different ways a point guard can be great from the undersized dynamo that was Kevin Johnson dunking on all-time greats to the scoring threat of Stephon Marbury. From the triple-double machine [Jason Kidd](#) to the greatest shooting and passing guard of all-time in Steve Nash. There have been a few good talents to come through the desert and lead the team.

The team has made an effort to add as much quantity to the roster in an effort to find another quality player like Johnson, Nash, Kidd, or Marbury.

Thirteenth Topic: Phoenix Suns Point Guard Rotation

1. *Breaking the Ice: Who is the future of the Phoenix Suns at the point guard position --* [Goran Dragic](#)

or

[Eric Bledsoe](#)

BSOTS Roundtable: A Point (Guard) of Emphasis

Written by

Tuesday, 27 August 2013 11:00 -

?

Jim Coughenour: None of the above? I still don't buy Bledsoe as a point guard. Not with a career average of 5.5 assists per 36 minutes and a 1.6:1 assist to turnover ratio. Goran appears to be more natural at the position, but entering his prime he will still struggle to be an above average starting point guard. My guess is that if the Suns keep these guys as long term that the roster will need to add talent in other areas because the team has relegated itself to average guard play.

Jacob Padilla: I have trouble seeing Eric Bledsoe as an every play starting point guard. He played shooting guard next to [John Wall](#) in college and played behind and next to Chris Paul in Los Angeles (as well as alongside ball-handling bigs like [Blake Griffin](#) and [Lamar Odom](#) and a ball-dominant shooting guard in [Jamal Crawford](#)). Bledsoe has never been a true No. 1 point guard, and I don't think his skill-set matches that role, at least as of yet. I think Goran Dragic is our guy at point guard for the next few years as the team continues to build up talent around him, but it's a fluid situation.

Dave King: That's a good question, and one I can't answer right now. I think, ultimately, IF Eric Bledsoe reaches his ceiling, then he's the future and Dragic becomes a 6th man of the year type. If the Suns are to win 50+ games in the next two years, it's going to be with Bledsoe playing most of the point guard minutes because the only way the Suns win 50+ games real soon is because McStunna hit a jackpot or two this summer.

Kris Habbas: Is neither an appropriate answer here? While I appreciate and enjoy what Dragic does on the court, he is 27 entering this season and has limitations that make me feel he will always be at his best as a reserve. I have always had reservations for Bledsoe becoming a superstar, but at least he is still 24 mid-way through this season and has more potential to be a point guard of the future, but his future here is unclear. Neither. Both. Who knows?

BSOTS Roundtable: A Point (Guard) of Emphasis

Written by

Tuesday, 27 August 2013 11:00 -

Richard Parker: I'm not sure there is a right answer to this. Maybe the future of the Phoenix Suns under Jeff Hornacek doesn't really entail a traditional "point guard" position. I do believe both players will coexist and flourish together but at this point, neither is a star, so to appoint either as the future of the team's point guard position would be premature.

Sean Sullivan: I don't believe he's on the roster yet. We may...MAY have found our shooting guard of the future in Goodwin, depending on how he develops over the next couple of years, but I don't believe the next K.J., Kidd, or Nash is anywhere to be found on this team at the moment. Dragic is more than serviceable, and Bledsoe could be a very good combo guard, but I don't believe either of them have the transcendent qualities as a point guard that will have fans talking about them as one of the greats 20 years from now.

2. *Since the team has both of them now, Dragic and Bledsoe, should they play them more separate or together? Explain.*

JP: Together, although staggering their minutes some would probably be a good idea.

DK: They should play together, simply because there is no better option. This isn't the [San Antonio Spurs](#) who needed Ginobili to come off the bench to save wins while the second unit was in there. This is the Suns, who are trying to identify the future while losing 50-60 games a season. Dragic and Bledsoe should each play 35+ minutes, with at least one on the floor at all times.

KH: They will be fun together and could cause some havoc in the open court, but for every steal and fast-break finish they could give up twice as many plays in the open court after missed gambles. Both of these players are at their best creating chaos and chaos can go good and bad depending on the situation.

BSOTS Roundtable: A Point (Guard) of Emphasis

Written by

Tuesday, 27 August 2013 11:00 -

RP: They should definitely play most of their minutes together to create a fast, athletic, and dynamic starting back-court. However, I expect Jeff Hornacek to spread their minutes out such that both will get some time as the sole play-maker on the floor (i.e. without one another), which could be bad news for Kendall Marshall.

SS: Definitely together. The Suns need to create a lineup that utilizes as much of their talent as possible...Getting their best players on the court together. Phoenix doesn't have the luxury of an All-Star roster like the Clippers (did I really just type that?) right now, where they can afford to keep one of their stars on the bench as a sixth man or a back-up. The Suns need to find a way to get their best players out on the floor, period...they can figure out the positions as they go.

JC: I would probably plan on starting and finishing with them to start the season and have at least one of them on the court at all times (if the game's competitive). They're really the only proven, productive guards on the roster. Until they prove it won't work I expect the Suns to see if it will.

