

2014 NBA Draft Prospect Profile: Is Dante Exum attainable?

Written by
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As far as two way combo guards go Dante Exum is dripping with intrigue, but does the Suns' interest in the unique prospect have any chance of coming to fruition?

Vitals

Hometown: Melbourne, Australia

High School: Australian Institute of Sport

Born: July 13, 1995

Height: 6' 6"

Weight: 196 pounds

Wingspan: 6' 9.5"

Standing Reach: 8' 7"

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Body Fat %: 6.4

No Step Vertical: 31.5"

Max Vertical: 34.5"

Draft Predictions

Draft Express: 4

NBA Draft.net: 4

Hoops Hype: 4

NBA Draft Insider: 4

Chad Ford's Big Board: 4

In fact, [NBA.com curated the online mock drafts](#) and Exum was predicted to go fourth in 10 of the 12 mocks. That would seem to make him a virtual lock to the Orlando Magic, but who knows after last season's flummery...

Scouting Report

Comparisons: Anfernee Hardaway, Michael Carter-Williams

Exum has the potential to be a dynamic defender. His quickness and lateral movement enables him to stay with smaller point guards while his size gives him the versatility to defend at the two or three. His size also helps him rebound the ball well at both ends of the court.

Exum's size and reach allow him to finish at the rim against larger defenders. Exum may also be able to exploit matchups against smaller point guards with his promising post up game. He has demonstrated the ability to score and distribute out of the post.

Exum has the ability to score in the post, on isolation plays, running the pick and roll and in transition, making him a very protean and potent offensive threat. Exum has shown the ability to be a volume scorer and fits the Suns mold of moving the ball in transition. Exum can very easily pick up a steal or rebound and go coast-to-coast for a fastbreak layup at the other end.

Overall, Exum has a very good feel for the game with great court vision, basketball IQ and live game instincts.

Many of Exum's flaws are the kind that tend to be concomitant with the inexperience of youth. Exum still needs a lot of work with his shot and makes questionable decisions on the offensive end, which results in him forcing up bad shots and turning over the ball at a high rate. Exum really struggles to shoot off the dribble and has a flat shot trajectory at times.

Some doubt Exum's ability to run the point at the next level, since his skill set doesn't necessarily fit the prototypical point guard mold. Exum also still needs to build up his strength, but has already made the jump from 188 pounds at his weigh in at the Hoop Summit to 196

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when he weighed in at the NBA Draft Combine. Considering he's only 18 years old this isn't really much of an issue.

Background

At the [FIBA Under-19 World Championship that was held from June 27 - July 27, 2013](#) Exum exploded in the Final Round to help lead his team to fourth place in the tournament. Exum scored 33 points and tallied four assists in an upset of Spain in the quarterfinals and again led his team in points (21) and assists (4) in a close lose to Serbia in the semifinals. In the bronze medal game Exum finished with 28 points and five assists in an overtime loss to Lithuania.

In all, Exum averaged 24.8 points and 5.1 assists per 40 minutes at the tournament. He also showed the ability to get to the line with 9.6 free throw attempts per 40 minutes, but unfortunately only converted at a 60.9% rate. He will need to work on that, along with his shooting stroke in general. Exum's performance earned him a selection on the All-Tournament Team.

Unfortunately, Exum doesn't have a plump portfolio of play against top flight competition to allow for further scrutinization. Exum has limited exposure to playing in highly talented

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environments and elected not to play basketball for almost a year leading up to the draft.

On an interesting note, Dante's father, Cecil, played on the 1982 North Carolina Tarheels National Championship team alongside Sam Perkins, James Worthy and Michael Jordan.

Outlook

Is Dante Exum attainable?

Probably not.

In fact, I probably wouldn't be doing this profile if the Suns hadn't made the interesting decision to make Exum one of their 18 player interviews out of the 60 players at the NBA Draft Combine. [Dave King covered this development](#) back before the draft lottery selection in May.

Exum appears to be the exact type of player that Ryan McDonough is obsessed enamored with, a young combo guard with upside and potential that may even exceed that of the players in his current backcourt.

However, it is one thing to covet and another to obtain. It just doesn't seem too realistic that the Suns can move up to a position to be able to draft Exum, especially without sacrificing assets that make the team worse in the short term.