

## Center of the Sun: After the shame that is All-Star Weekend it is time to get back to real basketball again

Written by

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Recapping the week (weekend) that was, reviewing the news & notes, taking a look at Suns history, updating the 2014 NBA Draft Watch, and previewing the week ahead... Welcome to the Center of the Sun.

The past week for the [Phoenix Suns](#) (30-21) consisted of silly contests, disappointment, and a lot of rest for the surprise team of the 2013-2014 NBA season. With All-Star Weekend taking over the NBA schedule the team sent a representative to the now even more gimmicky Skills Challenge and another to the Rising Stars Game where he rode the pine like he was in Indiana all over again...

### All-Star Weekend Recap

[Skills Challenge](#)

[Rising Stars Game](#)

What was that thing that [Goran Dragic](#) was in? I think they called it the Skills Challenge, but if my memory serves me correctly the Skills Challenge used to look a lot different. Like, an individual contest where guards showed their skills?

Right?

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This year it was some 2-on-2 drill that I didn't even understand, same with the new 3-on-3 Dunk Contest format. Trying new things could result in a net positive, or the thud of a day that Saturday became. There was little drama, no spectacle, and they took away the one thing that All-Star Saturday Night was all about -- allowing a star to rise. That was what it was about to me at least from [Vince Carter](#) at the Dunk Contest to [Peja Stojakovic](#) in the Three-Point Shootout. Stars were able to shine and come out of nowhere.

In the Skills Challenge someone like Goran Dragic or [Reggie Jackson](#) could have stood out against their more noteworthy peers, instead they were relay partners.

The weekend itself is a gimmick so turning an entertaining gimmick into a gimmicky gimmick is like the XFL. We already have football, but let's goof it up a bit for no reason. Hey, we already have an All-Star Weekend that is fairly entertaining, why not gimmick the you know what out of it? No thanks, back to real basketball please.

## **Key Stat**

20+ PPG 6+ APG 50+ FG%

How special of a season is Goran Dragic having so far?

Only LeBron James and Kevin Durant are more efficient offensive producers for their respective teams. No big deal, right? There are only three players in the NBA that are in the Top 20 in points and assists per game while shooting over 50% from the field, two are MVP candidates, and the other wasn't even an All-Star. If Goran keeps this up he will be the first 20+ point scorer in four years and the first player since [Stephon Marbury](#) to average at least 20+ points and 6+ assists in a season for the Suns. Marbury never shot higher than 46.1% in a season...

No, Goran is not leading the league in scoring, assists, or shooting percentages, but he is doing all three at a very high rate, which is very rare.

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## 2014 [NBA Draft](#) Update

Surrogate Watch continues and the Suns have three first round picks with the current projections, none of which are in the lottery. A slight change of pace from pre-season projections. Here is the update on how the three picks look right now:

[Minnesota Timberwolves](#) (25-26) -- No. 13 Overall (Pick stays in Minnesota based on Protections) -- Wayne Selden, Freshman Guard, Kansas

[Washington Wizards](#) (25-27) -- No. 18 Overall (Pick goes to Phoenix based on Protections) -- Chris Walker, Freshman Forward, Florida -- Although he has only played a few games this season Walker is still a very valuable long-term prospect. He has the athletic gifts of a Young Kevin Garnett and he is still developing his game.

Phoenix Suns (30-21) -- No. 22 Overall (Pick stays in Phoenix based on Protections) -- Zach LaVine, Freshman Guard, UCLA -- Hyper athletic combo guard that has experience as a one, but has grown into more of a two. Either way he fits the mold as a McDonough Quality Athlete and can knock down the NBA three.

[Indiana Pacers](#) (40-12) -- No. 29 Overall (Pick goes to Phoenix based on Protections) -- Jabari Bird, Freshman Wing, California -- Keeping it in the PAC12 with Bird who is a better two-way athlete than LaVine with the size to play both wing positions. The new regime is all about versatility and athleticism.

Keep [following along here](#) to get updates and information on the 2014 NBA Draft Class and more.

## News & Notes

It has been five weeks and three days since [Eric Bledsoe](#) 's injury/surgery, but he is rehabbing

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well in the training room and getting closer to a return.

## **Suns History Lesson**

This week in Suns History: February 19th -- Charles Barkley grabbed his 10,000 rebound making him the 10th player ever with 20,000 points and 10,000 rebounds

### **Previewing the Week Ahead:**

Tuesday, February 18th @ [Denver Nuggets](#) (24-27)

Wednesday, February 19th vs. [Boston Celtics](#) (19-35)

Friday, February 21st vs. [San Antonio Spurs](#) (38-15)

Sunday, February 23rd vs. [Houston Rockets](#) (36-17)

A quality start to the second half of the season for the the Suns with a little bit of everything on the menu. The Nuggets are not contenders this year under first year head coach [Brian Shaw](#) and find themselves in a very similar position as the Suns the past few years. Biggest difference -- they traded their pick so tanking is meaningless. Basically this season has been meaningless, but Goran needs to watch his ankles because the first two meetings this season (one in pre-season) he went down with injury.

At one point the Celtics were giving away wins at an alarming clip (lost 16 out of 18 games) before getting into a groove before the All-Star break going 4-2 overall. They are lottery bound and still close to gaining a Top 5 pick.

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So far this season the Suns are 1-3 against the Texas Duo of the Spurs and Rockets. After winning the first round against the Rockets they were run out of the gym in a high scoring blowout the next time the teams met up. With both teams trying to play a faster pace and run the ball these games have the potential of being entertaining, but without a [James Harden](#) type closer the Suns are vulnerable against the Rockets. It always seems like when the world talks about the Suns and Spurs it is similar to the younger brother and the older brother. One has youth and excitement while the other has experience and equity. Each game this year has been played close, competitive even, with the Spurs besting their Western Conference Little Brother.

Getting a solid 2-2 start after the All-Star Break would allow the Suns to stay above water. So, why not strive for 3-1? That is my call, 3-1 week to start the second half of the season... Thoughts?