3. Overall the numbers suggest that Bledsoe is comfortable playing in a two point guard system, but with the best point guard in the league. Can that be replicated here? Explain.

DK: We shall find out soon enough. I believe the Suns will at least be interesting and entertaining, if overmatched. Bledsoe will be a break out player one way or another this season - either exploding onto the NBA scene in starting minutes, or in showing that he's really a 6th man. Odds say it will be the latter, but this is where McStunna needs to hit a home run to shorten the rebuild from four years to two years.

KH: No. He can play with Dragic, but in no way should people think that the [Los Angeles Clippers](#) of last year are wearing orange jerseys here in the Valley. Just, no. They will be exciting to watch in segments and equally frustrating in others.

BSOTS Roundtable: A Point (Guard) of Emphasis

Written by

Tuesday, 27 August 2013 11:00 -

RP: Obviously, that level of success won't be achieved in Phoenix this year because Goran Dragic is not Chris Paul. However, I do think Bledsoe's best role is not as the primary playmaker but as a complementary, Swiss army knife-type guard. Therefore, I expect a Dragic-Bledsoe backcourt to not only mesh well, but to be a strength of the 2013-14 Suns team (perhaps its only real strength).

SS: Playing in a two guard system? Definitely. While he's no CP3, I think Dragic's style complements Bledsoe's very well. Dragic is a very good passer and can knock down perimeter shots off the ball as well to help spread the floor if Bledsoe wants to drive and/or create. I think they fit together very well...at least on paper.

JC: Was Bledsoe really comfortable with being second fiddle to [Chris Paul](#) and playing 20.4 minutes per game? I have to imagine he is salivating at the prospect of being the best player on this team and ossifying himself as a quality starter in the league. Rather than residing in the expansive shadow cast by Paul, which is funny considering his diminutive stature, EB will have many more responsibilities this season. Can he adapt and overcome? I'm sure he'll score more than the 8.5 points per game he poured, yes I said poured, in last season.

JP: Not to the same effectiveness, no. But I do think that's how Bledsoe can be most effective. (That's all I'll say here; much more coming soon)

4. The team has talked about [Archie Goodwin](#) being a point guard, but also drafted [Kendall Marshall](#) just a year ago in the lottery... Who should get the lion's share of the minutes as the back-up (or third) point guard?

KH: I am going to be on an island here (so it is appropriate I am going first here) in saying that the minutes should go to Marshall. He was a lottery pick just A YEAR AGO and the team has to invest in his development while he is on the roster. Marshall is not a bad locker room guy; he is not a headline maker off the court so why give up on him? Stats, style, and performance aside he was a rookie last year so if you like him, love him, or are indifferent; a team cannot give up on a kid this early.

BSOTS Roundtable: A Point (Guard) of Emphasis

Written by

Tuesday, 27 August 2013 11:00 -

RP: Much like the others, I don't view Goodwin as a point guard so I do believe Marshall should be given backup point guard minutes (behind Dragic and Bledsoe). However, there may not be too many minutes for Marshall to earn with two stronger point guards ahead of him and a budding best-player-in-the-NBA-history candidate to his right in Archie Goodwin.

SS: Archie Goodwin is not a point guard. I repeat, Archie Goodwin is not a point guard. His biggest struggles at Kentucky came when they attempted to play Goodwin at the one instead of his natural position off the ball. I know the coaching staff has indicated that they want to develop him as a PG, but I think that's a mistake. He is very effective as a scoring, slashing two guard, and I think the Suns would be better suited to developing that aspect of his game rather than forcing him to become something he's not. Marshall gets my vote for backup PG duties.

JC: Goran and EB can still platoon some of the minutes at backup while the other rests. Marshall should get the majority of backup minutes off the bench, which I only expect to be 10-15 minutes a game most nights. I don't think Goodwin will get a ton of playing time this season. No reason to rush him along and destroy his arrogance confidence by subjecting him to on court ridicule unless he's ready to compete at this level. Don't forget [Diante Garrett](#), either. I fully expect him to be battling Goran for a starting position all season long.

JP: I don't think Archie Goodwin is a point guard at all. He's a shooting guard, and there's nothing wrong with that. I don't understand the team's reported desire to make him a point guard. His skill-set is that of a slashing two-guard (albeit on who can handle the rock some), so asking him to run the offense is taking him outside of his comfort zone (as we saw at Kentucky). Kendall Marshall should get the point guard minutes when both Dragic and Bledsoe are sitting on the bench.

DK: There's no way (in my mind) Goodwin is a starting point guard in this league. But then again, Barbosa was given PG duties for most of his first few years and LB wasn't a point guard either. He just had to play point due to his size. In that context, Goodwin could play some minutes at the point the way LB did. Yet, Goodwin is plenty big for the shooting guard position so there's no need to force him to distribute. Play Dragic, Bledsoe and Marshall at PG and give Goodwin free reign to drive and score.

