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The NBA season is on the horizon as the [Phoenix Suns](#) will host their annual media day September 30th before heading up north for Training Camp. There are loads of new faces on the roster and throughout the organization that are going to start putting their fingerprints on the franchise going forward.

With the Suns there are more questions than answers making them more provocative than the generic lottery team and a fascinating case study going forward.

Break up the Bright Siders, we got some questions and some answers, and likely some shenanigans as we take a look at the outlook of the Suns as they head to camp.

Seventeenth Topic: Training Camp is right around the corner. Need I say more?

***1. Breaking the Ice: Last year the team delivered convincing lip-service that this was a playoff contender. What do you expect the message to be this year?***

Jim Coughenour: Although I'm sure it won't be something even remotely as fatuous, it is kind of nice, in a twisted sort of way, when they say things that turn out to be insanely idiotic (in retrospect). Even those of us who were gullible enough to buy last season's ketchup popsicle (to varying degrees - Jim sheepishly raises hand) still had the opportunity to chuckle at/deride the lack of front office foresight. We had plenty of discussions as to what they should have said, after all they can't just come out and say they're going to suck, right? Well, I think this year we'll get a much more diplomatic prediction along the lines of youth, development and improvement.

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Jacob Padilla: I think it's the same thing we've been getting since the regime change. They're going to talk about youth, development and up-tempo basketball, with little mention of tangible expectations or predictions.

Dave King: I am highly curious about the message I will hear next week. Dragic and Frye have both already said they expect to play to win as many games as possible. As Babby put it last year, how can you tell actual NBA basketball players you don't want them to win? That's puts a loser mindset on the entire organization. I expect to hear some conflicting messages. Kool-aid flows through players and front offices just as much as fans. The front office will be circumspect, while the coach and players will be optimistic. That's my guess.

Kris Habbas: I hate to answer a question with a question, but -- How much hurt could honesty bring? The fans are not ignorant to the fact that this is a rebuilding team and it is unwise to patronize fans in general, it could even be considered a slap to the proverbial face even. The message of a rebuilding team with an exciting new coach, athletic new players, and the promise of a promising future is enough to appease the fan base.

Richard Parker: All about the future. They might say something along the lines of the team wanting to compete for a playoff spot (which is understandable), but I don't think anyone's going to say this is a playoff team. They'll continue to emphasize focus towards the future.

## ***2. Should the team sell false hope or reality to the fans?***

JP: Selling false hope is the worst thing they can do right now and will only serve to poison the team's relationship with the fans. Focus on the positives, but be realistic. As I said in my first answer, all of the emphasis must be placed on the youth and development and the implementation of the new system. No need to address concrete team goals in terms of the number of wins or anything like that.

DK: No. Despite my earlier answer, I do expect the message from the front office to be very

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even-keeled and introspective. I expect to hear "we don't know what this team can do" immediately followed by "this is a transition year - don't expect much". This summer's moves have been made with a clear vision: sustainable future. Expect that to be sold by McDonough and Babby. Where we will hear the kool-aid is from players and coaches.

KH: The great thing about reality and hope with the Suns in specific is that they are one in the same. There is no sales required to let the fans know that the team is building through the draft, has an aggressive gameplan, and that they have the right people in place to make the decisions going forward. Hope, reality, or whatever it is called, the Suns have plenty of it to sell.

RP: Not at all. They should market hope, but only the kind that actually exists with this team, and that entails the team's future prospects.

JC: Reality. Especially after last season. I don't like being treated like an idiot and I'm sure that the vast majority of fans share that sentiment. It's one thing to not live up to expectations, but setting realistic goals is definitely the right approach for this season.

***3. Overall the roster is set at 17 players and have to trim some fat, who ends up being the fat?***

DK: The Suns have a month to figure this out, and I am sure they will. Either McD will make a massive trade to get a 2010-extendee who can't come to terms with his current team, or they will simply eat the contracts of Smith and Lee (for example). It's also possible they decide four centers is too many. I think Christmas stays, no matter what.

KH: It seems the team is obnoxiously deep at the "point guard" position with Goran Dragic, Eric Bledsoe, Kendall Marshall, Malcolm Lee, and Ish Smith. If there is fat to trim it is there. The future is in either Dragic or Bledsoe, but the team has already invested so much into Marshall that he should get top priority over the newcomers for a chance to prove he can be a part of the teams future. Either Lee, Smith, or both should be the casualties after camp is out.

