

## Phoenix Suns Free Agency: The quiet before the storm

Written by

Wednesday, 02 July 2014 09:46 -

---



While middling players get big pay days, the Phoenix Suns are in a holding pattern.

A year ago, the [Phoenix Suns](#) had money to spend but could not get representatives for free agents to even return their calls. GM Ryan McDonough said as much this spring in an interview, highlighting the difference between the Suns this year and a year ago.

The Suns were not looking for more rotation veterans last year, but they still put in the requisite calls to the best free agents and were ignored because of what many perceived to be the onset of a 3-4 year rebuilding plan. When McDonough was hired, he vowed to go after the best players in the NBA.

This year, coming off a 48-34 record with a roster of talented youth, the Suns have a much easier selling job. But still, getting the very best free agents is proving to be a challenge.

### **The market be cray cray**

While the Suns wait for [LeBron James](#) to make his decision to stay in Miami or leave for younger pastures, other teams in the NBA are spending their money like it's got an expiration date of 72 hours.

[Avery Bradley](#) just got \$8 million per year, an agreement first reported (as far as I can tell) by Steve Bulpett out of Boston. Jodi Meeks got \$7 mill per year from Detroit. Shaun Livingston got \$5.3 mill (the MLE) from Golden State. None of those guys is a lifelong NBA starter.

[Marcin Gortat](#) is a long time starter and just got \$12 million per year for five years, all guaranteed. That's \$12 million when the guy is 36 and he was already wearing down in Phoenix.

## Phoenix Suns Free Agency: The quiet before the storm

Written by

Wednesday, 02 July 2014 09:46 -

---

Meanwhile, [Lance Stephenson](#) just turned down \$9 million per year from Indiana. It was first reported, from what I can tell, by Chris Broussard and later confirmed by a bunch of other media dudes.

How does this happen? The salary cap is projected to go up by \$5 million per year, and a huge TV contract has promised gobs of money for owners.

But mainly, it's because the new CBA has created shorter contracts and has a huge penalty tax structure for those who spend too much. So, many teams are positioning themselves to have roster turnover on a bi-annual basis. Basically, there's lots of money to spend.

### The storm before the calm

It happens every year. Crazy dollars are spent on a handful of second-level players in the first days of free agency before cooler heads prevail and the money dries up. This year, it might take a little longer to calm down though considering so many teams have money to spend.

The Suns are wise to stay out of the fray for now.

### What does that mean for Suns bids?

Per Paul Coro, [the Suns are linked to a dozen guys right now](#)

The Suns also have made contact with or been contacted by at least 12 other free agents. That includes unrestricted free agents [Pau Gasol](#) , [Trevor Ariza](#) , [Luol Deng](#) , [Spencer Hawes](#) , [D](#)  
[anny Granger](#)

,  
[Ed Davis](#)

,  
[Marvin Williams](#)

and

[Josh McRoberts](#)

and restricted free agents

[Gordon Hayward](#)

## Phoenix Suns Free Agency: The quiet before the storm

Written by  
Wednesday, 02 July 2014 09:46 -

---

'  
[Chandler Parsons](#)

'  
[Isaiah Thomas](#)

and Patrick Patterson. That does not necessarily mean the Suns are interested in all of them.

If the Phoenix Suns want to bid on players like Chandler Parsons or Gordon Hayward (rumors abound) right now, the starting price looks to be in the \$12 million per year range. And that might not be enough to make Houston (Parsons) or Utah (Hayward) blink before matching the offer anyway.

As mentioned already, the Suns should just wait this out until the prices drop a bit.

### **How about the Suns own free agents?**

It's been all quiet on the Suns home front.

The only [Eric Bledsoe](#) rumor so far has the [Lakers](#) wanting a meeting with him. Since the Lakers have nothing to offer the Suns in trade, their only play is to make an RFA offer the Suns will almost certainly match. Otherwise, the only news on Bledsoe was that the Suns planned to make him a starter offer this week.

Bledsoe did apparently post a picture of him in a Suns uniform on instagram and twitter yesterday before deleting it minutes later. Is that a sign? Who knows.

The market for [P.J. Tucker](#) is non-existent at this time, but it's only July 2. When Jodi Meeks got \$7 million per year though, that had to perk up Tucker's camp. But I don't see Tucker dying that much for money that he goes to a team in worse position than the Suns. If Tucker leaves, I expect it will be to a contender that uses their MLE on him. Most likely, Tucker stays and hopefully for a reasonable amount.

[Channing Frye](#) is getting some interest, but not enough to make him jump ship quite yet. The two teams most reported are Golden State and Cleveland. GS just signed Livingston, so they

## Phoenix Suns Free Agency: The quiet before the storm

Written by

Wednesday, 02 July 2014 09:46 -

---

don't have any more money to spend on free agents. All they can do now is make trades. It's possible the Suns and GS will negotiate a sign-and-trade for Frye, but unlikely. Cleveland is still out there as well. The Suns would just rather re-sign Frye now, to a lower number than his cap hit (a \$9.6 mill cap hold).

While it's in the Suns best interests, financially, to wait to re-sign Tucker and Bledsoe because their cap holds are smaller than their projected salaries, the opposite is true of Frye. If the Suns want Frye to stay, they should just sign him as soon as they can to the lowest number they can. That's not today, for sure, with the free agent prices so high. but as soon as the prices drop, the Suns should strike.

### And there's that LeBron guy

Suns owner Robert Sarver [said yesterday, in the azcentral.com/sports section](#) , that the Suns were willing to wait LeBron out.

"I think this is going to be on his timeline more than any one else's," [Sarver] said to Bob Young. "We've had conversations with his agent and we'll work within their time frame."

LeBron and friend Bosh and Wade are waiting for Pat Riley to supplement their team with some undisclosed amount of money before they re-sign. Reports had the HEAT with \$12 million to spend on other players, but that would force Wade and Bosh to sign up for only \$23 million between them (a 50% pay cut). Later, that number was called B.S. by their agent.

The money around the HEAT is getting murkier by the day, and the longer it takes the HEAT to sign anyone they want in free agency, the more iffy LeBron's return becomes. The HEAT have not signed anyone yet. The latest scuttlebutt has them going after more late-stage players who will take a thimble full of money to play for them - like [Shawn Marion](#) or [Vince Carter](#) . An early target, Marcin Gortat, just re-signed with Washington for more money than the HEAT can spend.

Will LeBron be happy with 92 year old Shawn Marion, for example, replacing the retired [Shane Battier](#)  
? Or 86 year old Vince Carter replacing the (probably) retiring

## Phoenix Suns Free Agency: The quiet before the storm

Written by

Wednesday, 02 July 2014 09:46 -

---

[Ray Allen](#)

? Those don't seem like upgrades to me. At least not the kind of upgrades the HEAT will need to continue to win championships.

### Quiet before the storm

Despite getting ignored by the best free agents last year, McDonough made a splash on day two of free agency one year ago today.

On July 2, 2013, McDonough jump-started the Suns resurgence by shipping off [Jared Dudley](#) and a second round pick for Eric Bledsoe. Bledsoe was considered the league's best trade asset, and the Suns snagged him for pocket lint.

Will the Suns make hay today?

Stay tuned.