

Written by
Wednesday, 30 April 2014 06:00 -



It's sure to be the best of all the report cards. Don't act like you aren't going to read it.

From the maker of ' [The Legend of Ish Smith's Three Point Shooting](#) ', a piece of writing the critics called

"a waste of time"

and having

"no purpose/point"

while also being

"a bit disingenuous"

comes the heartwarming story of 4 Suns basketball players nobody else on the writing staff wanted to commit to writing about.

Sure they don't have the overwhelming talents of Goran Dragic or Eric Bledsoe nor the upside of Alex Len or Archie Goodwin but they were Phoenix Suns just the same. This is the story of

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the 2nd best Ukrainian center on the roster, the 30 year-old part-time player, the Seven Seconds or Less relic, and the always happy hypeman.

This is about those guys. The other guys.

In the event you still don't know who or what I'm talking about (because, density) - this is the report card for Slava Kravtsov, Shavlik Randolph, Leandro Barbosa, and Dionte Christmas.

None of those 4 players were on the Suns during the 2012-13 season and it's entirely possible none of them will be on the Suns in the 2014-15 season. Combined they played just 85 games last year which is just three more than Channing Frye.

Here's your due - other guys.

Slava Kravtsov

How He Became a Sun:

Slava was acquired by the Suns along with Ish Smith in a deal that sent Suns uniform model Caron Butler to Milwaukee. I had sincerely never heard of the Ukrainian center before that trade occurred. He'd played 25 games for the Pistons the season before and was included by them in a summer trade that got Brandon Jennings to Detroit. 4 weeks after that he was dealt to the Suns - a moment that changed all of our lives forever.

2013-14 Performance:

Um - do you just want me to analyze every single minute he played? I mean that's a thing we probably have time for, but since that sounds exhausting for me and pointless for most I'll spare us.

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Here were his pertinent statistical contributions:

- 20 games, 59 minutes
- 20 points, 17 rebounds (9 of which were offensive).
- 8/15 from the field (53.3%)
- 4/8 from the free throw line. This 50% was a vast improvement from his 29.7% on 37 attempts with Detroit.

Kravtsov managed to play more than 5 minutes in a game just once when he played a whopping 9 and a half minutes in the Suns 29 point defeat at the hands of the Warriors. He also produced 25% of his scoring output in that game and recorded 3 rebounds.

Slava was 2nd in the NBA in offensive rebounds per 36 minutes for any player who participated in more than 15 games. This proves once and for all that per 36 numbers are hilarious to manipulate.

To sum this up more quickly, Slava Kravtsov warmed the bench for a while until the Suns organization thought they needed someone who could actually play in games when needed. The arrival of Shavlik Randolph on March 2nd marked the end of the Slava era.

My Top 3 Slava Moments:

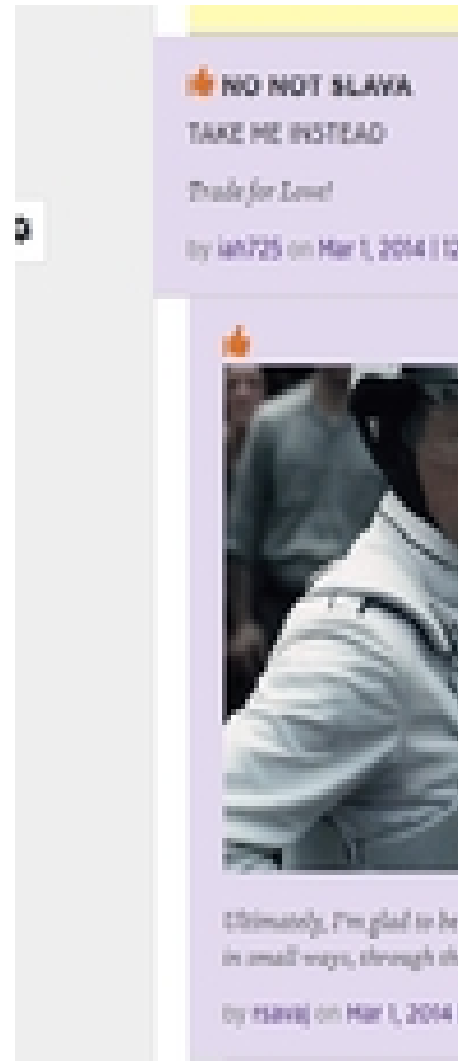
(1) **Jacob Padilla REALLY not liking how I kept misspelling his name in the thread for the BSotS Season Preview Google Hangout** - just flip through [this bad boy](#) for a fun read.

