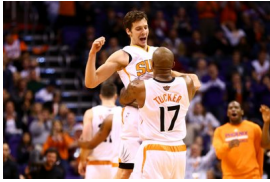


To Phoenix Suns Goran Dragic, career high scoring "doesn't matter" - it's all about winning

Written by

Sunday, 15 December 2013 09:20 -



Phoenix Suns guard Goran Dragic has not tasted the NBA playoffs since 2010, but he's developed his game and now leads a winning team while flirting with career high scoring nearly every game.

[Phoenix Suns](#) guard [Goran Dragic](#), one half of the "Slash Brothers" back court along with [Eric Bledsoe](#), also known around these parts as DragonBlade, has flirted with his NBA career high several times this season but never exceeded it.

Back in 2010, as the backup point guard to [Steve Nash](#) on the Suns, Dragic went off for 32 points in a January game against the [Utah Jazz](#), making 6 of 7 three pointers along the way. In the playoffs, he poured in 26 against the [Spurs](#) in what is still the most celebrated game of his career.

Over the next three seasons, he only exceeded 26 points twice - both last year - and tied his career high (32) once against tonight's opponent, Golden State, last April.

Last season, his first as a full starter with the ball in his hands on every play, Dragic reached his career high in scoring at 14.7 points per game. He was very consistent, with 50 of his 77 games resulting in 10-19 points and an even distribution of under-10 and over-20 games.

But this year is different. This year, with Eric Bledsoe taking some of the attention on offense and running point half the time, Dragic has approached games with a different mindset.

He's become a real scoring threat, pouring in a career high 19 points per game in his first 19

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games. Before Christmas, he's already had more games (4) over 26 points than he had all of last season (2) in 77 games.

"If I'm going to be open, I have to take the shot," Dragic said after scoring 29 against the [Kings](#) on Friday night, including dropping 4 of 5 wide open three point attempts.

Dragic has grown from low-minutes backup point guard to fulltime scorer (19.0) and distributor (6.2) in a span of 2.5 seasons. But is Goran Dragic suddenly becoming a selfish player, thinking only of his own shots at the expense of the team?

No.

Four times in the past three weeks, Dragic has flirted with exceeding his career high in scoring (32) but come up just short. In at least two of those games, Dragic entered the fourth quarter within easy striking distance of that career high, but barely took a shot as he led the team to victory.

Friday night was a case in point. Dragic entered the fourth with 29 points, but didn't score again as the Suns won handily against the Kings.

"I don't care," he said about the career high. "We were winning. Miles [Plumlee] was going, Gerald [Green] was going, E [Eric Bledsoe] was going, everybody was going. So it's fine. The most important thing is winning."

After experiencing his best individual season last year amid a terrible environment and the most losing he's seen in the NBA (25-57 record), Dragic knows what's important.

Dragic took only one shot all quarter - a wide open three that went halfway down before spinning out - as the Suns stretched the lead and took control of the game behind four massive dunks by Plumlee and several pretty shots and passes from Eric Bledsoe.

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While he's scoring nearly 5 points per game better than his career high, Dragic is also assisting at the second-highest rate of his career as well, collecting 6.2 assists per game.

"If somebody else is in a better position to shoot the ball, I'll pass it to them," he said with a shrug. "It doesn't matter [about scoring]."

Dragic and his back court mate Eric Bledsoe share nearly identical stat lines this season, scoring and assisting at a high rate each game, lately earning the nickname "The Slash Brothers".

	FG %	3P %	2P %	FT %	TRB	AST	STL	BLK	PTS
Goran Dragic	49.4%	34.8%	54.9%	79.8%	3.1	6.2	1.0	0.3	19.0
Eric Bledsoe	49.2%	34.0%	54.7%	80.2%	4.1	6.3	1.7	0.3	19.2

The offense clearly runs through these two. No one else on the team scores even 13 points per game, or creates more than 2 assists.

But just like Dragic, Eric Bledsoe cares nothing for individual statistics. Bledsoe did reach a new career high in scoring on Friday night, with 28 points against Sacramento.

"At the end of the day, I don't care about career highs or assists," Bledsoe said. "Whatever it takes to win the game, that's what I'm going to do. I just try to play off them."

When asked later who's block of [DeMarcus Cousins](#) was better between his and Miles Plumlee's, both of which spurred the crowd into raucous cheering, Bledsoe did not hesitate with his answer.

"Definitely Miles," he said. "Mine went out of bounds. His led to a transition bucket."

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Whether you want to call them DragonBlade or Slash Brothers, the Suns trot out one of the best back courts in the NBA this season and all they want to do is win games. Career highs just come along the way.