RP: Malcolm Lee, Ish Smith, Viacheslav Kravtsov and to a lesser extent, Dionte Christmas are

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my picks. Expect two of these guys to be never suit up in one of those spiffy new Suns uniforms.

JC: It is going to be tough to decide between such a talented group of players, so I propose a steel cage death match... or we could run them through an obstacle course like MXC. No reason why we can't turn this into an entertaining venue instead of the banal pink slip process.

JP: This team has a lot of small guards. Goran Dragic, Eric Bledsoe, Shannon Brown, Gerald Green, Kendall Marshall and Archie Goodwin aren't going anywhere before opening day. However, Dionte Christmas, Ish Smith and Malcolm Lee are all on the bubble and still need to earn their spots in training camp and the preseason. The Suns also have a pair of bottom-of-the-roster bigs in Miles Plumlee and Slava Kravtsov. Kravtsov was actually better than Plumlee when looking at their numbers in limited minutes, but Plumlee was the highly drafted player. With a Marcin Gortat trade possibly on the horizon, the Sun may choose to keep both of them. But I wouldn't be surprised to see either one cut. Lee, Smith, Christmas, Kravtsov, Plumlee would be my list in order of likeliness to be cut.

#### ***4. Thoughts on the team bringing Training Camp back home to Flagstaff?***

KH: Less distractions, closer to home for the fans, and a call-back to yesteryear for the team as they try to initiate a nostalgia plan while building a better basketball team. Cannot be mad about that.

RP: Like Jacob, it doesn't mean too much to me. I guess I can be happy about the team embracing its history, though.

JC: Good for the players. Phoenix is still running over 100 degrees and most of these guys enjoy cooler climates during the offseason. If it was me I'd rather be there. I don't think fans here in Phoenix would be clamoring to get into canned food for admission practices anyway (are you?) so it seems like a winner.

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JP: Cool? Doesn't really affect me in any way. I don't even know where Flagstaff is, other than a LONG way away from me.

DK: Love it, love it, love it. It just doesn't work out to head up the hill for the open scrimmage, unfortunately, but I loved it when the Suns took over Flagstaff for a week each year when I lived there. Those guys will love it too.

***5. Since the team went into Training Camp with 23 players in 2012 and left with 15 to start the season; Should they carry a full 15 this year or a smaller roster?***

RP: It really won't make a difference, to be honest. I guess the team SHOULD carry 15 players so they can maybe find a keeper among those end-of-the-bench guys.

JC: Might as well carry as many as they can. McMiracle has already displayed a penchant for wheeling and dealing, and even if these guys never see meaningful minutes they can still be useful commodities in some sense. Injuries and other situations can also change the landscape in terms of playing time.

JP: Sure. If the 15th man needs to be cut to make a deal happen later on, so bet it. But the more the merrier right now. The young bigs and guards at the bottom of the bench will be good practice bodies and give McDonough enough "depth" to trade away a contributor if a good opportunity arises.

DK: Sure. The Suns still have a ton of cap room. They have to pay 17 contracts regardless, so why not put 15 of them into uniforms?

KH: If there are 15 talented, NBA level players with potential, then you carry a full 15 players into the season. Hording talent is something every team should be trying to do every season. Last year Luke Zeller didn't make it that far into the season even after being dubbed one of the "best shooters in the world" from the management team. Maybe this management group can just find an NBA player coming out of camp.

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***BONUS: What do you want to see the team add in camp this year?***

JC: More cowbell. The sooner they can get rid of Gortat the better, but I think the fact that he's still on the team is fairly indicative of the market (welp). They've added plenty. I'm ready to see how this conglomeration takes forever to come together melds through training camp and in the early season. October 1st here we come. Basketball.

JP: I just want the team to get on the same page on both ends of the court. That was a big problem last year, an one that comes down to coaching and effort by the players. I'd like to see everyone buy in and do their jobs and start to develop some chemistry.

DK: I identity that everyone can follow. I am tired of seeing the team come out of training camp and preseason without an identity. They need to "this" team or "that" team, not some amalgamation of several styles.

KH: Shooting. Period. This team has the potential to be historically bad from behind the arc if they do not find some shooters this summer or find improvement with the cast they have. Whether that is a young player or a veteran, this team needs some reputable shooters more than anything else to avoid historical pitfalls this year. Is there a third Morris Twin we do not know about?

RP: Andrew Wiggins. Kidnap him, take him to training camp, get him to stay, and somehow fool the rest of the world into thinking he's Gerald Green.