

Written by

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[Goran Dragic](#) has had a tough season, physically, so far. After being an iron man last year, and for nearly his entire career, Dragic has played healthy in only two of the Suns last six games.

He injured his left ankle in a preseason game against [Sacramento Kings](#) , missed the next preseason game, returned for two healthy games (the last preseason and regular season opener), then left Friday's game with a head injury and Sunday's game after re-injuring the left ankle.

"It felt worse this time," Dragic [said to Paul Coro of azcentral.com](#) .

Dragic said he had not experienced issues with the left ankle since returning from the previous sprain.

"It's frustrating, but I have to be strong," Dragic said. "Maybe it's because I played the whole summer (for Slovenia's national team), but I feel good. Maybe I just don't have luck. I'll be strong, work on this and come back stronger."

After a day of rest since the ankle roll on Sunday against Oklahoma City, the team decided that Dragic needed the rest of the road trip to recover, at the least.

"I'm guessing he probably won't go these couple of games," Suns coach [Jeff Hornacek said to Coro today](#) of the road trip's final stops against New Orleans on Tuesday night and San Antonio on Wednesday night.

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The Suns return home on Friday to face the [Denver Nuggets](#) , hopefully with Dragic in the lineup. Then again, it would be better just to make sure he's completely healthy and strong again before taking any more chances. Once an ankle is turned, it remains weak and prone to re-spraining for a long time.

Len mending too

Speaking of ankles, [Alex Len](#) is still nursing the one that was repaired last spring. He had months of immobility before suddenly starting heavy rehab, and the ankle will be a come-and-go problem for a while. After the opening game last week, the surgery done on Len's left ankle was still evident with heavy purple coloring from scarring and irritation.

"Sometimes it hurts to walk," Len told me last week after his first regular season NBA game. "And then some days it feels great to jump and bounce and stuff like that. It's going to go away eventually, so you just got to push through it."

Now, Len missed Sunday's game against OKC and may miss more time this week on the road. The Suns are being cautious - they'd rather than 10 years of health in the future than 20+ minutes a night right now. It's a long term plan they knew they were getting in to.

"He's always going to be day-to-day," Hornacek said to Coro of Len. "This is what we anticipated would probably happen all year."

Ford eats a bit of crow

ESPN's Chad Ford has not been a friend of the Suns over the years. Once, back in 2009, he said "word out of Phoenix" was that Amare was a locker room cancer. After Stoudemire called him a liar, he later called in to the local radio show to say it was "someone from another team". Sure, Chad. Someone "in Phoenix" but with "another team". The Sun Devils, then?

I also remember as late as March 2010, when the Suns were still in 8th or 9th position in the West, right in the middle of the 28-7 run to third that didn't crystallize until the final night of the season, Ford picked the Suns to be the team to miss the playoffs entirely. Ford has also regularly ranked the Suns in the bottom five of Future Rankings for the past five years, despite

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the Suns being good or, at worst, middle of the pack, every year but 2013-14.

Anyhoo, I digress.

Here's Ford [last week in his wonderful new weekly series called Tank Rank](#) .

1. [Phoenix Suns](#) | Status: Tanking

...blah blah blah, rabble rabble...

Factor in that the Suns are playing in the brutal Western Conference and it's hard to see them winning a game in the West this season.

Days later, the Suns started the season 2-0 with wins against, gasp!, Western Conference teams.

Now, here's Chad [in today's NBA chat](#) in which an intuitive and mildly interesting NBA fan asks Chad a follow-up question to his rankings. (I am guessing he added the addendum in parenthesis in order to entice Chad into answering, as opposed to many other questions he's posed to Ford in the past that went ignored. At least, that's my assumption anyway):

Dave (Phoenix): Hey Chad, what happened to the Suns not being able to win a game in the West? Have you watched any of their games yet, and has your take on them changed at all? (this coming from a guy who thought you were close to right on, and is worried the Suns will lose out on the best 2014 talent now)

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Chad Ford (1:06 PM): Yes, I said before the season I **wasn't sure** the Suns could win a game in the West and they go out and win their first two against Western opponents (Blazers and [Jazz](#)

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[Eric Bledsoe](#)

has been great and in those first two games,

[Miles Plumlee](#)

played out of his mind posting back-to-back double doubles and a 24 PER. To put that into perspective ... Plumlee only had 3 double-doubles in his last two seasons at Duke. Of the two (between Phoenix and Philly) I think the Suns are more likely to come back down to Earth on their own.

