

Friday, February 22, 2008

Mega NBA post, including trade thoughts

With the regular season back underway and the trade deadline past, it's time for a mega basketball post.

First, the Jason Kidd deal. I hate the trade for the Mavs. They get a washed up point guard who can't or won't play defense anymore for: a young, improving point (Devin Harris), a young, improving defensive center (Diop), a young swingman (Maurice Ager), and two first-round picks. That's essentially five young players for a guy who will throw out some 10-10-10 triple doubles this year while allowing Chris Paul, Deron Williams, Tony Parker, and all the rest to run past him all game. Also, as The Yemen Deli has insisted to me over and over again, the Mavs are damaged psychologically and needed to make a move a long time ago, not now. At least now Devean George can put this whole thing behind him now.

The Mike Bibby deal. I'm just not sure how this is relevant. The Hawks should make the playoffs with Bibby, since they gave up absolutely nothing (two backup points, one lottery pick who wasn't playing any minutes for them) to get him, but this doesn't make them a contender. Bibby's a good player, but he's not a game-changing player. His peak ended two years ago. I have no idea how this deal will work out for Sacramento. I guess it depends on how good Shelden Williams actually is.

The Ben Wallace deal. The Cavs gave up Drew Gooden, Larry Hughes, Cedric Simmons, Shannon Brown, Ira Newble, and Donyell Marshall for Ben Wallace, Wally Szczerbiak, Delonte West, and Joe Smith. This is a risky move for the Cavs: Wallace is an aging malcontent who basically has one skill. He does rebound better than any of the guys the Cavs gave up, of course, so they'll improve in that area. Wally should actually be a key to the deal, since the Cavs basically had two three-point shooters: Daniel Gibson (who's also supposed to be running the point for the team, not just hoisting up threes) and Damon Jones (Sasha Pavlovic should be on the list, just not this year). Adding a third guy who shoots it at 40% from downtown could help keep defenders off of Bron Bron. Delonte West should also be a better backup point than whoever was doing the job for the Cavs before the deal (Brown? Eric Snow? Hughes?).

For Seattle, this is a straight salary dump, getting rid of Wally and getting back Newble (expiring), Adrian Griffin from Chicago (expiring), and Donyell Marshall (who's a useful player for 10 or 15 minutes per game).

Finally, Chicago gets to move on from the massive Ben Wallace mistake, and ends up with Gooden, Hughes, Simmons, and Brown. Who they got back almost doesn't matter as much as getting rid of Wallace and moving on to the next phase for the franchise. Gooden may be considered a project, to see if anyone can get him back on track: he's stagnated the last two years in Cleveland, and it's not really clear why. Maybe someone in Chicago can get him back on track.

The Hornets. New Orleans made a bit of a silly trade, sending Bobby Jackson to Houston for Mike James and Bonzi Wells. Wells is an interesting pickup, but you have to worry about a corrosive personality.

Jackson for James is essentially a lateral move -- these backup point guards, they all look alike to me. For Houston, I'm not sure what the deal does. More playing time for Luis Scola and Chuck Hayes? It's a risky move because they're in the playoff picture, but the West is tight enough, with nine teams for eight spots, that any incremental downgrading could let Golden State push past you.

The Spurs. Brent Barry and Francisco Elson for Kurt Thomas. This deal reminds me of those waiver claims in baseball where you put in a claim to keep another team from picking up a player via a trade. Thomas's name has been bandied about as a guy who could defend well against Tim Duncan in the playoffs, so maybe the Spurs decided to take that off the board. The problem for San Antonio is I don't see what Thomas gives them that Elson doesn't, and then they have to give up a great three point shooter to get him? Let's say that Thomas is a better defensive player than Elson, and that he's less incompetent on offense. Both of those things are probably true. Does that make it worth giving up a shooter of Barry's caliber? I'm not so sure. (Not that I'm complaining, as a Laker fan.)

Speaking of the Lakers, they won the last two nights, once in a blowout over the Hawks (it was 73-37 at halftime). Mike Bibby played just 16 minutes. The Lakers did their usual: Kobe scored, Pau scored with a ridiculous shooting percentage (7-11), Odom rebounded, and a bench guy knocked in a couple of threes (it was Jordan Farmar this time). The other Lakers win, last night, was a little more exciting: 130-124 over Phoenix. No overtimes. L.A. scored at least thirty in each quarter, and rode an eight point halftime lead to the victory. Kobe had 41 (what finger?), Pau shot 13-19, Odom had 22-11, Sasha Vujacic went off again (15 points in 24 minutes), and L.A. generally just shot the lights out (56.5%).

LeBron had a triple-double in an eight-point loss at home to Houston in which Yao shot just 3-17. That sentence makes my mind boggle. He went for another triple-double the next night, this time leading the Cavs to a victory over a bad team. (Indiana.) Congratulations, LeBron. You beat a team you were supposed to beat.

The Knicks scored 23 points in overtime in Washington. 23! Overtime is only five minutes! They should have saved some of those points for the next night: they lost by forty in Philly yesterday.

Charlotte shot a whopping 28.2% in losing by 20 to the Spurs. That's awful. Tim Duncan only hit 2 of 12 shots, and it was still a blowout? Terrible.

Dueling benchies: Francisco Garcia had 23 points in 21 minutes for Sacramento and Travis Outlaw had 23 in 27 for Portland. The Kings won, as if that matters.

After beating Detroit by keeping them under 40%, the Magic allowed Toronto to shoot almost 60% in a Raptor win. Chris Bosh dropped 14 of 16 en route to 40 over Dwight Howard. Howard had a funny line: 37 points on great shooting (13/16) and fifteen rebounds, but just five of those rebounds were defensive. Ten offensive rebounds. When you get ten offensive rebounds, shouldn't you have like 30 total?

The Marcus Williams era began in New Jersey with an overtime win over the Bulls. Williams scored 25, but with just four assists. Kidd's re-debut for Dallas resulted in a New Orleans win as Kidd had six turnovers and Chris Paul scored 31, with eleven assists, nine steals,

and just one turnover. Yeah, that's pretty much what you can expect from here on out, Dallas.

My heavyweight prediction came true, as Marcus Camby came this close to a points-rebounds-blocks triple double, finishing one block short. This helped lead Denver to a win over Boston, stripping the Celtics of their Heavyweight title. Allen Iverson and Carmelo combined to shoot 33 free throws. Boston shot 28 total.

Denver's next test is at Chicago tomorrow. Yeah, I'm taking Denver in that game. That shouldn't even be close. Marcus Camby probably won't get 10 blocks, but that's only because Chicago will just shoot 65 jump shots and miss 45 of them all on their own.

2007-08 Current beltholder: Denver Nuggets

2007-08 Title Bout Records:

Denver10
Boston122
Cleveland52
Milwaukee52
San Antonio73
Houston32
Phoenix32
Utah32
L.A. Clippers11
Philadelphia11
Miami23
Washington23
Charlotte12
Chicago12
Memphis14
Sacramento14
Dallas01
Detroit01
Orlando01
Portland01
Seattle01
Atlanta02
Indiana02
New York02
L.A. Lakers03

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski in Basketball, L.A. Lakers at 10:39