

A Phoenix Suns and Indiana Pacers Trade Retrospective: Both teams came out ahead, but the Suns win b

Written by

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We examine how the Suns and Pacers trade from this past offseason has worked out for both teams.

There is an awkward reunion tomorrow at US Airways Center when the [Phoenix Suns](#) and [Indiana Pacers](#) meet for the first of two times this season.

For a full understanding of how a trade between these two teams went down you have to go all the way back to the summer of 2012.

In an attempt to reshape the Suns roster then general manager Lance Blanks claimed [Rockets](#) forward [Luis Scola](#) off amnesty waivers. They got him on a three-year deal in the \$12 million range and the final season of the contract wasn't guaranteed. Word at the time was that the Suns strategically offered just a bit more than any other probably bidder was able to offer, in order to secure his services.

We all know how 2012-2013 season went for the Suns and obviously Scola, who at this point in his career was nothing more than an average player, no longer fit their plans.

Enter the Pacers, a team that was one game away from the [NBA Finals](#) . Indiana's roster was built around a stellar starting five featuring [Roy Hibbert](#),
,
[David West](#),
,
[Paul George](#),
,

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[Lance Stephenson](#)

and George Hill. Arguably the best starting group in the NBA, but man was the bench a mess. The reserves were the main reason the team only won 49 regular season games.

[Gerald Green](#) was brought in last offseason to give the Pacers bench unit some pop coming off a solid season with a bad [Nets](#) team. But Green was buried on the Pacer depth chart behind high-minute players Paul George (37.6) and Lance Stephenson (29.2). Green only played 18.0 minutes per game, never finding his stroke, shooting 36% overall and only 31% on threes.

[Miles Plumlee](#) was drafted with 26th pick during the first round of the 2012 Draft. Plumlee only played in 14 games for 55 minutes total his rookie year. Plumlee was third on the depth chart at center, behind Roy Hibbert and [Ian Mahinmi](#) .

Current Suns general manager Ryan McDonough saw an opportunity to buy low on two players and it has worked out better than I imagine he expected. This is before even mentioning Phoenix will get Indiana's first round pick in the upcoming draft (it's only 1-14 protected).

The completed deal looked like this:

- Suns acquire 25-year-old Miles Plumlee under team control until on a rookie deal through 2015/2016, Gerald Green' remaining two contract years (\$3.5 million per season) and a first round pick.
- Pacers acquire 33-year-old Luis Scola.

How McDonough got the Pacers to include a first round pick for a player he most likely would have released at the end this season I have no idea. Based on how NBA trades work it's not

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crazy to think the Suns should have been the team including a first round pick even without knowing Plumlee would exceed the wildest expectations.

Plumlee has produced nearly 10 points and 9 rebounds a game, while ranking in the top 10 in blocked shots per game (1.65) and top 15 in defending the rim (allowing just 47% FG on 10 attempts this year).

In addition to how Plumlee has performed, Green has at least been close to the version he was with Brooklyn in 11-12. His 43% FG/37% 3P FG aren't matching the 48% FG/39% 3P FG from that season, but with the increased volume in his three point attempts, a career high 8.4 per 36 minutes, his true shooting % is only .08% lower.

The importance of Plumlee is multi-faceted. His play on both sides of the ball have been huge to the Suns success this season, but he's also allowed them to bring along fifth overall pick, 20 year old [Alex Len](#) slowly. Coach Hornacek recently said that without Plumlee the team would be under .500, and McDonough and Babby have both said that Plumlee's work in August and September with assistant coaches Mark West and Kenny Gattison gave them the confidence to trade incumbent center [Marcin Gortat](#) for ANOTHER first round pick.

Len is five years younger than Plumlee and has more long range potential despite the former Blue Devils' excellent play this season. As their 2013 top pick becomes ready to take on more responsibility in the future, Plumlee could be a piece to include in a trade for a more valuable commodity. Or, Plumlee could be Len's insurance policy at least until his rookie deal expires (2 more years after this one).

From a Pacers perspective, Scola has brought exactly what they expected. The drop off when they go to him from David West no longer crumbles their second unit. It's not only Scola, but also the addition of [C.J. Watson](#) and return of [Danny Granger](#) has made them a better-balanced team.

In retrospect, Indiana probably could have acquired a better piece than Scola for the three assets they gave up. In the end their offseason, while not perfect, has been good enough to help them become the best team in the NBA and arguably the favorite to win the NBA Title. Hard to complain about much when that's the place you've put yourself.

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