(2) **Slava Owing the Knicks:**

6 seconds of playing time I'll remember forever. I briefly thought about making this 2 and a half minute video the entire post.

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(3) **iah725 and rsavaj combine for an [epic Bright Side moment](#) :**



The Future:

Since he got waived by the Suns in March and wasn't particularly good in the first place I'm having a very hard time imagining a scenario where he plays for Phoenix again.

I suppose in theory he could surface with another team in the NBA, as he's just 26, but I'm admittedly not terribly optimistic.

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Grade: He was a 12th man that played 59 total minutes on the season. The expectations were non-existent and he did very little to remind us that he existed. So I don't know, C. Yeah, C. *(As a side note I really thought we had more Arrested Development fans on this site. In the Ish Smith report card I gave him a grade of "Crocodile" which I thought at least a few of you would catch as Maeby Funke's spelling grade at her old alternative school. For shame.)*

Shavlik Randolph

How He Became a Sun:

Randolph finished playing a season in China for the Foshan Long Lions and was picked up by the Suns on March 2nd for the stretch run.

The former Duke big had spent parts of 6 seasons in the NBA for Philadelphia, Portland, Miami, and the Celtics before joining the Suns. As with most Ryan McDonough moves this basically came out of nowhere, further driving home the point that rosterbaiting is as pointless as my writing.

2013-14 Performance:

Unlike Slava, Shavlik Randolph had a few moments to remember that weren't related to hilarious things I remember on Bright Side comment threads.

Statistically he played just 95 minutes in his 14 games and scored only 20 points and had 25 rebounds but he had a few games where he actually provided a stabilizing force as a big man. On 4 different occasions Randolph played over 10 minutes in a game and only once was it because the game didn't matter - that being the season finale against the Kings.

My Top 3 Shavlik Moments:

(1) **Debut** - In his debut against the Hawks, Randolph immediately played 10 minutes in the Suns home win. This general period was a trying time for Miles Plumlee, so it helped to get decent minutes from a reliable big.

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(2) **Blazer Rally** - In a late season game remembered more for Gerald Green throwing an alleyoop to himself, Shavlik provided 12 minutes and 41 seconds of sweetness against the Blazers. Randolph entered the game with 4:43 remaining in the 3rd quarter and the Suns trailing 72-66, when he left 8 minutes and 43 seconds later, the Suns were ahead 92-85. Sarcastically that was all him - not sarcastically he made a difference.

(3) **Obligatory Third Moment** - In a few key minutes against the Clippers, Shavlik recorded his season high of 9 points and oversaw the Suns cutting the Clippers 4th

quarter deficit from 15 to 5 before he left the game. This was the one where the Suns blew a 12 point third quarter lead and Matt Barnes scored 10,000 points.

The Future:

The Suns have a team option on Randolph for 2014-15 but given his veteran status I'd be pretty surprised if the Suns brought back a big man who's going to be 31 during the 1st month of next season.

Grade: He was basically a street free agent the Suns picked up and he provided useful minutes a few times. I'll give him a C+.

Leandro Barbosa

How He Became a Sun:

The day before it was announced that Eric Bledsoe would be out indefinitely, the Suns signed Leandro Barbosa to a 10-day contract. Barbosa had torn his ACL playing for the Celtics the previous season but had rehabbed very quickly and was playing in Brazil at the time the Suns signed him.

Anybody who's been a Suns fan for any decent period of time remembers that the Suns acquired Barbosa in a 2003 draft day trade and he later spent 7 seasons with the team during the heart of the Seven Seconds or Less era. Barbosa was the NBA's Sixth Man of the Year in

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the 2006-2007 season, could score points in bunches, and was a fan favorite.

After leaving Phoenix in a trade with Toronto that brought the Suns another fan favorite in Hedo Turkoglu, Barbosa played most of 2 seasons for the Raptors before being dealt to Indiana. A short stop Indiana led to another short stop in Boston where he apparently made an impression on Ryan McDonough.

2013-14 Performance:

Uneven probably sums it up nicely. ACL injury or not Barbosa clearly had retained his trademark speed and ability to get to the basket. However the shooting stroke that led him to hit nearly 40% of his 1,781 three point attempts in his first stint as a Phoenix Sun seemed to abandon him in the second stint.

In his 20 games with the Suns - Barbosa averaged 7.5 points per game on 42.7% FG and 28% 3P while playing 18.4 minutes per game. He's Leandro Barbosa so I'm pretty sure you all know his assist numbers are irrelevant - frankly I'm surprised he had any.