BSOTS Roundtable: A Point (Guard) of Emphasis

Written by

Tuesday, 27 August 2013 11:00 -

5. *Should the team be more patient with Marshall? Nobody here was a part of drafting him, but nonetheless he is a lottery pick that is a part of the young foundation here.*

RP: Yes. He is just one NBA season old and needs more time to develop. The team can and should entertain offers for him (though I can't imagine there would be too many) but there's absolutely no reason to actively look to dump him. He is still an asset and although he needs to massively improve his overall skillset, he is a unique player on this roster in the sense that he's the team's only true pass-first point guard. Keep him and see how he performs - the Suns have nothing to lose.

SS: Absolutely. I'm probably one of the remaining few Marshall supporters left, but I'll keep beating the patience drum until it breaks. Marshall has a very limited game right now, no question. But his court vision, passing, and reportedly his I.Q. are all top notch, and what better foundation to start with in a young point guard? His shot looked better toward the end of last season, and improved still when I saw him play in summer league. He does need to develop a consistent jumper, no doubt, but he looks as if he's working hard on it and it seems to be paying off...Let's give him a little more time and see what he can do. It's not as if he has much trade value at this point anyway.

JC: He's far from untouchable if there's any interest around the league, but based on his rookie season and subsequent summer league performance I'm not sure much exists. He's definitely easily movable from the Suns' perspective. It seems logical that he should get the opportunity to play his way into or out of minutes based on his in game production, but I don't get to see how he plays in practice to earn those minutes in the first place.... It will be interesting to see how the new administration embraces or distances itself from the (remaining) previous players on the roster. McMiracle definitely doesn't seem beholden to any of the players he inherited.

JP: Yes the Suns should be more patient with him. There's no reason for the team to give up on him completely after one year into his career, especially when he was going to take plenty of time to adjust to the NBA game in the first place. The Suns aren't in any sort of win-now mode, so there's little reason not to give him a chance to prove himself.

DK: Someone should be patient with Marshall, though I don't know that it's the Suns. I still would not be surprised if Marshall is traded before training camp. He doesn't seem to fit the guard profile on this team. If Marshall is still with the Suns, then yes he needs minutes but that might not happen unless there are injuries.

BSOTS Roundtable: A Point (Guard) of Emphasis

Written by

Tuesday, 27 August 2013 11:00 -

KH: See Above Rant

BONUS: *What is your opinion on loyalty? As mentioned, nobody was here for the 2011 or the 2012 drafts, but it seems that [Markieff Morris](#) gets more rope than Marshall. Should the team ride with the guns they were given or go and get their own?*

SS: It's a business. All is fair in love and basketball...or something like that. While I do believe there should be some loyalty toward guys like Steve Nash and Grant Hill who have paid their dues with the organization, I don't think this same concept applies to guys like Markieff, Marshall, or even Dragic. The Suns should definitely try to develop their young players and make the most of what they have, but if they can make moves to better their team, they need to do it, period.

JC: I think loyalty is overwhelmingly a good thing, so in general I'd have to say I'm for it. I don't even think loyalty really bridges into the current situation with the Suns, though. It's not a [Steve Nash](#) conundrum. These are all players with relatively little tenure and barely perceptible footprints in the organization. They are under contract and evanescence and impermanence are the nature of professional sports. As far as guns go I just hope they don't start giving guns to the fans... that could get ugly come 40 point loss to crappy team X time.

JP: I think the Sun organization overall has been pretty loyal to its players, and that's good for the team's reputation when it comes to free agency. However, loyalty is not the same thing as sticking by a player no matter what. If that player can't do his job, then there is no reason to hold onto him. Give the guys a chance under Hornacek, but if it doesn't work out it would probably be best for both parties just to move on.

DK: There should be no loyalty on a 25-win roster. Period. Everyone on the entire team should

BSOTS Roundtable: A Point (Guard) of Emphasis

Written by

Tuesday, 27 August 2013 11:00 -

be available in any trade that brings better individual talent. McStunna proved he's willing to do that with trading Dudley first, because it brought back Bledsoe. He will and should continue. And it shouldn't stop with who he inherited. Goodwin, Len and Bledsoe should all be available for better individual talent as it becomes available.

KH: No question. An amateur basketball player is working to sell themselves to get to the NBA and the team takes them as an investment in the future of the organization. If an investment is not immediately gratifying either move on from it (trade him) or show some genuine patience and commitment and allow that investment to have time to get back on track. Marshall is the investment and if Ryan McDonough keeps him, Coach Jeff Hornacek should play him. Attack.

RP: A team should never ride with the guns they were given if those guns have no ammo, as was the case with the 25-win 2012-13 Suns. While McDonough should (and has) look to upgrade the team's talent moving forward, it's important to continue emphasizing development of the talent already on the roster. The team shouldn't ignore the Marshalls and the Morrisises in its constant quest to acquire further talent. Successful team-building requires proper talent evaluation and shrewd acquisitions, but none of that will matter without patient player development.