

Phoenix Suns' Goran Dragic is Excited to Play with New Running Mate, Eric Bledsoe

Written by

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Goran Dragic has been having quite a busy offseason. Between [marrying his long-time girlfriend](#) and leading his national team in the European Championship, any spare time he's had has been devoted to honing his basketball skills [against the likes of an axe and flaming sword-wielding barbarian](#).

Meanwhile, his NBA team has arguably been even busier. In the last few months, the Suns have completely retooled their front office, drafted two first round picks that figure to be significant parts of their future, completed two major trades to continue stockpiling assets, nearly became NBA (Summer League) champions, and introduced a brand new set of team uniforms. The team's moves this summer has fans feeling largely positive vibes for the first time in a while, and that excitement has seemingly spread all the way to Slovenia to infect Dragic. In a [recent interview with Matt Petersen of Suns.com](#), he discussed his feelings and support for the team's offseason moves:

"I'm really excited with what they're doing," Dragic said. "I talked with [Suns General Manager] Ryan [McDonough] and [Head Coach] Jeff [Hornacek] a couple of times. They told me what they're doing and how they want to do things. I think it's awesome."

"When I was a kid and I was watching the games, they were talking about those legends and about NBA history, so I know that Jeff was a great player," Dragic said. "The most recognized thing about Jeff was when he was at the free-throw line and he would touch his face before taking his free throw. He was one of the best shooters in the NBA. I have a great opportunity to learn a lot from him. He was a point guard, too. So I'm going to try to get as much information as I can from him to be a better player."

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One of the most exciting developments of the Suns' summer has been the acquisition of Eric Bledsoe from the Los Angeles Clippers. The dynamic 23 year old guard will star alongside Dragic in a two-headed monster of a starting back-court that some fans have dubbed "DragonBlade." [At the end of the 2012-13 season, Dragic proclaimed](#) that the team's most important need for the upcoming season was "another playmaker who can pass the ball, set up the offense along with him on the floor." Enter Bledsoe.

"He's a mini-Lebron James," Dragic said of Bledsoe. "He's got that big strength so when he's in the open court, he's unstoppable. Like a lot of fans know, I like to play fast basketball. When I get the ball to the other guy, he's going to run. We're going to score a lot of points."

Both Dragic and Bledsoe are fast, athletic, and dynamic guards that thrive in the open floor. Last season, [Dragic took 44% of his shot attempts in the first ten seconds of the shot clock](#) and shot .542 eFG% on those attempts, while [Bledsoe attempted 45% of his shots in the first ten seconds](#), shooting .506 eFG%. This essentially reveals that nearly half of both players' shot attempts in the 2012-13 season were in transition (or semi-transition), which is when the highest efficiency shots are taken. Moreover, both guys are ball-hawks and are quite adept at playing the passing lanes to create turnovers. [Among guards with at least 800 minutes played last season,](#) Bledsoe was third in the league in Steal Percentage, while Dragic was among the top 20.

Given Jeff Hornacek's stated desire to emphasize high percentage shot-selection and [the importance of scoring in the first eight seconds of the shot clock](#), it's easy to see why the Suns will be eager to push the pace with Goran Dragic and Eric Bledsoe leading the way.

When asked by Matt Petersen about his goals for the near future, Dragic said:

"Right now, my goal is to be healthy, to not have injuries in the European championship. When

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I'm done with that, [I'll] try to play as hard as possible and improve a lot of things. Personally, I'd like to upgrade from how we did last season to this season. I think we have a better team this year. I'm hoping we're going to fight for the playoffs."

Many might scoff at the notion of Dragic hoping to fight for the playoffs with the current iteration of the Phoenix Suns, but this is exactly what should be expected from a player of his attitude. Fans know how much winning means to Dragic - his fiery play and consistent effort on the court are perhaps his most endearing qualities. Until the Suns are statistically disqualified for the playoffs, you can bet Goran will continue to set that bar as his goal for the team. Never change, Gogi.

Let's hope Goran returns to Phoenix next month after a successful stint as the leader of the Slovenian basketball team. Furthermore, let's hope he begins to form a chemistry with his new back-court partner that can build on the excitement of potential.

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