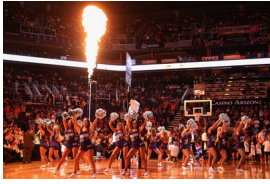


NBA Phoenix Suns Trade Rumors: A lot of speculation, very little substance

Written by
Thursday, 13 February 2014 09:05 -



A lot of names are being linked to the Phoenix Suns over the past couple of weeks, and even more will come out soon. But you have to look past the name to get to the real value of any deal.

Every team in the NBA wants to foist their overpaid, underperforming and/or inefficient player on the [Phoenix Suns](#) in exchange for instant money savings, future cap relief and draft picks. Makes a ton of sense for those teams.

But does it make sense for the Suns?

No.

Macallan Signatory Vintage

[Josh Smith](#) (\$54 million through 2017). [Carmelo Anthony](#) (\$44.7 million through 2015). [Rudy Gay](#) (\$37.2 million through 2015).
[Zach Randolph](#) (\$35.1 million through 2015).
[Thaddeus Young](#) (\$28 million through 2016).
[Jeff Green](#) (\$27.1 million through 2016).
[Omer Asik](#) (\$16 million through 2015).

These guys are all heavy on the wallet and there's better out there for less money.

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All of those players could likely be had for [Emeka Okafor](#) (\$14.5 million, expiring, 80% paid by insurance), cash and a one or more of 6 first round draft picks in the next two years.

On the surface, it sounds good. The Suns could add a player for the playoff run this season without giving up any current talent.

Yet, the Suns would be tying up their salary cap for the next 1-3 years AND giving up a young player(s) in the 2014 or 2015 draft for the privilege.

And, that would make it much harder to sign any younger players ready to break out, or to acquire big-name players like [Kevin Love](#) .

Jim Beam

[Carlos Boozer](#) (\$32.1 million through 2015). [Gerald Wallace](#) (\$30.3 million through 2016). [Kendrick Perkins](#) (\$18 million through 2015).

Costs more than you'd think, but the taste is a dime a dozen.

These guys could be had for "just" Okafor's expiring, 80%-covered contract, but still you're tying up next year's cap to get them.

There is a reason these folks are on the trade block. They don't do enough for their current team to justify keeping them. Ryan McDonough went on record last summer saying the Suns were looking for keepers. These guys are not keepers.

Just the other day, Lon Babby said, "We are all in agreement in the principle of: 'Don't be blinded by instant gratification.'"

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Cross all of these guys off your list unless they are part of a bigger trade that gets the Suns a long-term piece to their puzzle. A star. If Kevin Love is walking through that door, sure it's worth adding a bad contract to get him as long as you're not gutting the team of Dragic or Bledsoe.

Seagrams 7

[Pau Gasol](#) (\$19 million, expiring). [Ben Gordon](#) (\$13.2 million, expiring). [Richard Jefferson](#) (\$11 million, expiring).

[Luol Deng](#) (\$14.2 million, expiring).

[Anderson Varejao](#) (\$9 million, with 2014-15 non-guaranteed).

Not as heavy as the others, and they won't weight you down in future years. But the taste is a little bitter anyway.

Now you're getting into players who won't hurt the cap in future years, so it's okay if they are not keepers. Once June hits, their impact on the team could easily be over.

Deng or Varejao would clearly upgrade the team this season, helping a playoff run and possibly cementing their value for future seasons.

But Deng or Varejao would require a draft pick or two in return. Is it worth giving up future picks if these guys don't stay past this season? And if they did stay, is it worth giving up future cap space AND picks to get them now?

That's why you might hear about players like Gasol, Gordon and Jefferson "on the Suns radar" in the coming days. None would (likely) require draft compensation to acquire, all would easily fit into the Okafor/cap space equation and all are clear NBA players who could help a playoff run at least marginally.

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But are those guys true upgrades?

Does Gasol provide a higher win potential than [Channing Frye](#) and/or [Markieff Morris](#) ? Or Miles Plumlee and [Alex Len](#) ? Maybe, but no guarantee.

Does Jefferson provide a higher win potential than [P.J. Tucker](#) or [Marcus Morris](#) ? Probably not.

Does Gordon provide a higher win potential than one of [Ish Smith](#) or [Leandro Barbosa](#) ? Not likely.

Ryan McDonough said the other day he won't make a trade just to make one. He won't dump the salary savings of Okafor in exchange for someone else's full salary just for the sake of the transaction.

Crown Royal

(yes, that's a shameless product plug)

The Suns are most likely holding out for something better. They want to make the playoffs this year - why not? - but they don't want to impact the overall upward trajectory of the team. Assets are only assets if you use them right.

It's okay to eat into future cap space and give up youth if you're acquiring talent that is clearly better than anyone at that position on your team and can stay for a few years.

Lon Babby tells me that the Suns would love to enhance the current roster AS LONG AS it doesn't hinder their future flexibility. If the transaction acquires the star, or further sets the stage to acquire a star, then go for it.

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But if all the transaction does is marginally improve the current team while hurting the future, then there's no way that deal gets done.

Wait for Kevin Love, or someone of that caliber.

Short of that, don't do anything to hurt your position in July.



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