And then after the chat, he [updated his Tank Rank column](#) , placing the [Celtics](#) and Jazz ahead of the Suns in the race for the #1 overall pick:

3. Phoenix Suns | Status: Tanking | Record: 2-1

Conventional wisdom from Tank Rank last week: "It's hard to see [the Suns] winning a game in the West this year." To which the Suns responded by beating both the Blazers and Jazz to start the season. In those two games, center Miles Plumlee played out of his mind, putting up back-to-back double-doubles. To put that into perspective, Plumlee put up just three double-doubles in his last two seasons at Duke. Plumlee was sporting a 24 PER before regressing to the mean (0 points, 5 rebounds) in a loss against the [Thunder](#) on Sunday.

Expect the rest of the team to follow Plumlee's lead eventually. However, with games against a struggling [Pelicans](#)

[ns](#)

team and an even shakier Nuggets team coming up this week, they may yet put another win or two in the books.

(Last week: 3)

Conventional wisdom, huh? So, it's conventional wisdom to predict the likelihood that an NBA

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team can possibly go 0-52 against the teams in its own conference, no matter how bad you might think they are? It's "conventional wisdom" to say something so stupid that it's obvious you made a childish accusation in order to get back at some unknown monster who made you scared and defensive one day?

So, he's modified his "conventional wisdom" from 0-52 against the West to potentially 3-2 in the span of 7 wisdom-consuming calendar days. Good to know, Chad. Schanks, pal.

Meanwhile, back in Sunsland

After suffering through three consecutive years of declining play from a swiss cheese roster full of gaping holes in their basketball playing hero's games, it seems that Bright Siders, at least, cannot shake the habit of pick-pick-picking even the smallest scabs of Suns players not named Goran Dragic or Miles Plumlee.

After three seasons of averaging no more than 20 minutes a night, and producing per-36-minute numbers of 15, 5, and 4 with 1.5 steals per game, new guard Eric Bledsoe has delivered a whopping 22 points, 8.7 assists, 6 rebounds and 2 steals *per game* in his first three real NBA games as a Phoenix Sun.

On top of that, his team - which was predicted to lose at least 75% of its games by any number of national outlets (and local bloggers named Jim) - has gone 2-1 with a top-5 defense. Bledsoe himself even made a ballsy game winner, the likes of which Suns fans haven't seen in years.

Yes, Bledsoe has warts. He floats on defense, can't make jumpers consistently and doesn't run the team like the last team MVP did. And possibly worst of all, to some at least, he doesn't smile big into the camera and try to make friends with us through the TV.

But while the Suns are winning, and while Bledsoe is the head of the snake that's surprising the league by emulating his talents (hustle, athleticism, highlight reel plays), let's enjoy it while it lasts. He's pretty darn good and, at just short of 24, he's still improving.

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More from Bright Side Of The Sun:

- [Center of the Sun: Basketball is back, the Phoenix Suns are winning, and the first week of the season was the most exciting in years \(Plus Staff Predictions\)](#)
- [Phoenix Suns fall in Oklahoma City, 103-95; Thunder's superstar duo too much](#)
- [Phoenix Suns at Oklahoma City Thunder Preview: Suns look to stay unbeaten](#)
- [The Great Philly Debate Part Two: How is the Michael Carter-Williams Era being embraced and some differing opinions on P.J. Tucker](#)
- [Phoenix Suns Capology Update: Lots of recent activity still adds up to lots of cap space](#)