When healthy, the Brazilian Blur was a regular member of the rotation. Healthy was a bit of a trick though. In his 4th game with the team, Barbosa injured his shoulder in his smoking hot 4th quarter against the Knicks - which resulted in him sitting out overtime and the next two games.

Barbosa's last game of the season was March 4th

when he broke his wrist on a drive to the basket in the 1st

half of the Clippers game.

He basically bookended the period during which Eric Bledsoe was injured.

My Top 3 Leandro Moments:

(1) **His Return** - On January 8, 2014 the Suns signed LB and a host of good feelings just washed over the majority of us. It came almost entirely out of nowhere and there were

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concerns about him taking minutes away from our other guards but "Suns sign Leandro Barbosa" was just a cool thing to see again.

(2) **Lighting Up the Knicks** - I mentioned this like a sentence ago, but in 30 minutes against the Knicks, LB scored 21 points including 14 in the 4th quarter to basically carry the Suns to overtime. Had he not hurt his shoulder and missed the entirety of the extra 5 minutes I'm pretty sure the Suns win that game.

(3) **Putting Me On Blast** -

[@ScottHoward42](#) I will...for sure

— Leandro Barbosa (@TheBlurBarbosa) [January 28, 2014](#)

My biggest joy from that was that Leandro Barbosa apparently searches his own name on Twitter - guess there's a lot of down time in the NBA. This was directly after the Suns road win over the 76ers and in his defense he shot 5/13 from three after that tweet. So, in my face.

The Future:

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Barbosa is an unrestricted free agent for the 2014-15 season. As much as it hurts the nostalgia part of my brain I would be really surprised to see the Blur back in Phoenix next year. While there were points this year where I was A-OK with him getting Archie Goodwin's minutes - those points will not exist next year.

Grade: Like I said above his performance was uneven - some days he was really good, other days not so good. That sounds perfectly average so he gets a C.

Dionte Christmas

How He Became a Sun:

The walking pun had quite the journey before finally making an NBA regular season roster. After finishing college at Temple in 2009 - Christmas played in summer league with the 76ers and Clippers, played with the 76ers for the 2009-10 preseason, played in the Israeli Super League, played for the Kings in 2010 summer league, played in the Czech National League, played with PAOK and Rethymno of the Greek Basket League, signed with the Rockets in April of 2012 (but didn't play in a game), played for the Celtics in the 2012 summer league, played with CSKA Moscow (like our hero Trajan Langdon used to), played for Montepaschi Siena of Italy, played with the Jazz and Suns in the 2013 summer league (DEEP BREATH) and then signed with the Suns. Best run-on sentence ever.

As a 27 year old, Dionte Christmas was finally getting his shot in the NBA.

2013-14 Performance:

With the early season injury struggles of Goran Dragic and Eric Bledsoe, many of us probably forgot that Dionte Christmas was actually a member of the rotation for a few games. Christmas played double digit minutes in 6 games during the 2013-14 season - 4 of which were in November while the other 2 were the abhorrent loss to Golden State in December and the Dragic/Bledsoe-less Utah road game in late February.

On the year, Christmas appeared in 31 games and played a total of 198 minutes. In his

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heartwarming holiday minutes he jingled all the way to 71 points. Although advertised as a shooter, Christmas hit just 29% of his 31 attempts from long distance.

My Top 3 Dionte Moments:

(1) **NBA Debut** - Becoming an NBA player is really, really hard. Becoming an NBA player for the first time when you're in your late 20's seems even harder. Dionte Christmas did both of those things on November 1st against the Jazz when he played nearly 15 minutes while scoring 9 points and grabbing 4 rebounds. Oddly enough the 9 points would be his season high. Here's the [video](#).

(2) **Leaning Into the Puns** -

(3) **Happiness** - if you watched any Suns game you saw Dionte Christmas cheering constantly, always being excited for his teammates, and basically being what you and I would be if we were sitting on the bench in uniform. If you could watch Christmas react to a play and not get a smile on your face then you probably aren't a human being.

The Future:

Dionte has a non-guaranteed contract for the 2014-15 season with a price tag of \$816,482. While he's pretty much the perfect 12th man on an NBA roster, you have to wonder whether the combination of rookies and new players will force him out. It may take some sort of Hanukkah miracle.

Grade: A+ - mainly because he was just so darn happy to be there. I find his actual basketball play to be irrelevant to the situation.

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