

Sunday, September 21, 2008

Lakers taking the right approach with Odom

This post mentions that the Lakers are talking with Lamar Odom about playing point forward, about being a sixth man, playing the two, the three, the four, all kinds of things. Anyone who's been reading knows that this is precisely the approach I want L.A. to take with Odom -- be flexible! He's a unique player who can cause matchup nightmares with anybody, a good defender, a great rebounder, a guy with the attitude and skills to be an offensive facilitator. We'll see how it actually plays out in-season, of course, but I think the fact that the Lakers are talking to Odom about his role combined with the fact that Phil Jackson is perhaps the coach least afraid to think outside the box in the NBA bodes well.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski at 20:10

Blog Export: Beaneball, <http://beaneball.org/>

Wednesday, September 17, 2008

Ed Hochuli's day job

The revelation of the day: Ed Hochuli is an attorney! That made my day for some reason.

Look Inside >> September 17, 2008

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski at 08:28

Barry Sanders on energy

Everybody loves Barry Sanders, but I love Barry Sanders.

Barry Sanders September 17, 2008

Check out what book he's reading! He reads about alternative energy. That's awesome.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski at 08:24

Sunday, September 7, 2008

On Rajai Davis

You know why I love Rajai Davis? Because it proves that the A's aren't a team that "doesn't believe in stealing" or whatever gross overcharacterization is often put on them. They're just a team that doesn't believe in stealing unless the percentages are right. With Davis, the percentages are, in fact, right, so he runs wild. Davis has stolen 23 bases (and been caught six times, a 79% success rate) since coming to the A's. He's got 44 hits, seven walks, and 27 pinch-running appearances. So that is 78 times on base, of which he's attempted to steal 29 times. Given that some percentage of those times on base, he must be blocked, or have pinch-run at second in a close game (i.e. no stealing third allowed) or something like that, he's got to be stealing in something like 50% of the available situations, right? To steal that often and still make it nearly 80% of the time is pretty impressive, and means he'd be a nice guy to have off the bench for the next few years.

He's been hitting relatively well over the last few days as Bob Geren has installed him as the leadoff hitter and center fielder, and his batting average is about .275, but with an OBP under .310, that's not really the long-term spot for him. Although one wonders: he did walk 21 times in 210 plate appearances last year, split between San Francisco and Pittsburgh. And his minor league record is 246 walks in about 2700 PA's, which isn't great, but it's a higher rate than the eight in 190 PA's he's put up this year. He probably won't hit .305 like he did in the minors, but if he can hit .270, walk enough to get his OBP to .350, play good defense in center field, and steal bases, he can be this team's leadoff man. Remember, this is a guy the A's got for nothing from the least talented team in the league.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski at 09:52

Friday, September 5, 2008

Knicks trade?

Story here. The deal is Zach Randolph (3 years, \$48 million) for Darko (2 years, \$14 million) and Marko Jaric (3 years, \$21 million). The savings, then, is about \$2 million in 2008-09; \$2 million in 2009-10; and \$9 million going into the magical summer of 2010.

But doesn't this deal make a lot of sense on the court for the Knicks, too? They dump Randolph's attitude and his inability to get up and down the floor while picking up a guy who defends the rim and a decent backup point with size. It's mostly addition by subtraction, although Randolph's 17 PPG ain't nothing to sneeze at. Jaric + Milicic aren't making that up. On the other hand, it'd mean more ball for Quentin Richardson, Jamal Crawford, and The Big Cock, which is a fairly talented group.

The question is what Memphis is getting out of this. It costs them money long-term and short-term. I guess what it does is give them a real power forward. Darrell Arthur's young and stupid, and Hakim Warrick is a nice piece, but not a 17 PPG guy. That's it for PF's on that squad, unless you count Antoine Walker, which ESPN apparently does. (He's listed as a PF on their Memphis roster page.) If your Memphis starting lineup is Conley or Lowry at point, OJ Mayo at two, Rudy Gay at three, Randolph at four, and ... well, center becomes a problem, because with the subtraction of Darko, you're down to two rookies who played overseas last year: the Iranian star Hamed Haddadi and Marc Gasol. It's actually a lineup with some talent, some excitement, although it's not a deep team by any means. Two good points is nice, and a third, Javaris Crittenton, who some teams would probably love as a #2, but the only other shooting guard on the roster is Greg Buckner, there are no small forwards aside from Gay, and we've already talked about the big man situation.

But even with that utter lack of depth, doesn't the upgrade from your fourth point guard + your center with no upside to Zach Randolph take you from 22 wins to 30? No, it's not a huge improvement, but playing better, playing closer, winning some games, might matter to a fanbase that's been abused the last few years. Maybe this deal actually does help both teams.

Posted by Jason Wojciechowski at 22:46